

THORPE ESTATE SOLAR FARM, HIGHFIELDS FARM, CLIFTON LANE.

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

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REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been researched and prepared by RPS, on behalf of Elgin Energy, in order to inform proposals for a solar photovoltaic park and ancillary development on land at Highfields Farm, Thorpe Estate, Clifton Lane, Tamworth (the study site).

The study site has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential, potential impacts on the settings of designated archaeological heritage assets, and potential impact on the historic landscape. Potential impacts on built heritage assets such as Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas are beyond the scope of this assessment, and are dealt with in a separate report (RPS 2021).

There are no designated archaeological heritage assets of national significance within the study site or the 1km study area. There is one designated archaeological heritage asset within 2km, namely the Motte and Bailey Castle (1011366), in Seckington, 1.7km south-west of the study site.

The assessment has identified a low potential for significant hitherto unknown archaeological remains from any period to be present within the study site. Any such remains that might be present are considered likely to be of only Low/Local significance, as the study site appears to have only ever been used as agricultural land.

The study site lies within a Historic Landscape Character Type known as Estate Farmlands, described as a landscape of rural, agricultural character. This is emphasised by the strongly nucleated settlement pattern and relatively few roads, giving this landscape a moderately high inherent sensitivity, relating primarily to the cultural dimension of the landscape. Visual sensitivity is also moderately high due to the relatively open, rolling nature of the landform and the general lack of woodland cover. This landscape is of local significance within the county.

The proposed development could have a physical impact on any buried archaeological remains present within the study site, through the construction of site compounds, access roads, transformer bases, cable trenches, etc.. No non-designated archaeological heritage assets are identified within the study site. As a result, no potential impacts on any known buried archaeological remains have been identified. It is considered that the potential for significant impact on the buried archaeological element of the historic environment would be very low within the study site.

Historic hedgerows are present within the study site, and there is the potential for them to be damaged or removed by the proposed development. The development proposals include provision for retention of existing hedgerows, so impact on hedgerows will be negligible.

The study site is within a landscape which is identified as having a strong cultural character and as being a valued landscape of high quality within the county. The proposed solar farm would introduce industrial structures into an otherwise, relatively unaltered and important area of landscape. The proposed solar development will have a limited effect on the significance of this landscape, as it will be only partially visible within the wider landscape. Retention of existing hedgerows, and additional planting will further serve to hide the development from view.

It is considered that the proposed development will have a low to moderate adverse impact on a historic landscape of moderate sensitivity. This effect will be reversible, and will retain the historic field pattern, enabling the study site to be restored to its original state in the future.

Overall, it is concluded that the proposed development will have a very limited impact on the historic environment and will largely be reversible.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been researched and prepared by RPS, on behalf of Elgin Energy, in order to inform proposals for a solar photovoltaic park and ancillary development on land at Highfields Farm, Thorpe Estate, Clifton Lane, Tamworth (the study site).
- 1.2 The study site comprises agricultural land at Highfield Farm, and is centred on National Grid Reference SK 24230 08644 (see Figure 1). The study site is approximately 6ha in extent.
- 1.3 Potential impacts on built heritage assets such as Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas are beyond the scope of this assessment and are dealt with in a separate report (RPS 2021).
- 1.4 In accordance with relevant policy and guidance on archaeology and planning and in accordance with the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments' (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, January 2017, updated 2020), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the study site.
- 1.5 This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of evidence in the Staffordshire County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) and other sources, including the results of a comprehensive map regression exercise. A site visit was undertaken in March 2020 as part of the assessment.
- 1.6 The assessment thus enables relevant parties to assess the archaeological potential of the study site and to consider the need for design, civil engineering and archaeological solutions to the archaeological potential identified.

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

- 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 February 2019. 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 189 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset and that 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 *Nationally Important 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* 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 The site is located within the Lichfield District Council Area which has adopted the Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy 2008-2029 (adopted February 2015). The strategy contains the following policies relevant to the historic environment:

2.15 Core Policy 14: Our Built & Historic Environment:

The District Council will protect and improve the built environment and have special regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment through positive action and partnership working. The historic environment contributes to sustainable communities, including economic vitality, and new development must make a positive contribution to the historic environment's local distinctiveness.

The significance of designated heritage assets including national protected listed buildings and their settings, ancient monuments, archaeological sites and conservation areas and their settings, will be conserved and enhanced and given the highest level of protection. Other heritage assets including locally listed buildings, and locally important parks and gardens will also be conserved and enhanced. In conjunction with Policy NR5, landscapes that form the setting to the built and historic environment will also be conserved and enhanced.

Change will be directed to the most appropriate locations taking into account the District's heritage assets and their settings, including the historic landscape, as informed by the local evidence base. Development proposals which conserve and enhance a heritage asset or its setting will be supported where clear and convincing justification has been provided through an assessment of the significance of the asset or its setting.

The sustainable re-use, maintenance and repair of listed buildings and other heritage assets will be supported, particularly those that have been identified as being at risk. In conservation areas, the built form will be protected and enhanced and there should be no net loss of trees, with physical improvements to conservation areas linked to the objectives contained within conservation area appraisals and their management plans where appropriate.

Opportunities to improve understanding of the District's heritage assets will be supported through partnership work with local communities and societies using a range of historic characterisation tools, the County Council's Historic Environment Record, the expansion of the local list and the programme of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

The District Council will seek to maintain local distinctiveness through the built environment in terms of buildings and public spaces and enhance the relationships and linkages between the built and natural environment and through the realisation of proposed major new development.

The skyline of Lichfield City, characterised by the five spires emerging above the roofs and tree canopy will be protected and should inform the height, scale and layout for new developments. This and other locally important views within settlements and rural locations will be safeguarded and the integration of views and vistas shaping a strong sense of place in new development layouts will also be encouraged. High quality design, tree planting, landscaping and green spaces will be required as part of new development and elsewhere, to improve quality of place, reduce the urban heat island effect and contribute to the Forest of Mercia and National Forest where applicable.

The District Council and its partners will continue to improve Burntwood town centre and Lichfield City centre in terms of their physical quality. In Burntwood this will be particularly focused on achieving new uses and spaces of a physical form that can be integrated into an extended town centre.

Community safety issues will be taken into account such as methods for designing out crime. Environmental improvement schemes will be implemented throughout the District in appropriate locations and the natural environment will play an important role in new development and regeneration through initiatives such green linkages, tree planting and effective landscaping to assist the health and well being of the community and reduce health inequalities.

Further information will be provided within the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document'.

Policy NR5: Natural & Historic Landscapes:

Development will be permitted where it does not negative impact upon the geological, archaeological and historically important landscapes in the Lichfield District. The

character and significance of the natural and historic landscape will be safeguarded through decisions which protect, conserve and enhance sites of national, national, regional, and local importance.

Where development or land use changes may affect nationally or locally important landscape assets, a full understanding of the context, characteristics, and significance should be provided and informed by the Historic Environment Character Assessment work of the County and District Councils.

Supplementary Planning Document

- 2.16 Lichfield District Council have adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to support the Local Plan. Of these, the **Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (adopted October 2015)** is of relevance and has been referred to in the production of this report. This SPD provides further detail to the policies relating to the historic environment and achieving high quality development within Lichfield District. It provides information to everyone involved in projects on the aspects which should be considered when undertaking works that affect the historic environment.
- 2.17 In line with relevant planning policy and guidance, this desk-based assessment seeks to clarify the study site's archaeological potential and the likely significance of that potential and the need or otherwise for additional mitigation measures.

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (DCLG)

- 2.18 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted in order to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.
- 2.19 Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases and that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally substantial harm is a high test that will only arise where a development seriously affects a key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed.

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, April 2008)

- 2.20 Conservation Principles outlines Historic England's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in Historic England's own advice and guidance, the document is recommended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.
- 2.21 The guidance describes a range of heritage values which enables the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main heritage values being: evidential value; historical value; aesthetic value; and communal value.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

2.22 The PPS5 Practice Guide was withdrawn in March 2015 and replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs) published by Historic England. GPA1: The Historic

Environment in Local Plans provides guidance to local planning authorities to help them make well informed and effective local plans. GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Making includes technical advice on the repair and restoration of historic buildings and alterations to heritage assets to guide local planning authorities, owners, practitioners and other interested parties. GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets replaces guidance published in 2011. These are complemented by the Historic England Advice Notes in Planning which include HEA1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2016), HEA2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016), HEA3: The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans (October 2015), and HEA4: Tall Buildings (December 2015).

GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

- 2.23 2.22 This document provides advice on numerous ways in which decision making in the historic environment could be undertaken, emphasising that the first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and the contribution of its setting to that significance. In line with the NPPF and PPG, the document states that early engagement and expert advice in considering and assessing the significance of heritage assets is encouraged. The advice suggests a structured, staged approach to the assembly and analysis of relevant information:
 - 1. Understand the significance of the affected assets;
 - 2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
 - 3. Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
 - 4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
 - 5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance balanced with the need for change; and
 - 6. Offset negative impacts to significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition; December 2017)

- 2.24 This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (March 2017) and Seeing History in the View (English Heritage, 2011) in order to aid practitioners with the implementation of national legislation, policies and guidance relating to the setting of heritage assets found in the 1990 Act, the NPPF and PPG. The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 and 2015 documents and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.
- 2.25 As with the NPPF the document defines setting 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'. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset, or the ability to appreciate that significance. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.

- 2.26 While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, setting also encompasses other environmental factors including noise, vibration and odour. Historical and cultural associations may also form part of the asset's setting, which can inform or enhance the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.27 This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. It is stated that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, further weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.
- 2.28 The document also states that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting, and that different heritage assets may have different abilities to accommodate change without harming their significance. Setting should, therefore, be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.29 Historic England recommends using a series of detailed steps in order to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on significance of a heritage asset. The 5-step process is as follows:
 - 1. Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
 - 2. Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;
 - 3. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
 - 4. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
 - 5. Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geology

3.1 The bedrock consists of Triassic Mudstone of the Gunthorpe Member. No superficial deposits are recorded within the study site.

Topography

- 3.2 The topography of the study site is undulating which limits intervisibility between some parts of the site, but also provides some long-distance views over the surrounding landscape. The highest points of the study site lie on its western edge at *c*.98 metres AOD, and its south-eastern edge at *c*.98 metres AOD, with land within the study site generally dropping away to the north and north-west, to a height of *c*.69m AOD. As such, from the high western edge of the study site there are some long-distance views towards Thorpe Constantine and Clifton Campville. There are also some long-distance views available from the south-westernmost field parcel within the study site, which slopes steeply downhill from north-east to south-west.
- 3.3 The nearest watercourse forms part of the north-western and northern boundaries of the study site.

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. 2a to 2d), also referred to as the study area, held on the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER), together with a historic map regression exercise charting the development of the study area from the early 19th century onwards until the present day.
- 4.3 In addition, LiDAR data from the Environment agency was examined, but the available information covers only half of the study site (not illustrated).
- 4.4 The COVID-19 epidemic has caused the Historic England archive to be closed since March 2020, and it was not possible to undertake a search of aerial photographs for this study.
- 4.5 Chapter 5 subsequently considers the site conditions and whether the proposed development will impact the theoretical archaeological potential identified below.

Previous Archaeological Work

4.6 No previous archaeological activities have been recorded within the study site, but a small number of archaeological activities have been recorded in the wider 1km study area. They are as follows:

EST3188: Historic Environment Assessment in relation to planning application for wind turbines at Hogs Hill, 1km north-west of the study site. While the HER relates the scope of this

assessment, it does not give any details. It was not possible to view this assessment for this report.

EST836: Archaeological watching brief at Clifton Campville 1km north-east of the study site. Works associated with a playing field and wildflower garden development were observed. No archaeology recorded.

EST2312: Archaeological watching brief at Statfold Farm, 500m south of the study site. Groundworks associated with the installation of a single wind turbine and associate cable route were observed. No significant archaeology was found.

HER number not known: A current planning application for a solar farm at Haunton has its eastern boundary 500m west of the study site. This application is supported by a Heritage and Archaeological Assessment, and its later update (HCUK 2020), which include the study site in their search areas. The assessment concluded a low potential for archaeology to be present within the Haunton application site, for all periods apart from Roman, which was reported to have a low to medium potential.

Historic Landscape Assessment: The Historic Landscape in the general area around the study site is described in the Supplementary Planning Guidance (LDC 2015) as follows – Along the eastern boundary of the district, some of the earliest known sites within the county are located, primarily in the river valleys which dominate the eastern half of the county. Monuments have been recorded dating from the Neolithic period onwards. However, there remains the potential for Palaeolithic sites to survive upon the gravel terraces of all the principal river valleys. The river valleys were the focus for arable agriculture during the medieval period and there are numerous villages and towns located here many of which are recorded in Domesday Book (1086), indicating their early origins.

Prehistoric

- 4.7 No Prehistoric finds or features have been recorded within the study site.
- 4.8 A (probable) Bronze Age burnt mound (MST1833) is recorded 750m south-west of the study site.
- 4.9 This remains the only Prehistoric feature recorded in the HER within the 1km study area.
- 4.10 While this lack of recorded Prehistoric activity within the study site and study area is partly a function of limited investigation, nonetheless it must be concluded that based on current evidence there is a low potential for hitherto undiscovered archaeological remains from any of the Prehistoric periods to be present within the study site. Any such remains, if present, are likely to be isolated finds and therefore of low (local) significance.

