

BUILT HERITAGE STATEMENT

The Battleaxes, Bristol Road, Wraxall

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REPORT

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by RPS, on behalf of Studio Hive Properties Ltd, to assess the likely impacts on the Battleaxes, Wraxall (hereafter referred to as “the Site”) from the proposed re-development and refurbishment of the Battleaxes and the residential development in part of its grounds. The Site is located on Bristol Road, Wraxall, BS48 1LQ and is centred on NGR ST 49538 71520 [Fig.1].
- 1.2 The Site is located on the south-western side of the B3130 Bristol Road on the north-eastern side of the Land Yeo valley [Plate 1]. The village of Wraxall is spread out along the Road with the parish church to the northwest. The valley side is mainly of fields set to pasture with the upper slopes densely wooded. Tyntesfield House at the centre of the associated estate is located c.1.1km to the east. The Battleaxes has a strong historic association with the Tyntesfield Estate.
- 1.3 This report meets the requirement under paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the applicant to explain the significance of the potentially affected heritage assets and demonstrate the impact that any proposals would have upon that significance. In this case the only relevant built heritage assets are the Battleaxes itself and the adjacent, to the north, Rock Farm House. This report accords with the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy.
- 1.4 The assessment makes reference, as necessary, to the relevant legislative framework contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance has been consulted to inform the judgements made, notably Historic England’s GPA3 *The Setting of Heritage Assets*. A summary of the relevant National and Local Planning Policy is included.
- 1.5 Relevant information, including from the North Somerset Historic Environment Record, have also been consulted in preparing this Built Heritage Statement. The report is further informed by the findings of historical research; a Site, internal and area walkover survey and assessment; map studies; and the application of professional judgement.
- 1.6 The walkover of the Site, the surrounding area and an internal inspection was conducted on 16th November 2021 and 2nd December 2022. During the Site visits the weather conditions afforded a clear appreciation of the Site and any potentially affected heritage assets.
- 1.7 The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing and all findings and conclusions are time limited to no more than two years from the date of this report. All maps, plans and photographs are for illustrative purposes only.

2 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The current national legislative and planning policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applicants should consider the potential impact of development upon 'heritage assets'. This term includes: designated heritage assets which possess a statutory designation (for example listed buildings and conservation areas); and non-designated heritage assets, typically identified by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a Local List and/or recorded on the Historic Environment Record.

Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.2 Where any development may affect certain designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure proposed works are developed and considered with due regard to their impact on designated heritage assets. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.3 The relevant legislation in this case extends from section 66 of the 1990 Act which states that special regard must be given by the decision maker, in the exercise of planning functions, to the desirability of preserving (keeping from harm) or enhancing listed buildings and their setting. In this case the statutory duty described above is engaged for the decision maker, since the proposed development on Site will have an impact on the significance of the Battleaxes, a Grade II listed building.
- 2.4 For development within a conservation area section 72 of the Act requires the decision maker to pay '*special attention