Roman

- 4.11 There are no Roman finds or features recorded within the study site or the surrounding 1km study area. The nearest recorded Roman remains are several kilometres to the west of the study site.
- 4.12 While this lack of recorded Roman-period activity within the study site and surrounding landscape may be partly a function of limited investigation, nonetheless it must be concluded that based on current evidence there is a low potential for hitherto undiscovered archaeological remains from the Roman period to be present within the study site. Any such remains, if present, are likely to be isolated finds and therefore of low (local) significance.

Anglo-Saxon/Early Medieval

4.13 No Early-Medieval finds or features are recorded within the study site.

- 4.14 In the wider study area, possible Anglo-Saxon material is recorded at Statfold Church (MST5232, 750m south of the study site). A deserted settlement of Early-Medieval origin is recorded at Syerscote, which comprises visible earthworks (MST1173, 1.1km south-west of the study site). This settlement was recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086, but deserted between 1334 and 1524 (MST1173).
- 4.15 Seckington was in existence prior to the Norman Conquest, 1.5km south-east of the study site, as were Clifton Campville (1km north of the study site) and Thorpe Constantine (1km east of the study site) (Open Domesday online resource).
- 4.16 It appears that the pattern of settlement in the area surrounding the study site was established to a large extent during the Early-Medieval period, and there is no evidence to suggest that the study site was a focus for settlement at this time.
- 4.17 It must be concluded that based on current evidence there is a low potential for hitherto undiscovered archaeological remains from the Early-Medieval/Anglo-Saxon period to be present within the study site. Any such remains are likely to be solely related to the agricultural use of the study site, and therefore would be considered of low significance.

Medieval

- 4.18 There are traces of Medieval agricultural activity present in the study site, in the form of ridge and furrow earthworks (MST5525, immediately to the north of the extant Highfield Farm buildings). These features were recorded from aerial photographs in the 1960s, but the earthworks are not obviously visible today, having been levelled by modern ploughing.
- 4.19 Other areas of ridge and furrow have been plotted from aerial photographs in close proximity to the study site MST5526, adjacent to the southern boundary, and MST18325 adjacent to the western boundary. Other areas of ridge and furrow are present around the periphery of the wider study area, including at Statfold (MST5529), 800m south of the study site; north-east of Thorpe Constantine (MST5534), 1km north-east of the study site, and around Syerscote deserted settlement (MST5531), 1km south-west of the study site.
- 4.20 As noted above, the Early-Medieval settlement pattern was continued into the Medieval period. There is a Medieval church present at Thorpe Constantine (MST11656), 900m east of the study site, although the settlement may have been deserted by the 1540s. The earlier settlement at Syerscote, 1.1km south-west of the study site (MST1173), was thought to be deserted between 1334 and 1524. Another deserted settlement is recorded at Statfold (MST1177), 900m south of the study site, although the church is still extant.
- 4.21 The only evidence within the study site from this period is clearly agricultural in nature, although the evidence of ridge and furrow earthworks plotted from aerial photographs is now largely no longer visible. This is likely to be the result of extensive deep modern ploughing. The Early-Medieval settlement pattern appears to have continued into the Medieval period, with no new settlements identified. A number of these settlements were abandoned during the Medieval period, but the study site appears to have remained as agricultural land.
- 4.22 As a result of the available evidence, it is concluded that there is a low potential for hitherto undiscovered archaeological remains from the Medieval period to be present within the study site. Any such remains are likely to be solely related to the agricultural use of the study site, and therefore would be considered of low (local) significance at best.

Post Medieval & Modern (including map regression exercise)

- 4.23 There is no specific evidence for Post-Medieval activity within the study site, but the known ridge and furrow earthworks may date from this period. The Historic Landscape Character Assessment (SCC 2009) indicates that the fields of Highfields Farm were enclosed from earlier Medieval fields in the Post-Medieval period.
- 4.24 Highfields farmhouse was built in the early 19th century, and on the earliest map viewed for this study, an 1811 Ordnance Survey (OS) drawing (not illustrated), Highfields Farm is shown as an isolated farmstead. The c.1840 Clifton and Haunton Tithe map (not illustrated) shows the study site divided into c. 30 different fields. On the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map (Figure 4), the study site has an appearance very similar to today. The Highfields farmstead lies centrally on Clifton Lane, with agricultural fields on all sides. The fields sizes are smaller than today, with 20+ separate areas defined by internal hedgerows.
- 4.25 Figures 5 to 12 show the study site over time, up to 2020. The only changes which are visible in the mapping relate to the development of the farmyard itself, and the general trend is expansion and an increase in the number of buildings. The number of fields has diminished to 12, but the surviving hedgerows were all present in the 1st edition OS map.
- 4.26 Based on the current evidence, there is a low potential for hitherto unknown significant archaeology dating from the Post-Medieval and Modern periods to be present within the study site. Any such remains are likely to be solely related to the agricultural use of the study site, and therefore would be considered of no more than low (local) significance.

Historic Landscape

- 4.27 The Historic Environment Record indicates that the study site lies in Historic Environment Character Area (HECA) 13d (SCC2009), 'dominated by early enclosure of the formerly open fields typical of Medieval arable cultivation. Also important for later watermeadows'. Watermeadows within this HECA are confined to the river valleys, and it is in the river valleys and lower-lying land that the highest archaeological potential for evidence of Prehistoric and Roman period activity is located. The study site does not lie in a river valley.
- 4.28 The study site lies in a fieldscape type recorded as re-organised piecemeal enclosure. This is defined as:

Areas of either small irregular or rectilinear fields that have lost 10 or more field boundaries since the 1st ed. 6" map, OR areas of large irregular or rectilinear fields. In both cases there will be at least two field boundaries that exhibit 's-curve' or 'dog-leg' morphology. The field patterns in these areas result from the amalgamation of fields created through piecemeal enclosure. In most cases it can be demonstrated that this has occurred since the publication of the 1st ed. 6" OS map. (SCC 2009)

- 4.29 A fuller description of the overall landscape character is given in an update of the Lichfield District Council Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2019 (LDC 2019). This document shows the study site as being within the Mease Lowlands National Character Area and within the Estate Farmlands Landscape Character Type.
- 4.30 The assessment states the following:

'This is a relatively open landscape of medium to large sized, mostly regular fields enclosed by closely cropped thorn hedgerows, dominated by planned enclosure under Parliamentary Acts in the 18th century. Patches of earlier piecemeal enclosure occur throughout, mostly adjacent to villages, such as Clifton Campville and Haunton, where they are often associated with surviving ridge and furrow.' (Para 4.17.3) 'Strength of Character – although the natural dimension of this Estate Farmlands is rather weak and largely confined to watercourses, the historic character of this well ordered, rural, agricultural landscape is strong and characterised by country estates, discrete rural villages and small regularly shaped game coverts.' (Para 4.17.5)

'Summary of Condition - the scale and survival of the historic enclosure pattern defines the overall character and condition of this landscape and although many areas retain a peaceful, pastoral character, other parts are disrupted by agricultural intensification. Where this is the case, land use change has often caused a decline in the structure of the landscape, resulting in hedgerow deterioration and creating a fragmented/neglected appearance.' (Para 4.17.6)

'Quality of the landscape - The Estate Farmlands within the Mease lowlands is a farmed landscape of nucleated villages, many with tall church spires, often sited on higher ground. This landscape is defined by a strongly nucleated settlement pattern, which is reflected in the strong rural character that distinguishes the quiet, undisturbed nature of the Estate Farmlands. The long views, quiet lanes and gentle topography make this a valued landscape of high quality.' (Para 4.17.9)

4.31 Historic hedgerows form an important part of this historic landscape. A number of the extant field boundaries within the study site are present on the Tithe map.

Assessment of Significance (Designated Assets)

- 4.32 Existing national policy guidance for archaeology (the NPPF as referenced in section 2) enshrines the concept of the 'significance' of heritage assets. Significance as defined in the NPPF centres on the value of an archaeological or historic asset for its 'heritage interest' to this or future generations.
- 4.33 There are no nationally designated archaeological heritage assets within 1km of the study site.
- 4.34 There is one Scheduled Monument of national significance within 2km of the study site, the 'Motte and Bailey Castle 90m NW of All Saints' Church' (1011366), in Seckington, 1.7km southwest of the study site (Plate 5). This monument derives its significance from the survival of above-ground earthworks, and buried archaeological remains. It is representative of a relatively rare type of monument from the 11t h- 13th centuries. By its nature the monument has a wide setting, and the study site lies within that setting. The study site is, however, only partially visible from the summit of the motte, and makes only a very small contribution to that wider setting.

Assessment of Significance (Non-Designated Assets)

4.35 As identified by desk based work, archaeological potential by period and the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present is summarised in table form below.

Period:	Identified Archaeological Potential	Identified Archaeological Significance
Prehistoric	Low	Low (Local)
Roman	Low	Low (Local)
Anglo-Saxon	Low	Low (Local)
Medieval	Low	Low (Local)
Post Medieval	Low	Low (Local)
Modern	Low	Low (Local)

Historic Landscape

- 4.36 The study site lies within a landscape which is identified it as having a strong cultural character and as being a valued landscape of high quality, in the district-wide assessment.
- 4.37 One of the special features of the Estate Farmlands is its rural, agricultural character. This is emphasised by the strongly nucleated settlement pattern and relatively few roads, giving this landscape a moderately high inherent sensitivity, relating primarily to the cultural dimension of the landscape. Visual sensitivity is also moderately high due to the relatively open, rolling nature of the landform and the general lack of woodland cover.
- 4.38 The historic landscape is of local importance within the county.
- 4.39 Historic hedgerows form an important part of this historic landscape, and most of the field boundaries within the study site were present on the Tithe map. They are therefore potentially important under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations.

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

Site Conditions

5.1 The study site comprises a farmstead with associated agricultural fields. The general nature of the study site is shown in plates 1-4.

Proposed Development

5.2 The proposed development is for a photovoltaic array, to include solar generating panels, transformers, cabling, fencing lighting, and associated access infrastructure. The proposed layout of the solar panels is shown in Figure 13.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Designated Archaeological Assets

- 5.3 There is one designated archaeological heritage asset within 2km of the site, the 'Motte and Bailey Castle 90m NW of All Saints' Church' (1011366), in Seckington, 1.7km south-west of the study site.
- 5.4 This monument consists of a large mound surrounded by a substantial ditch (Plate 5). It is built in a prominent position on a slight ridge. It has a significance both in the survival of the above-ground earthworks, and the buried archaeological evidence from the 11th 13th centuries. It has a very wide setting across the surrounding countryside, of which the study site forms a very small part.
- 5.5 A site visit has shown that the monument has a very limited potential for intervisibility with the study site from the top of the mound. Plate 6 shows that views towards the study site from ground level are largely obscured by blocks of woodland, and no part of the proposed development area is visible.
- 5.6 It is therefore considered that the proposed development could have no more than a negligible impact on the setting of the monument, on account of the intervening distance and woodland. This very limited impact on the setting would have no effect on the significance of the monument.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Non-Designated Assets

- 5.7 The proposed development could have a physical impact on any buried archaeological remains present within the study site, through the construction of site compounds, access roads, transformer bases, cable trenches, etc.
- 5.8 No non-designated archaeological heritage assets are identified within the study site. As a result, no potential impacts on any known buried archaeological remains have been identified. It is considered that the potential for significant impact on the buried archaeological element of the historic environment would be very low within the study site.
- 5.9 Historic hedgerows are present within the study site, and there is the potential for them to be damaged or removed by the proposed development. The Historic Landscape Character update

(LDC 2019) states that 'Their retention and potentially their improvement needs to be assured'. The development proposals include provision for retention of existing hedgerows, so impact will be very small.

- 5.10 One of the special features of the Estate Farmlands is its rural, agricultural character. This is emphasised by the strongly nucleated settlement pattern and relatively few roads, giving this landscape a moderately high inherent sensitivity, relating primarily to the cultural dimension of the landscape. Visual sensitivity is also moderately high due to the relatively open, rolling nature of the landform and the general lack of woodland cover (LDC 2019, Para 4.17.8).
- 5.11 The study site is within a landscape which is identified it as having a strong cultural character and as being a valued landscape of high quality within the county. The proposed solar farm would introduce industrial structures into an otherwise, relatively unaltered and important area of landscape.
- 5.12 The proposed solar development will have a limited effect on the significance of this landscape, as it will be only partially visible within the wider landscape. Retention of existing hedgerows, and additional planting will further serve to hide the development from view.
- 5.13 It is considered that the proposed development will have a low to moderate adverse impact on a historic landscape of moderate sensitivity. This effect will be reversible, and will retain the historic field pattern, enabling the study site to be restored to its original state in the future.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The study site has been assessed for its below ground archaeological potential, potential impacts on the settings of designated archaeological heritage assets, and potential impact on the historic landscape.
- 6.2 There are no designated archaeological heritage assets of national significance within the study site or the 1km study area. There is one designated archaeological heritage asset within 2km, namely the 'Motte and Bailey Castle 90m NW of All Saints' Church' (1011366), in Seckington, 1.7km south-west of the study site.
- 6.3 As identified by desk based work, archaeological potential by period and the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present is summarised in table form below:

Period:	Identified Archaeological Potential	Identified Archaeological Significance
Prehistoric	Low	Low (Local)
Roman	Low	Low (Local)
Anglo-Saxon	Low	Low (Local)
Medieval	Low	Low (Local)
Post Medieval	Low	Low (Local)
Modern	Low	Low (Local)

- 6.4 The study lies within a Historic Landscape Character Type known as Estate Farmlands, a landscape of rural, agricultural character. This is emphasised by the strongly nucleated settlement pattern and relatively few roads, giving this landscape a moderately high inherent sensitivity, relating primarily to the cultural dimension of the landscape. Visual sensitivity is also moderately high due to the relatively open, rolling nature of the landform and the general lack of woodland cover. This landscape is of local significance within the county.
- 6.5 The proposed development could have a physical impact on any buried archaeological remains present within the study site, through the construction of site compounds, access roads, transformer bases, cable trenches, etc. No non-designated archaeological heritage assets are identified within the study site. As a result, no potential impacts on any known buried archaeological remains have been identified. It is considered that the potential for significant impact on the buried archaeological element of the historic environment would be very low within the study site.
- 6.6 Historic hedgerows are present within the study site, and there is the potential for them to be damaged or removed by the proposed development. The Historic Landscape Character update (LDC 2019) states that 'Their retention and potentially their improvement needs to be assured'. The development proposals include provision for retention of existing hedgerows, so impact will be very small.
- 6.7 The site is within a landscape which is identified it as having a strong cultural character and as being a valued landscape of high quality within the county. The proposed solar farm would introduce industrial structures into an otherwise, relatively unaltered and important area of landscape. The proposed solar development will have a limited effect on the significance of this landscape, as it will be only partially visible within the wider landscape. Retention of existing hedgerows, and additional planting will further serve to hide the development from view.
- 6.8 It is considered that the proposed development will have a low to moderate adverse impact on a historic landscape of moderate sensitivity. This effect will be reversible, and will retain the historic field pattern, enabling the study site to be restored to its original state in the future.

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Cartographic

1811 Ordnance Survey drawing

1838 Clifton and Haunton Tithe map

1838 Thorpe Constantine Tithe map

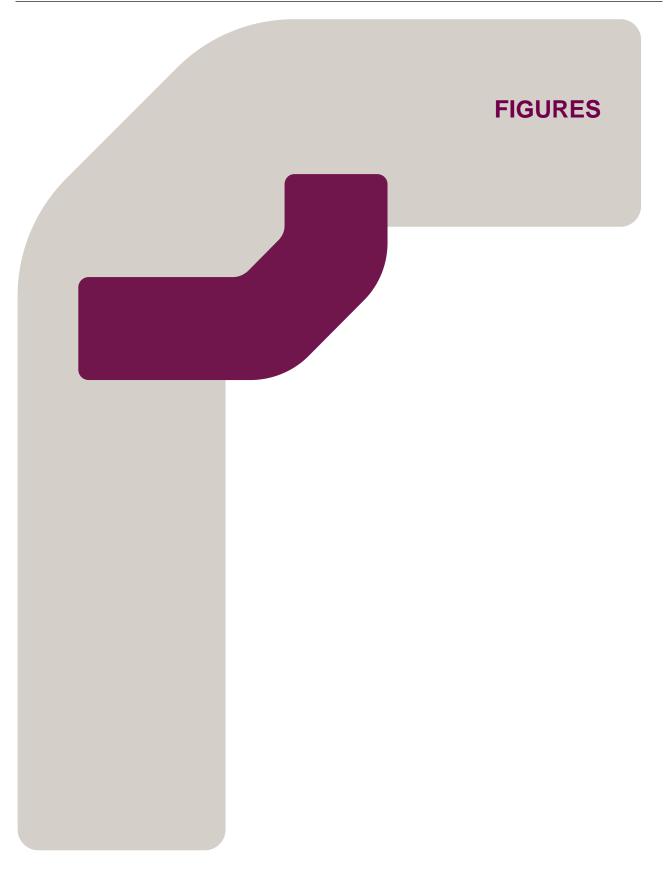
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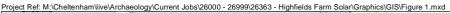
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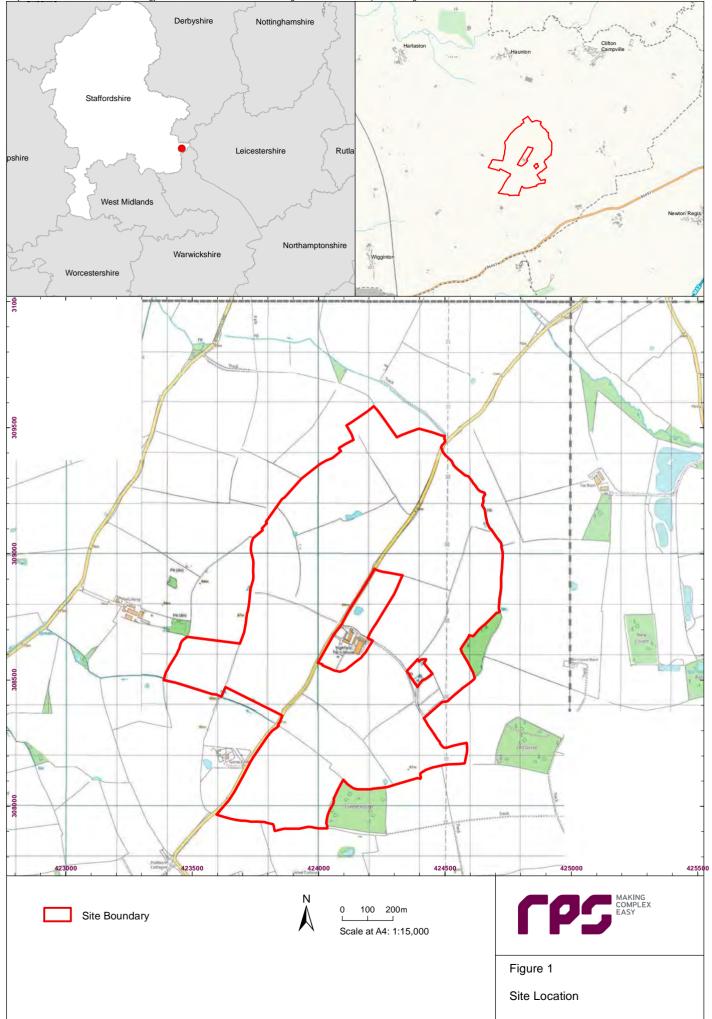
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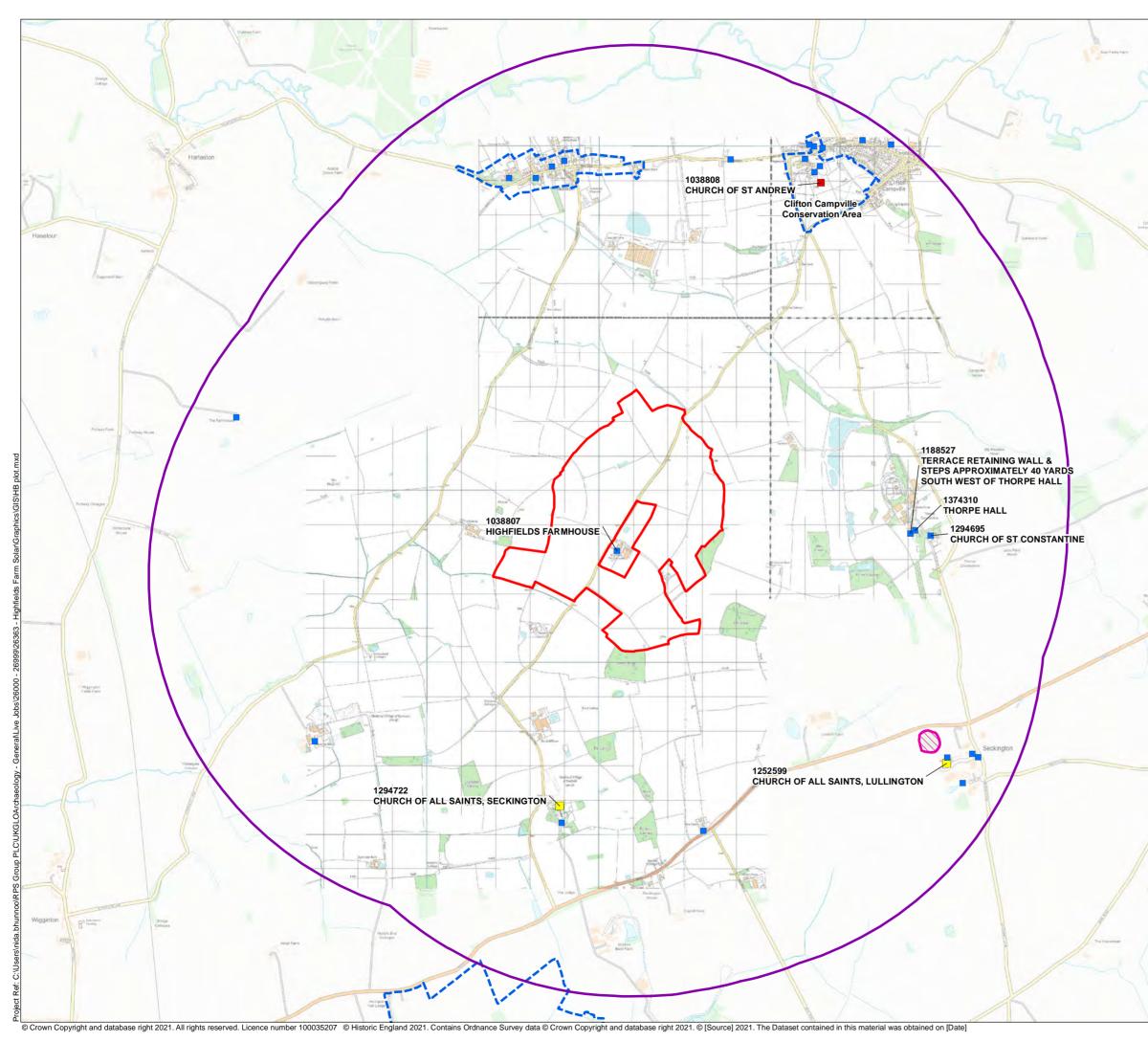
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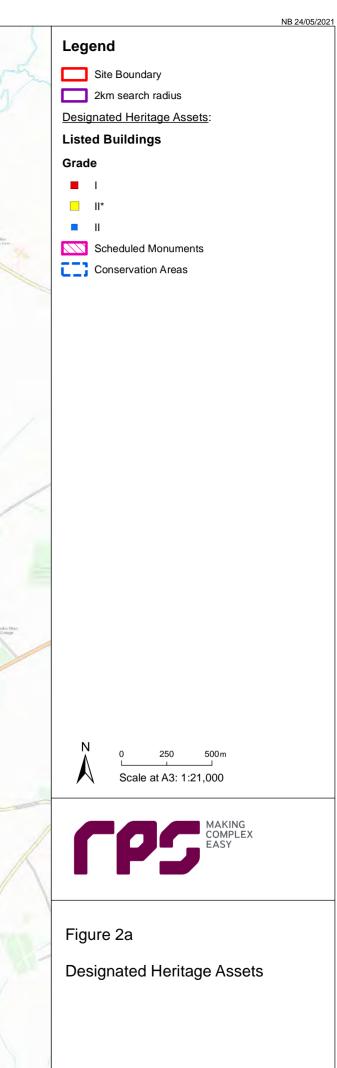


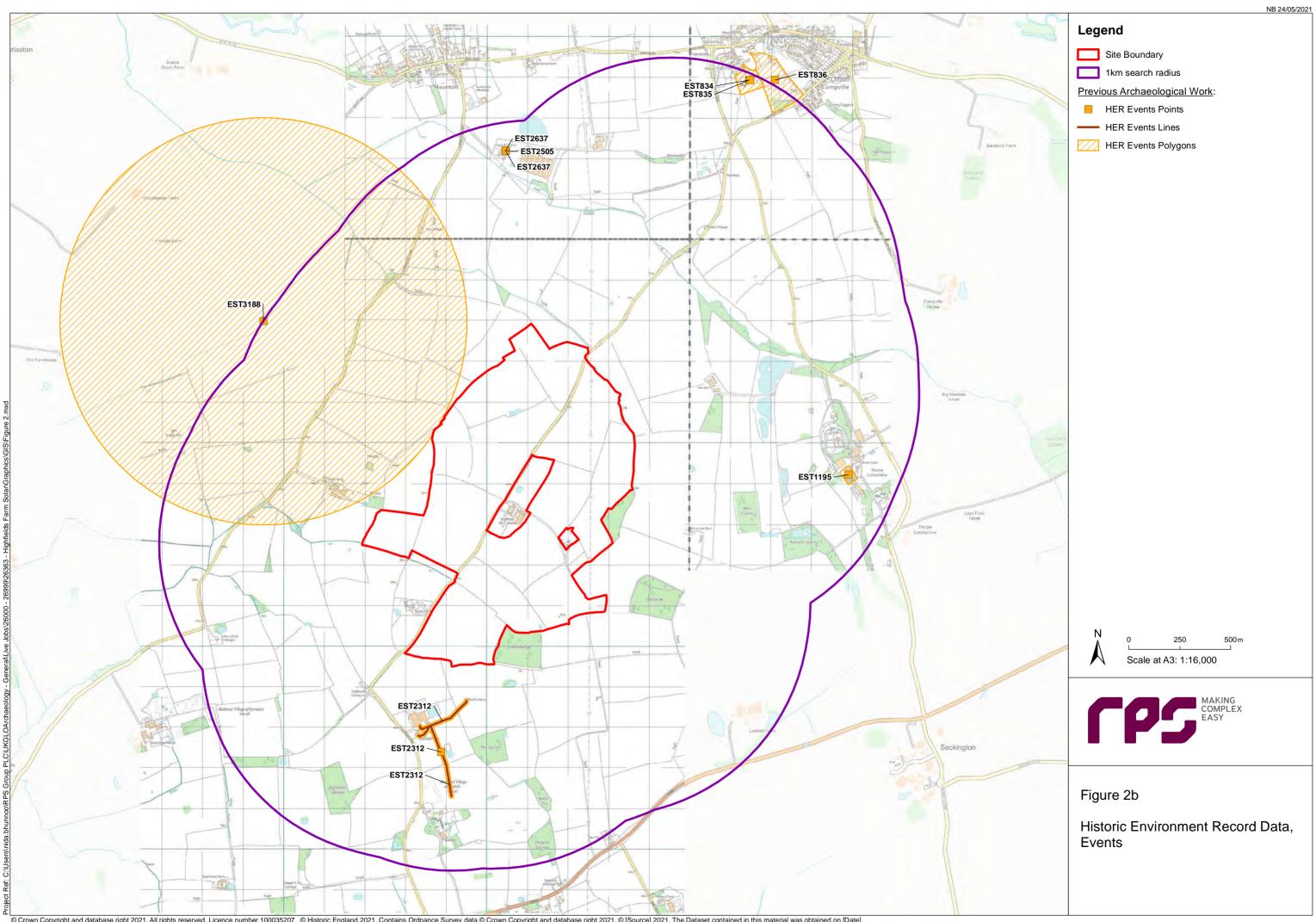




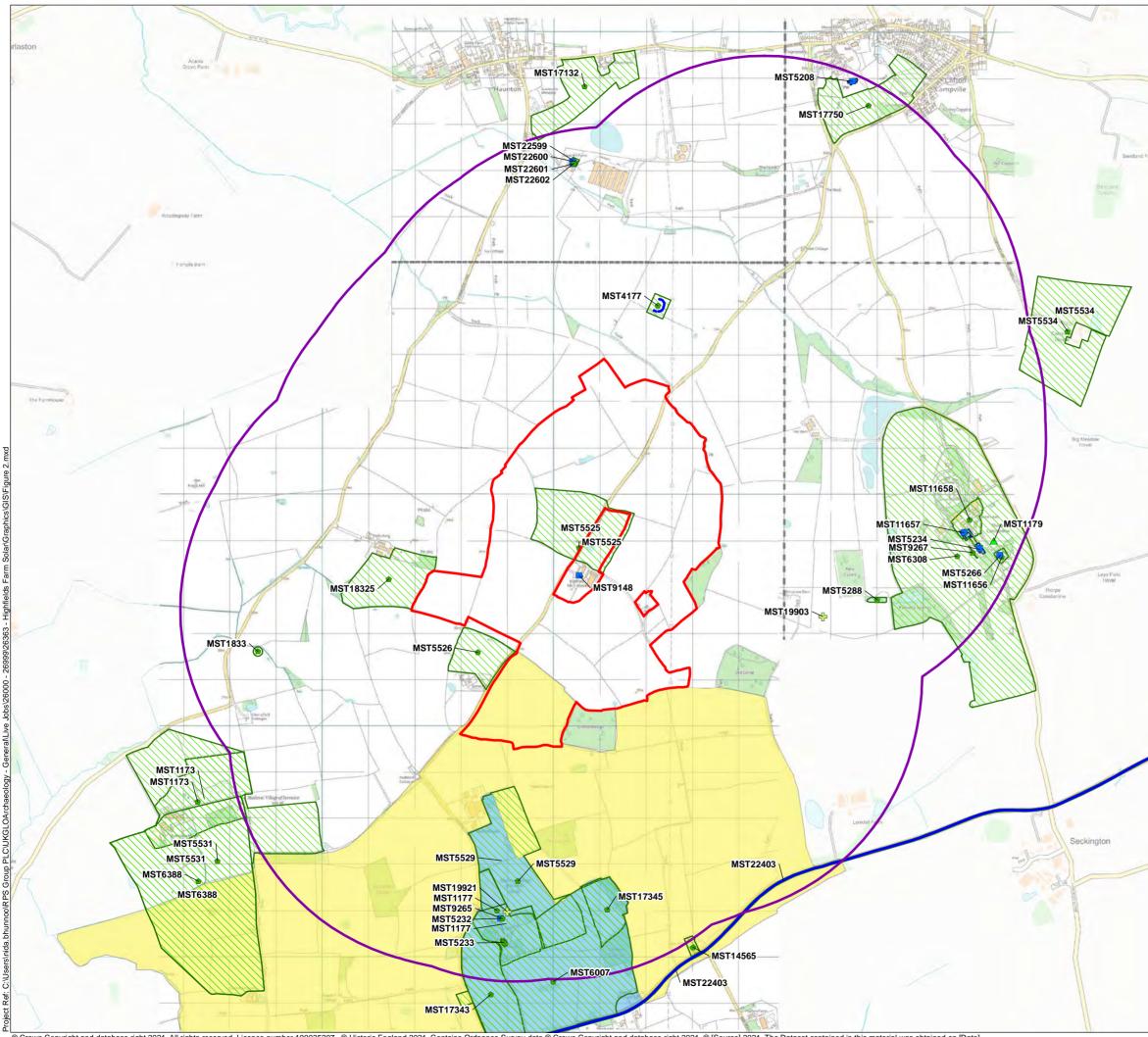




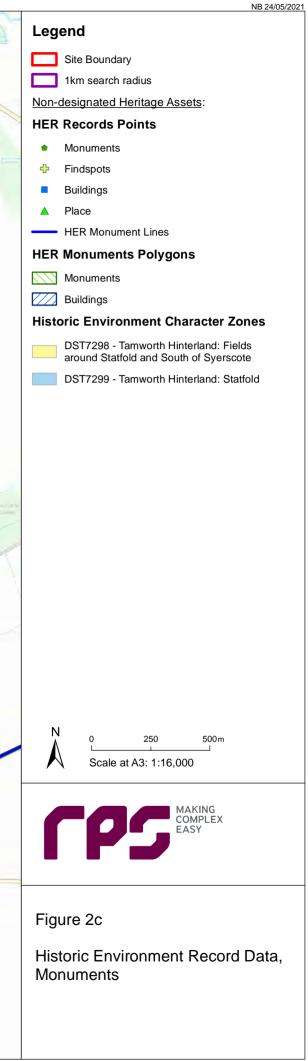


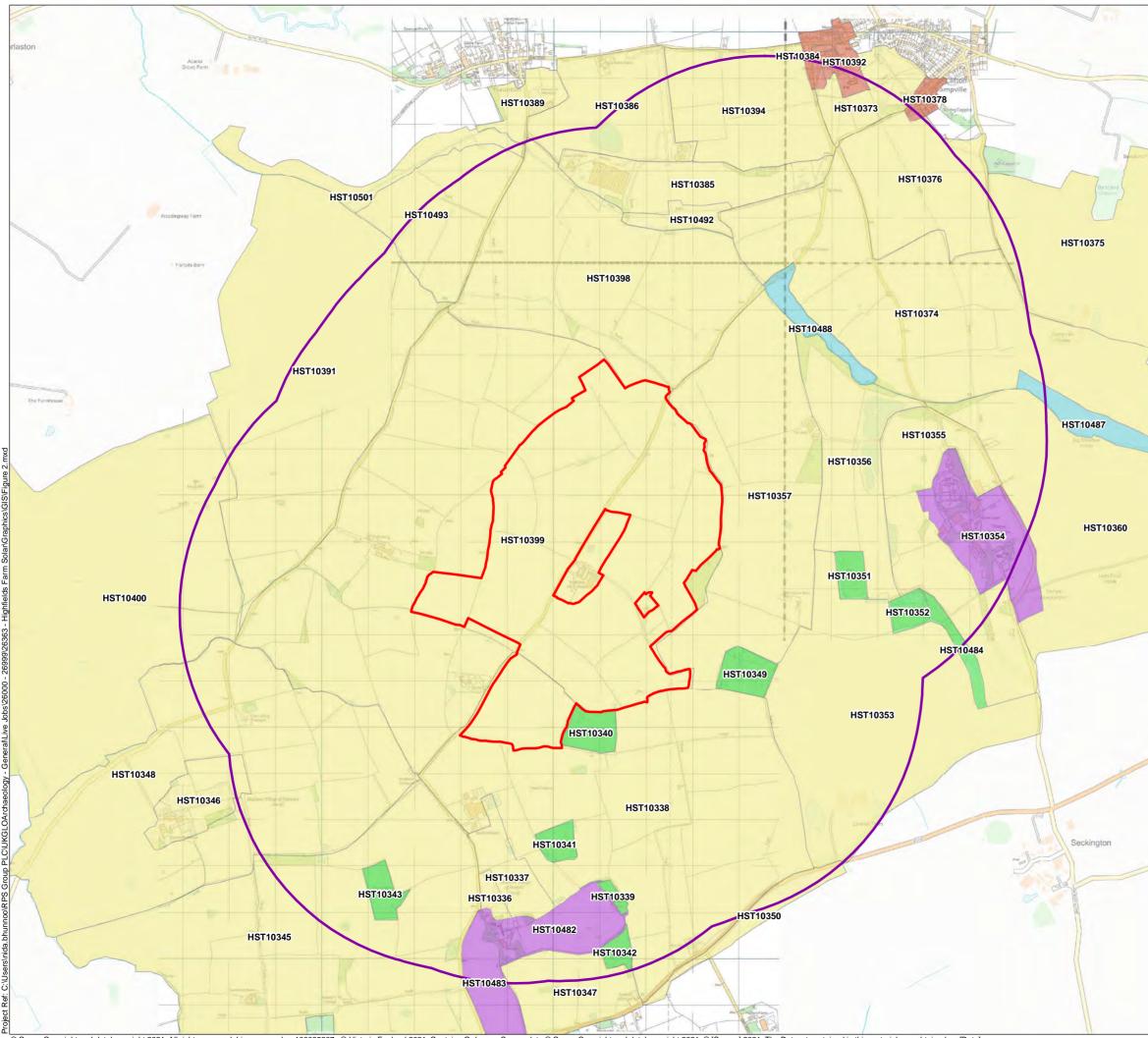


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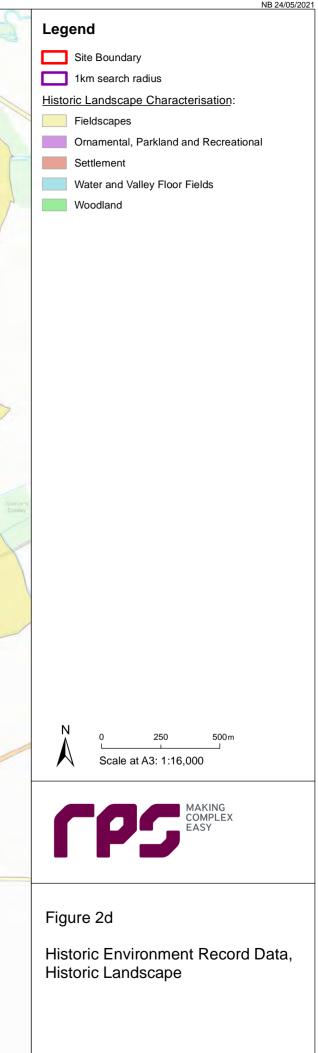


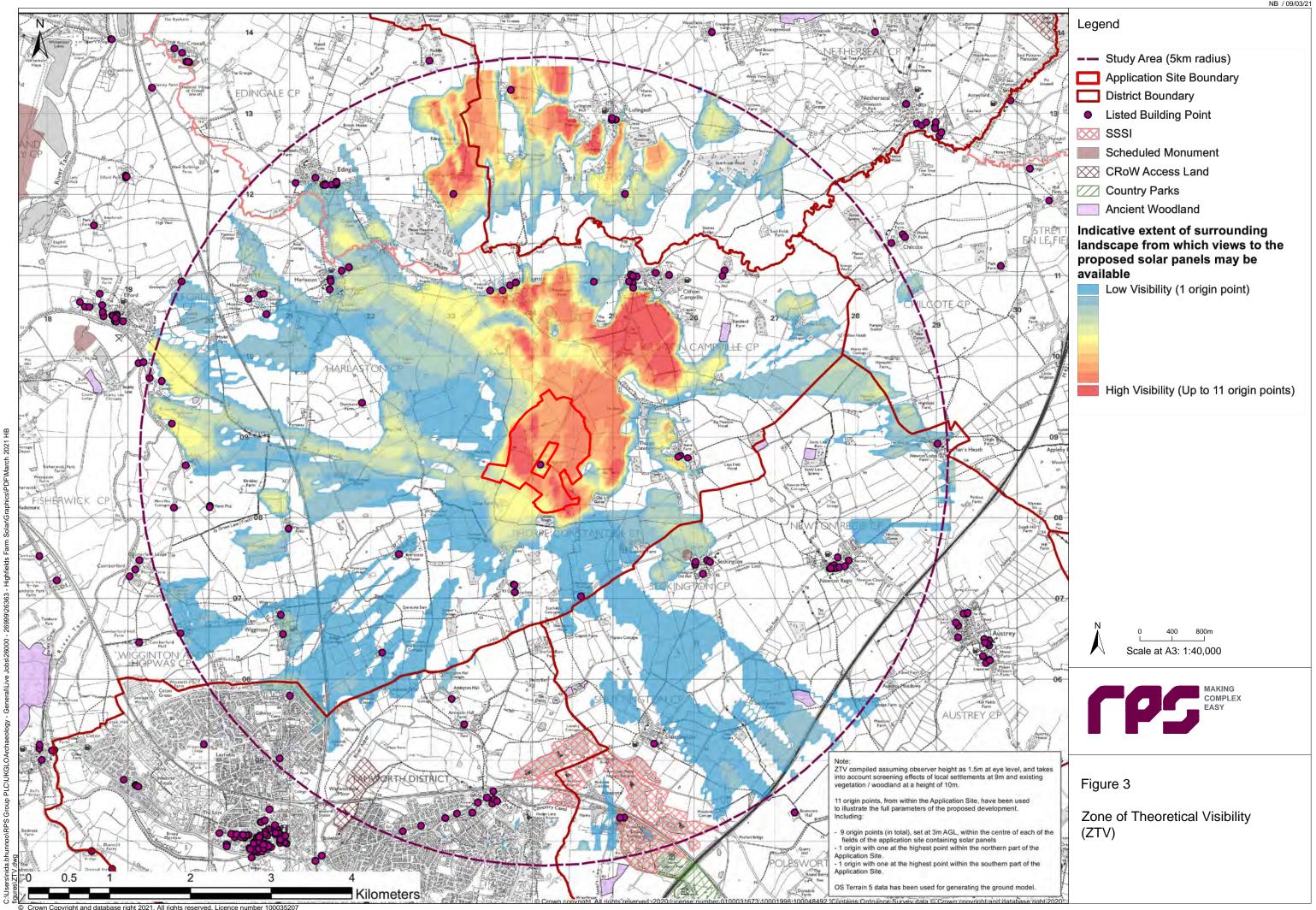
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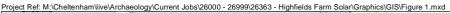
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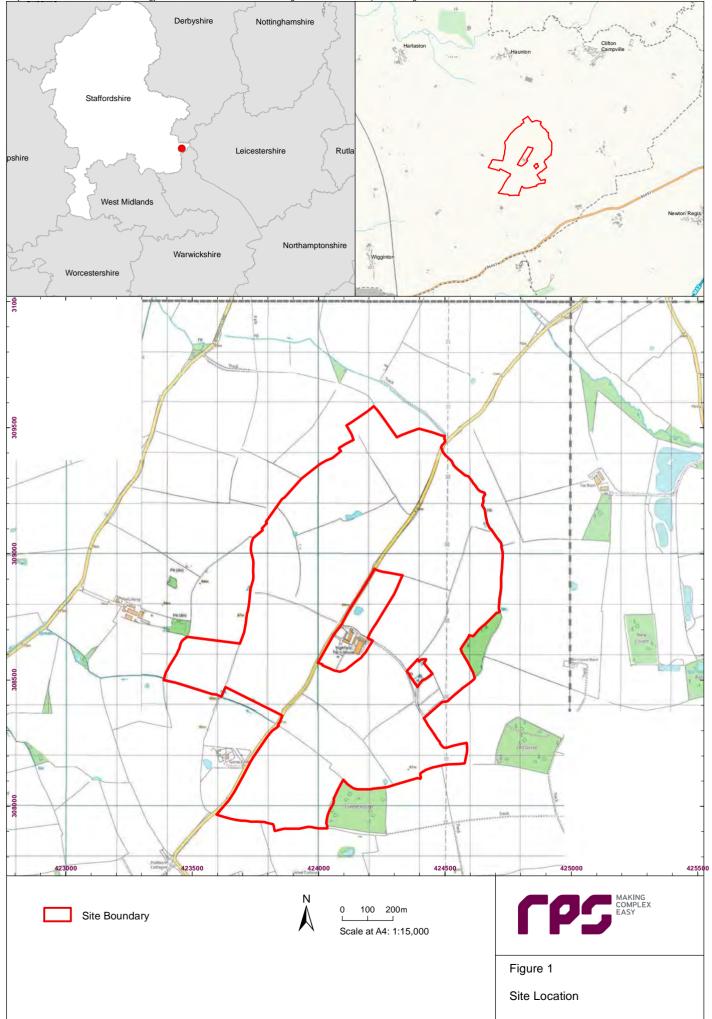


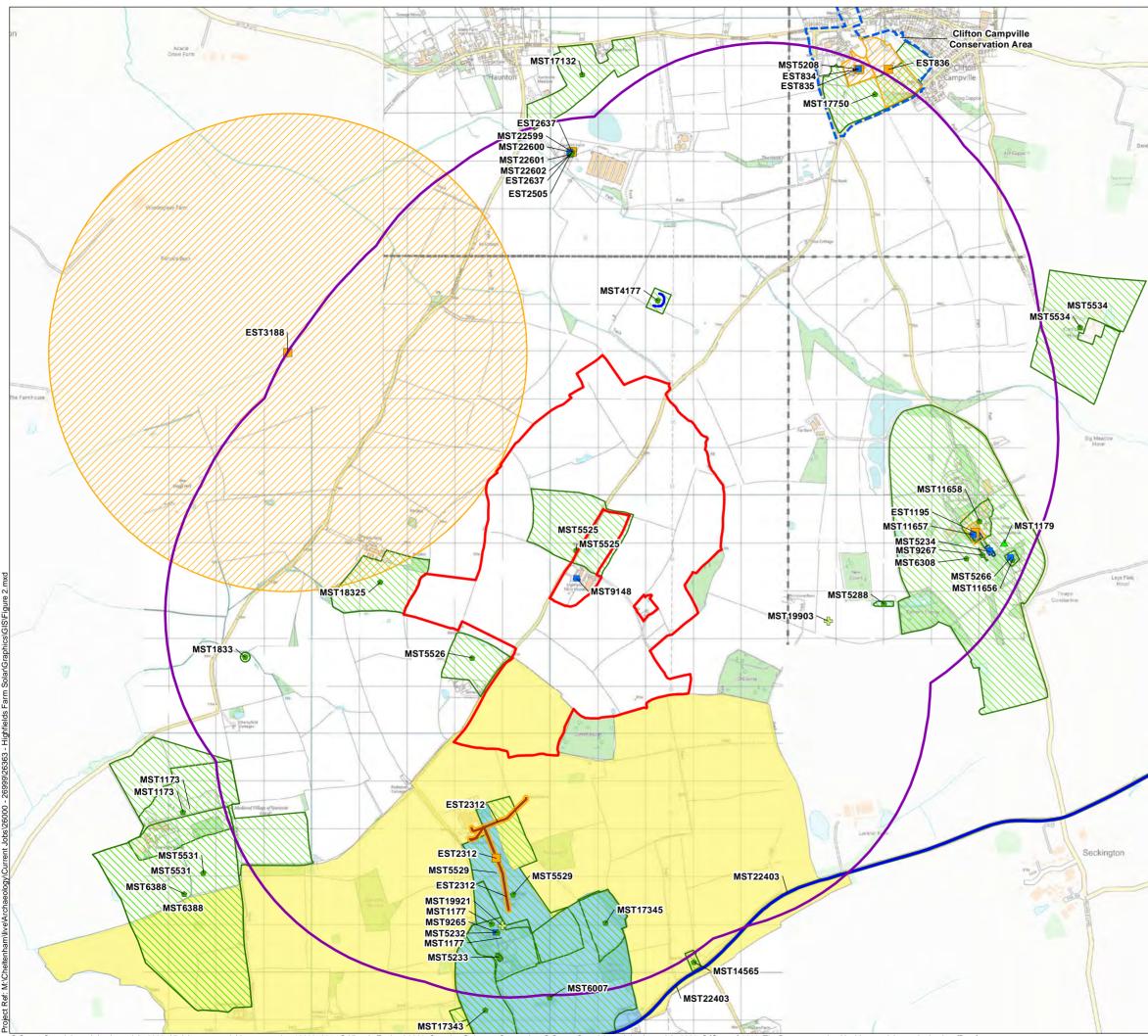
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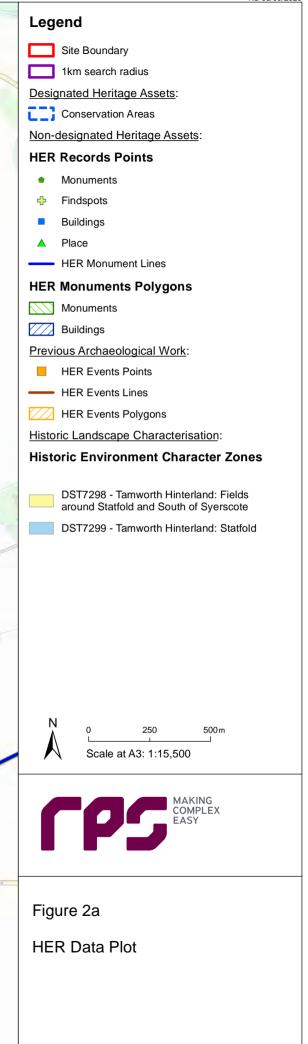


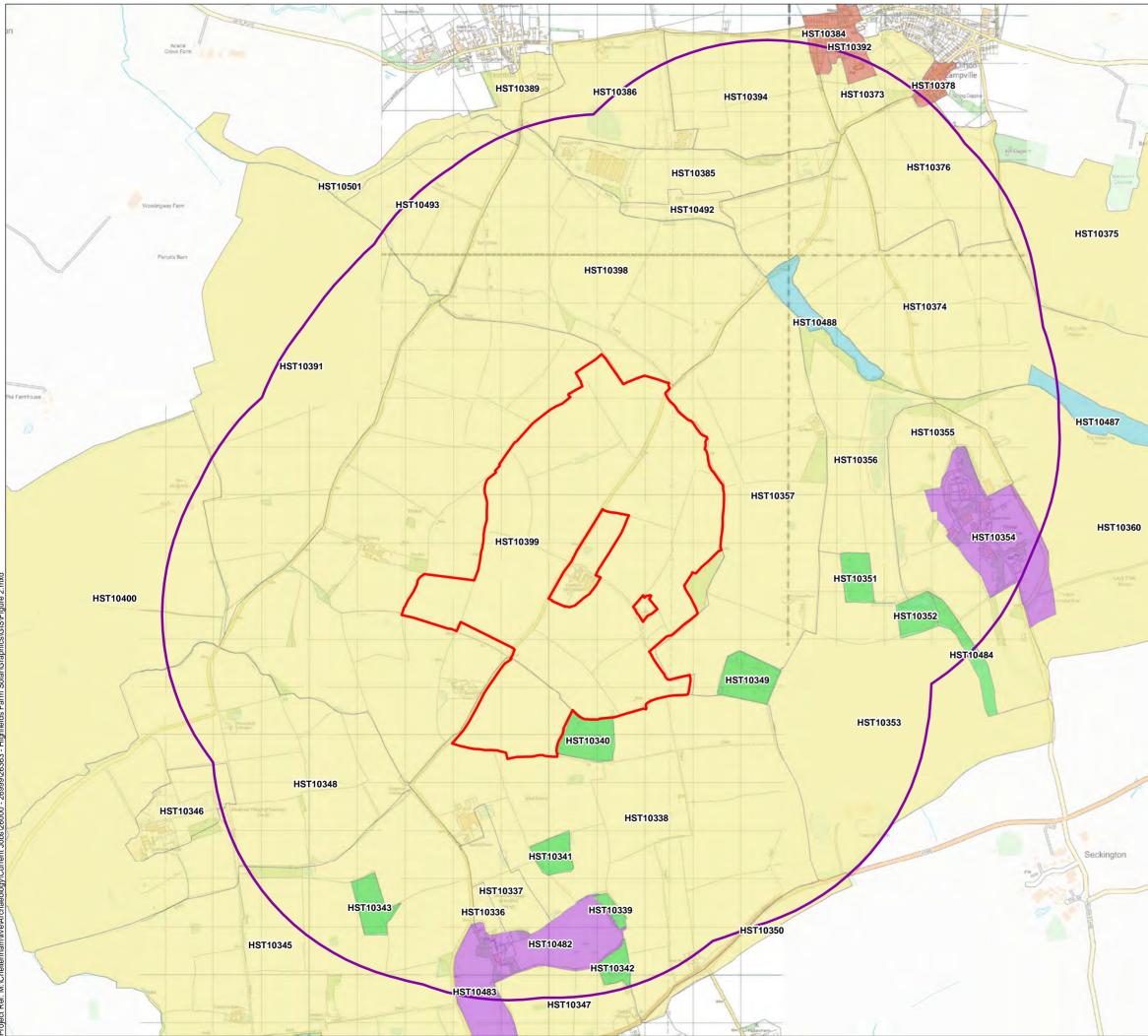




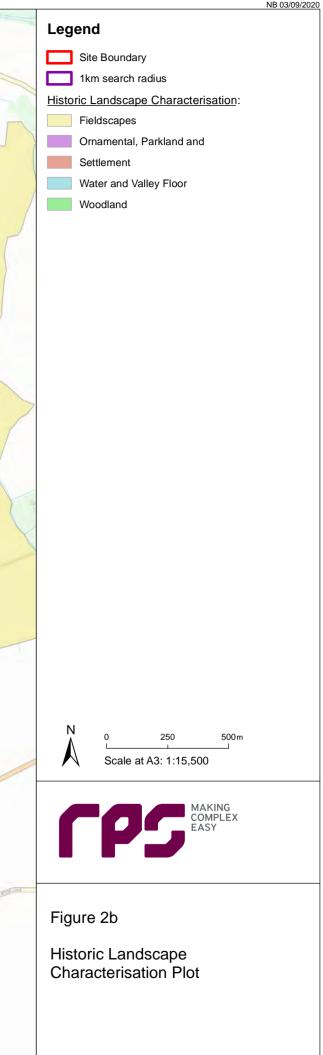


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Legend

Site Boundary



Source: Environment Agency

Data Type: DTM

Resolution: 1m

Date Captured: 10-11th Dec 2013

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

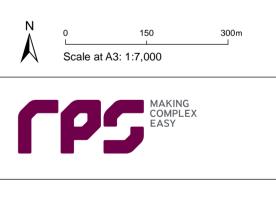
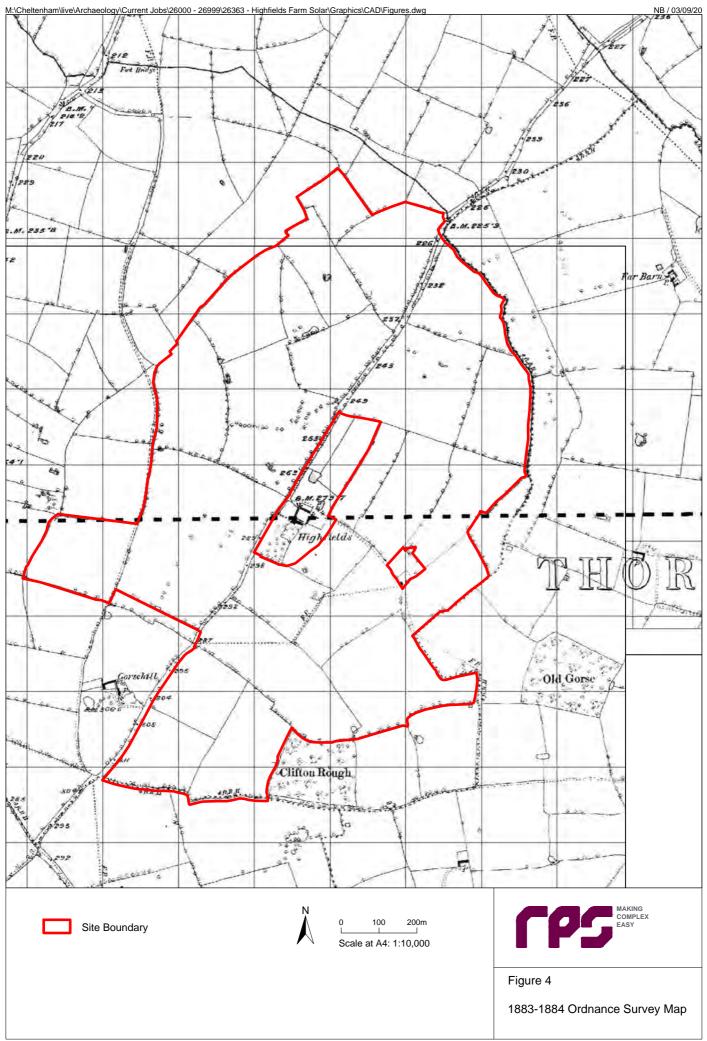
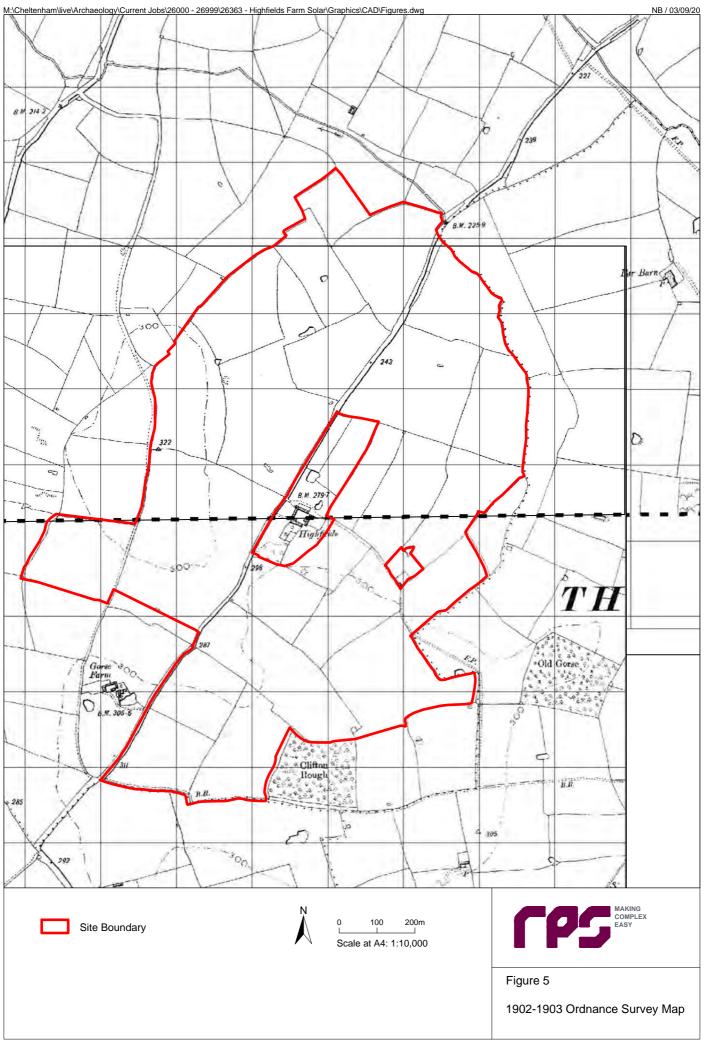


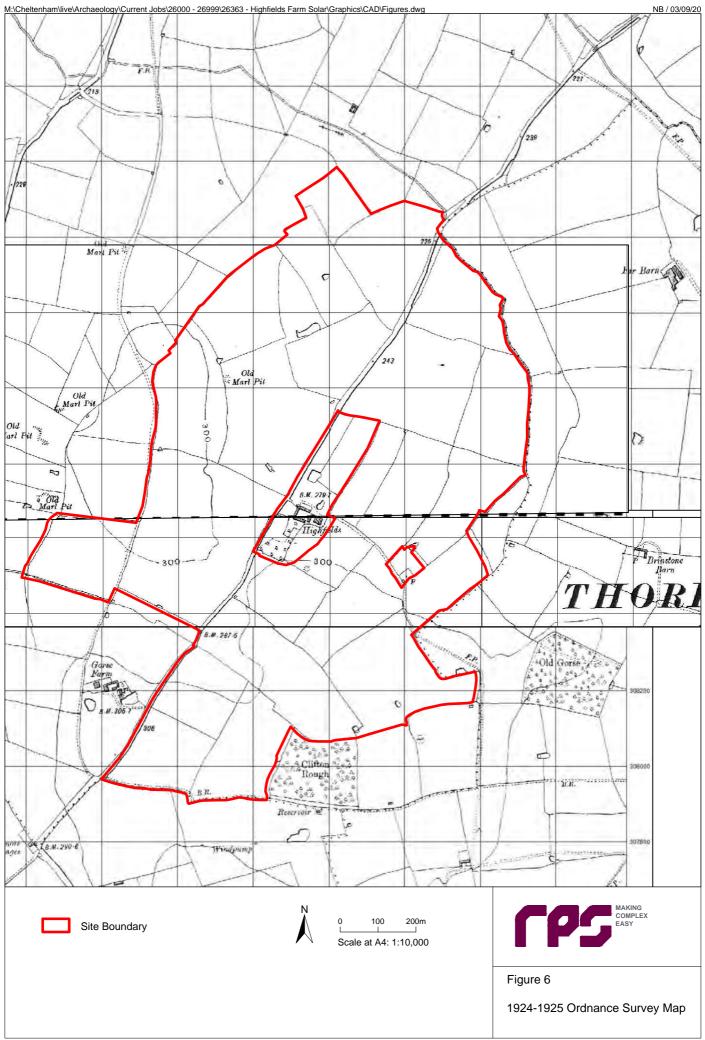
Figure 3

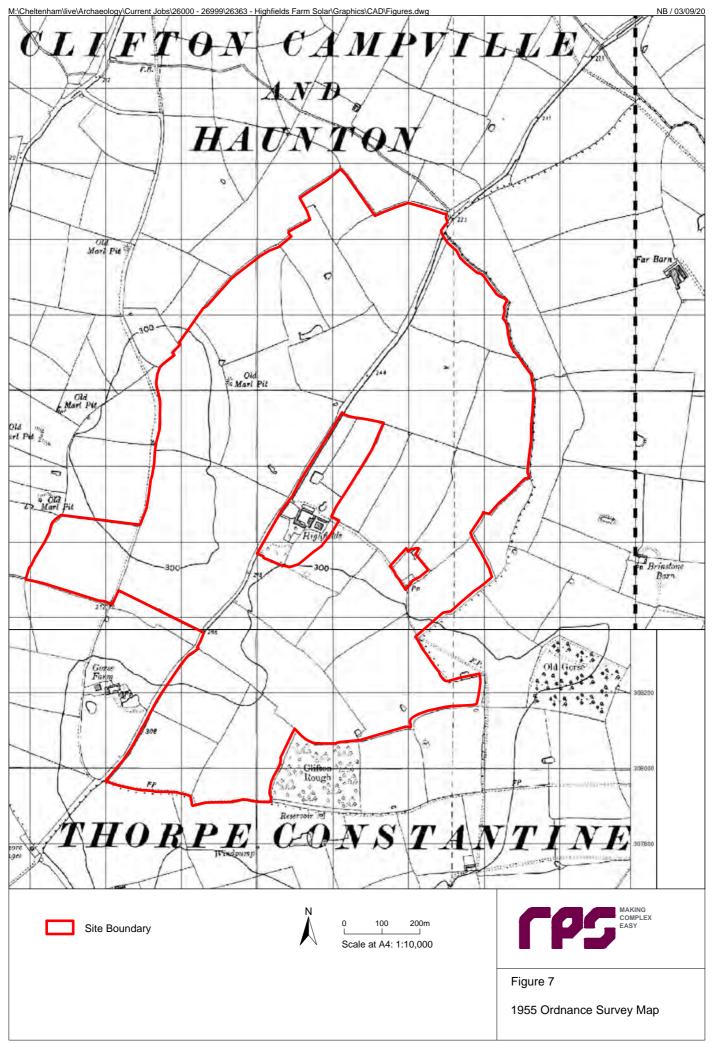
LiDAR Survey

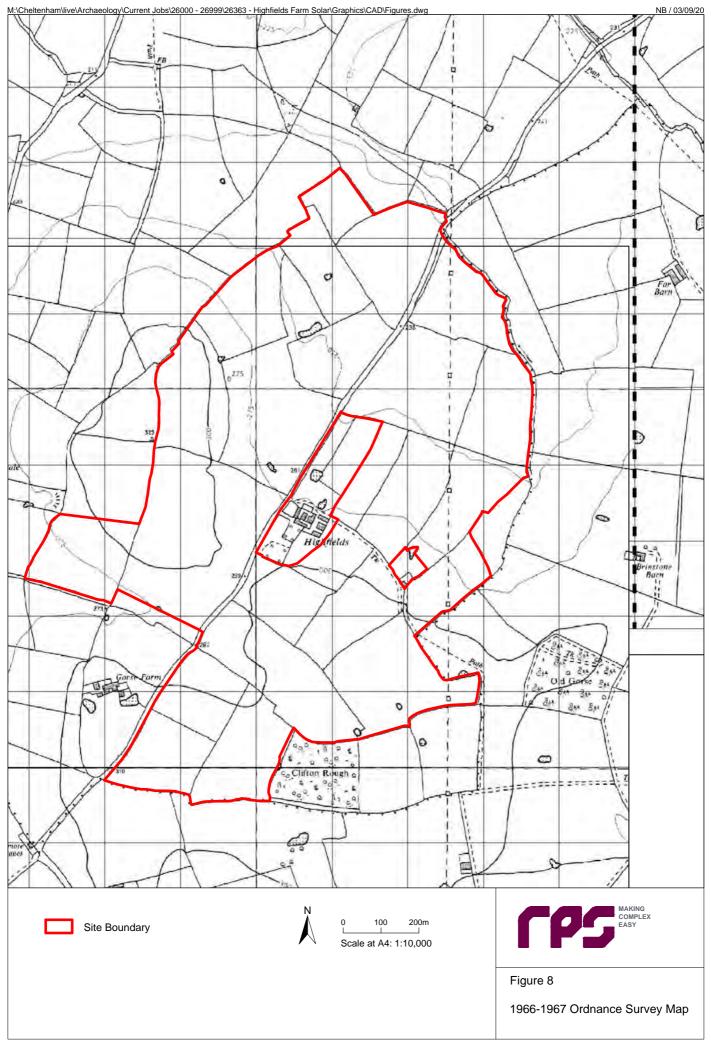


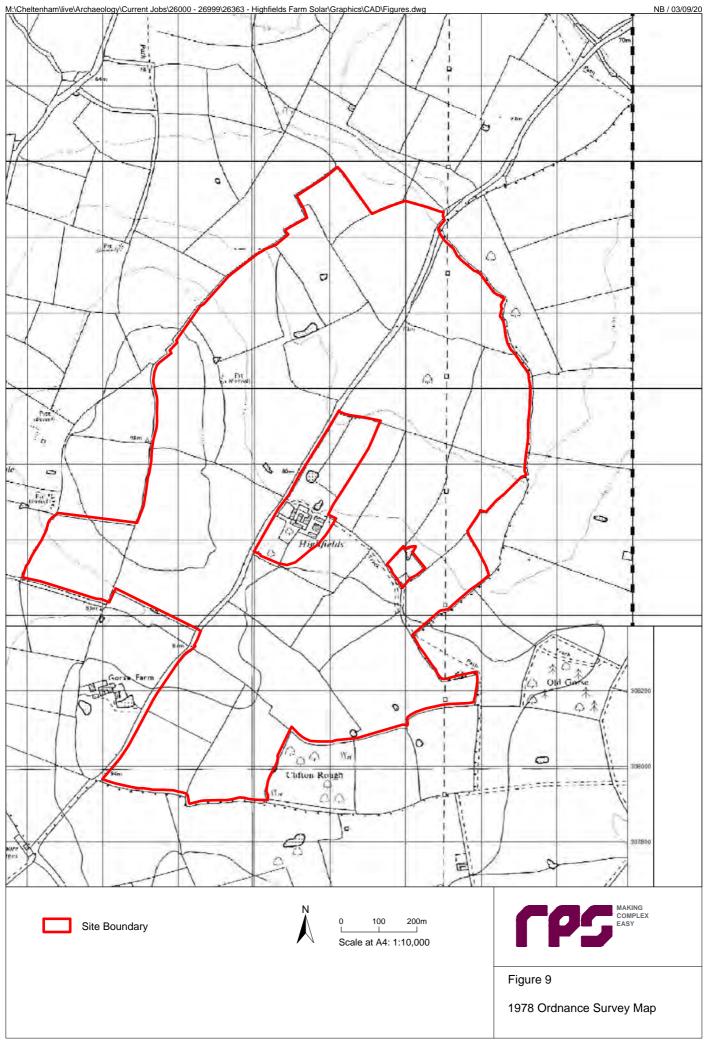


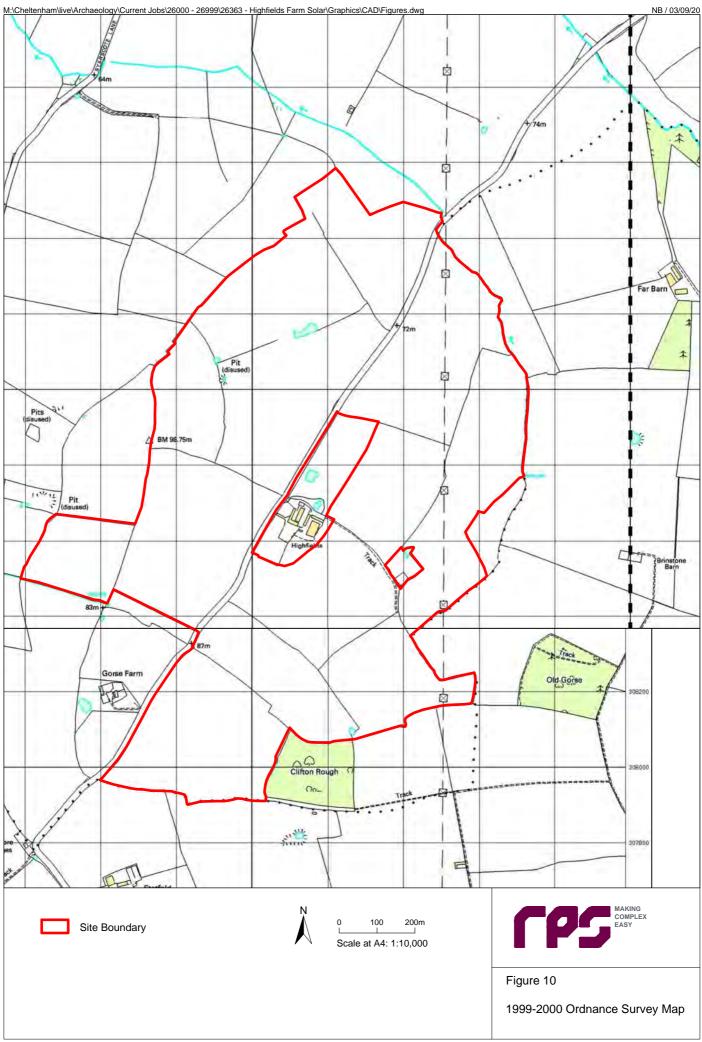
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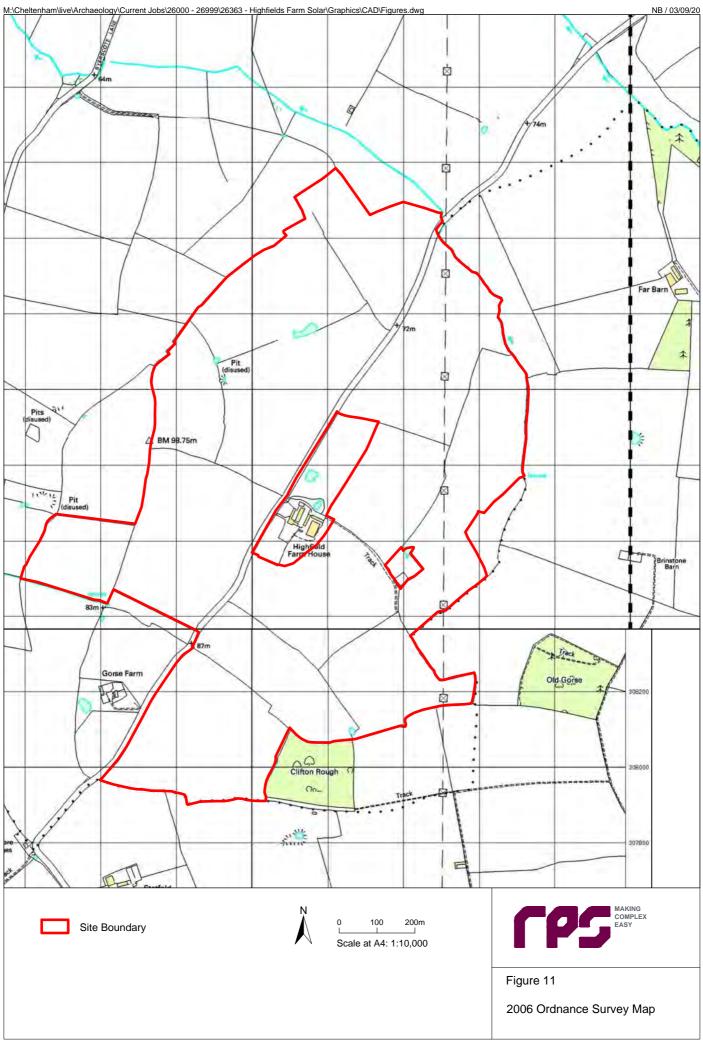


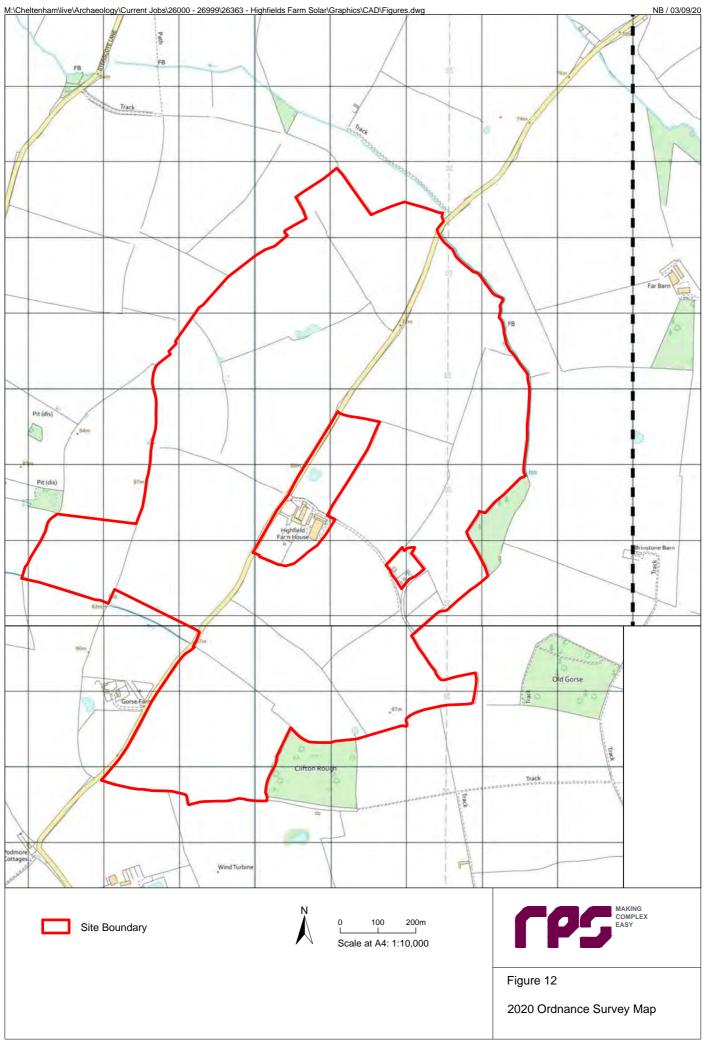


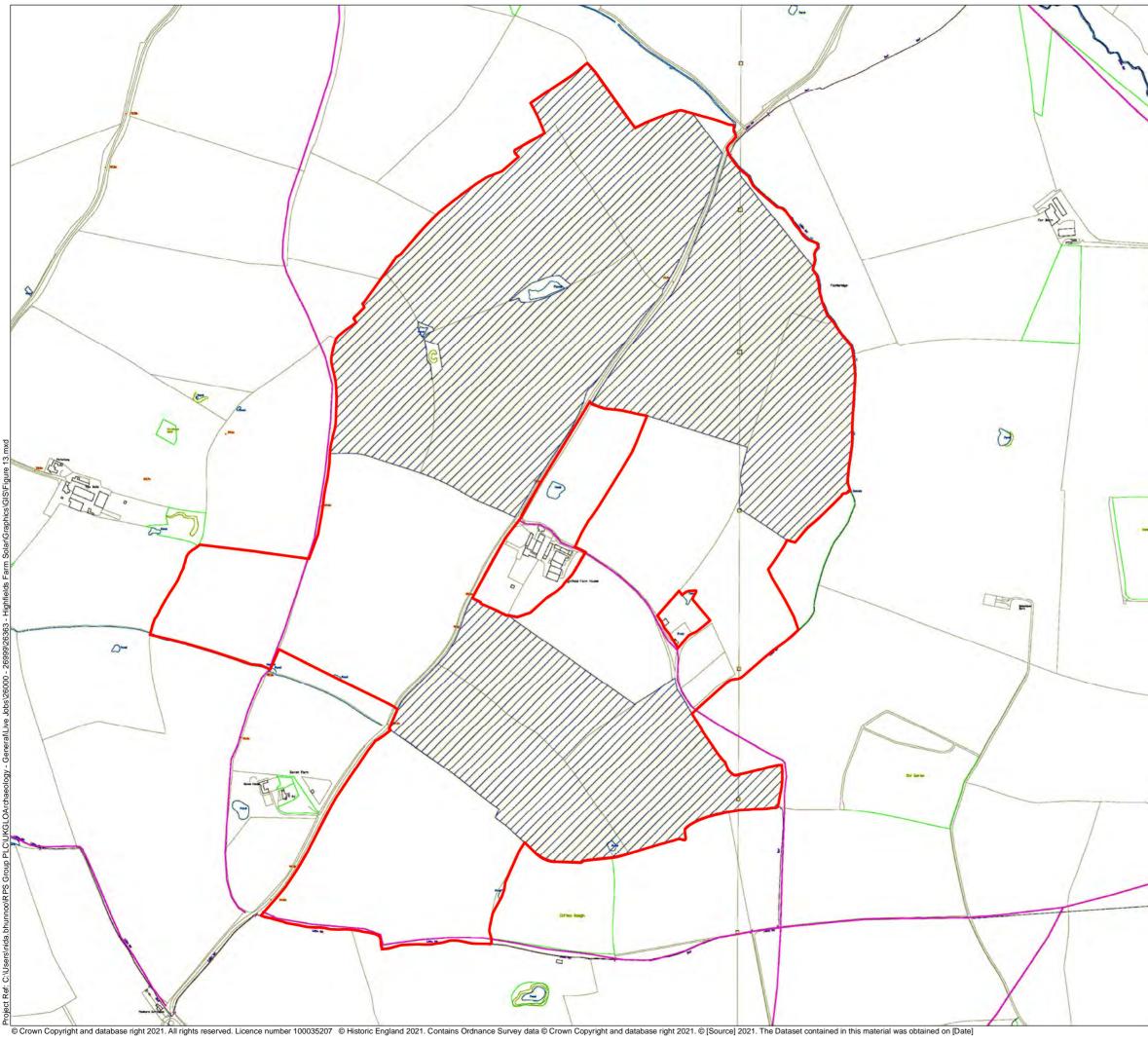






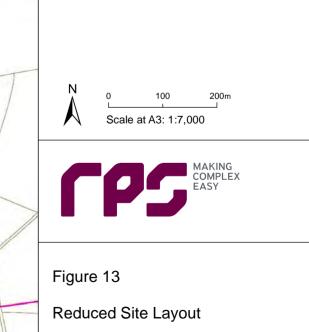








Site Boundary



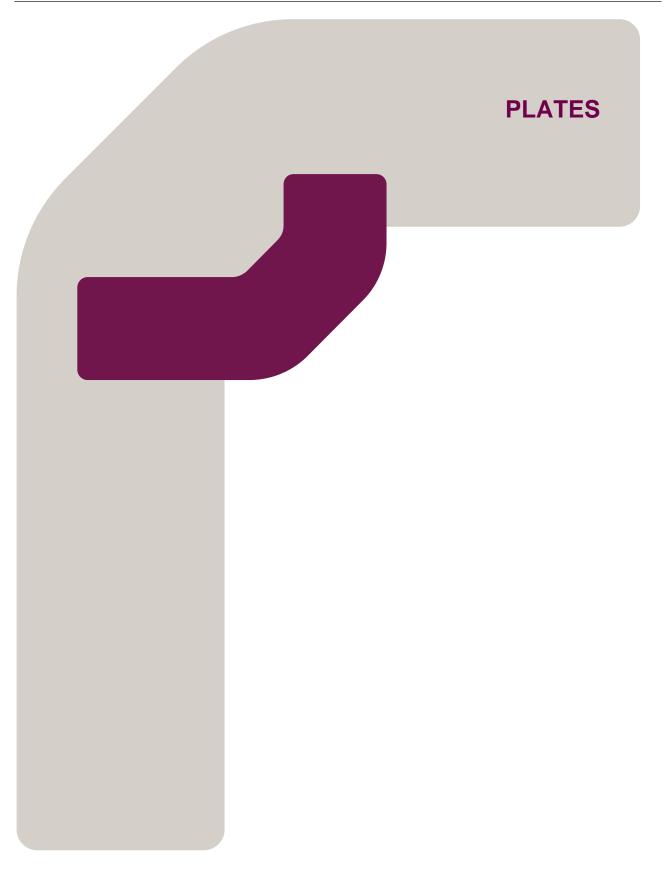




Plate 1 – View southwards across the study site from the northern boundary on Clifton Lane.



Plate 2 – View north across the east side of the study site, from just east of the farmyard.



Plate 3 - View north across the west side of the study site, from west of the farmyard.



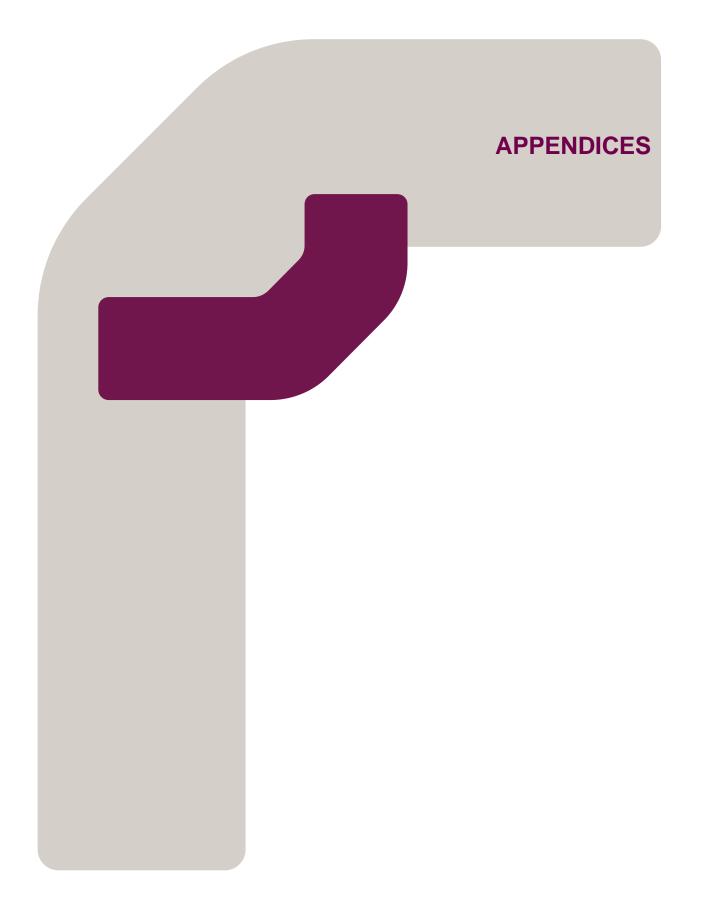
 $\label{eq:Plate 4-Highfields farmhouse from the west$



Plate 5 – Scheduled Monument Motte and Bailey castle at Seckington



Plate 6 – View towards the study site from north of the Scheduled Monument. The study site cannot be seenat ground level.



Appendix A

Gazetteer of Historic Environment Data Entries

HER No.	Name	Location
	Monuments	
MST5534	Ridge and Furrow, Clifton Campville Earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow, identified on aerial photography from 1963	SK 2625 0966
MST1173	Syerscote Deserted Settlement	
MST1177	Statfold Deserted Settlement Documentary evidence indicating that a settlement at Statfold was extant by the mid 14 th century. Earthworks associated with the former settlement appear to survive to the north of the church	SK 2380 0717
MST1179	Thorpe Constantine Deserted Settlement	
MST1833	Burnt Mound, North-East of Syerscote, Thorpe Constantine	SK 22724 08322
MST4177	Enclosure, North of Highfields, Clifton Campville	SK 2445 0981
MST5208	St Andrews's Church, Clifton Campville	SK 2529 1078
MST5232	All Saints Church, Statfold, Thorpe Constantine	SK 2377 0717
MST5233	Statfold Hall, Thorpe Constantine	SK 2378 0706
MST5234	Thorpe Hall, Thorpe Constantine A small, listed country house with a mid 17 th century core, remodelled in the early 19 th century.	SK 2584 0876
MST5266	Church of St. Constantine, Thorpe Constantine A listed church originally built in the 13 th or 14 th century as parish church, but remodelled in the 19 th century as an estate church	SK 2592 0873
MST5525	Ridge and Furrow, Clifton Campville The earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow, identified on aerial photography from 1963	SK 2412 0884
MST5526	Ridge and Furrow, Clifton Campville The earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow, identified on aerial photography from 1963	SK 2369 0829
MST5529	Ridge and Furrow, Statfold Medieval ridge and furrow earthworks identified on aerial photography around the settlement of Statfold. An archaeological watching brief across this area also identified the remains of a probable 19 th century field drainage system.	SK 2388 0739
MST5531	Ridge and Furrow, Syerscote The earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow, identified on aerial photography from 1963	SK 2254 0741
MST5534	Ridge an Furrow, Clifton Campville The earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow, identified on aerial photography from 1963	SK 2625 0966
MST6007	Landscape Park, Statfold Hall, Thorpe Constantine A landscape area around the late 17 th century Stafold Hall,	SK 2398 0696
MST6308	Landscape Park, Thorpe Hall	SK 2575 0872

	A landscaped area around Thorpe Hall, probably established in the	
	early 19 th century, with additions of the 1930s. Almost all the	
	components of the parkland are still extant	
MST6388	Syerscote Manor Park	SK 2241 0726
	A landscape area and garden associated with the late 18th century	51(22110/20
	Syerscote Manor	
MST9148	Highfields Farmhouse, Clifton Campville	SK 2411 0865
	A listed early 19th century farmhouse of red brick with a slate roof	
MST9265	A listed late 18th century ashlar pedestal tomb within the grounds of	SK 2378 0717
	All Saints Church, Statfold	
MST9267	Terrace Retaining Wall and Steps, Thorpe Hall, Thorpe Constantine	SK 2581 0875
	The listed, mid 19th century brick built retaining wall to the terrace	
	at Thorpe Hall. The wall has a stone ballustrade decorated with urns	
MST11656		SK 2593 0873
1020	Churchyard, Church of St. Constantine, Thorpe Constantine	SK 2595 0873
	The churchyard enclosing the possible 14th century church of St.	
	Constantine	
MST11657	Stables, Thorpe Hall	SK 25782 08826
	A range of late 19th century buildings at Thorpe Constantine Hall,	
	formerly used for the accommodation of horses and later cattle.	
	Now converted to offices.	
MST11658	Thorpe Hall Farm, Thorpe Constantine	SK 2578 0888
1015111050	A former model farm complex of mid to late 19th century date, used	51 2570 0000
	for the accommodation and processing of livestock at Thorpe	
	Constantine Hall. The complex is now converted to offices.	
MST14565	Farmstead, Thorpegorse Cottages, Ashby Road, Thorpe Constantine	SK 2459 0705
	An isolated farmstead originally laid out around a regular courtyard.	
	The farmstead may have originated in the 18th century but the	
	house (now converted to three cottages) is all that appears to	
	remain	
MST17132	Ridge and Furrow, South-East of Haunton	SK 2413 1072
1013117132	The earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow, identified on	5112415 1072
	aerial photographs in the area immediately to the southeast of	
	Haunton	
MST17343	Ridge and Furrow, Statfold	SK 2372 0687
	Ridge and furrow earthworks identified on aerial photography	
	around the settlement of Statfold	
MST17345	Ridge and Furrow, Statfold	SK 2422 0719
	Ridge and furrow earthworks identified on aerial photography	
	around the settlement of Statfold.	
		CK 2527 1070
MST17750	Ridge and Furrow, South-West of Clifton Campville.	SK 2537 1070
	Ridge and furrow earthworks identified on aerial photography from	
	2000 and 2006 in the area to the south-west of Clifton Campville.	
MST18325	Ridge and Furrow, Clifton Campville	SK 2328 0863
	The earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow, identified on	
	aerial photography from 1963.	
MST19903	Palstave Findspot, Thorpe Constantine	

	A heavily abraded cast bronze un-looped palstave with central rib below the stop ridge and raised flange facets of Middle Bronze Age date, recovered during metal detecting in Thorpe Constantine parish in November 2010.	
MST19921	Palstave Findspot, Thorpe Constantine A Middle Bronze Age cast copper alloy flanged palstave axehead of Acton-Taunton type, recovered during metal detecting in Thorpe Constantine parish in September 2009.	SK 23 07
MST22403	Tamworth to Harrington Bridge Turnpike Road A turnpike road connecting Tamworth to Ashby de la Zouch, Castle Donnington and Sawley (on the DerbyshireLeicestershire border). The route was probably established in the mid 18th centur	SK 2425 0665
MST22599	Cleat Hill Farm, Syerscote Lane, Haunton A isolated farmstead or small holding, originally laid out around a single-sided, loose courtyard. The farmstead was probably established in the early to mid 19th century and is still extant, though with a number of later 20th century outbuildings to the south. The original farmhouse and outbuilding were intended for demolition in October 2016.	SK 2409 1043
MST22600	Farmhouse, Cleat Hill Farm, Syerscote Lane, Haunton An early to mid 19th century double-fronted farmhouse of brick construction with tiled roof. The farmhouse underwent total internal refurbishment in the early 21st century and in October 2016 was proposed for demolition.	SK 2408 1043
MST22601	Outbuilding, Cleat Hill Farm, Syerscote Lane, Haunton An early to mid 19th century single-storey outbuilding of brick construction with tiled roof, which was probably originally used as a stable and cart store, and later (in the later 20th century) for milking. The outbuilding was proposed for demolition in October 2016.	SK 2408 1042
MST22602	Site of Pigsty, Cleat Hill Farm, Syerscote Lane, Haunton The site of a brick-built pigsty of possible 19th century date, later incorporated into a make-shift, flat-roofed, timber cattle shed. Assessment and recording of the farmstead in the early 20th century suggests that the pigsty was demolished at some time between 2010 and 2016.	SK 2408 1042
EST834	An archaeological watching brief at St Andrew's Church, Clifton Campville, Staffordshire, 1997.	SK 2529 1078
EST835	An archaeological watching brief at St Andrew's Church, Clifton Campville, Staffordshire, 1998.	SK 2529 1078
EST836	An archaeological watching brief on land of Chestnut Lane, Clifton Campville, Staffordshire.	SK 2542 1077
EST1195	Survey of stables and farm buildings at Home Farm, Thopre Constantine	SK 2577 0884
EST2312	An archaeological watching brief at Statfold Farm, Clifton Lane, Tamworth, September 2012.	SK 2378 0750

EST2505	A assessment of the significance of buildings at Cleat Hill Farm,	SK 2409 1043
	Haunton, August 2010.	
EST2637	An archaeological building recording survey at Cleat Hill Farm,	SK 2409 1043
	Syerscote Lane, Haunton, October 2016.	
EST3188	An environmental assessment of a proposed windfarm at Hogs Hill,	SK 2290 0959
	Haunton Manor Farm, Clifton Campville.	
	DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS	
1038807	Highfields Farmhouse Grade II	SK 2411 0865
1038808	Church of St. Andrew Grade I	SK 2529 1078
1188527	Terrace retaining wall and steps approximately 40 yards south west	SK 2581 0873
	of Thorpe Hall Grade II	
1294695	Church of St. Constantine Grade II	SK 2592 0873
1294722	Church of All Saints Grade II*	SK 2377 0717
1374310	Thorpe Hall Grade II	SK 2583 0876

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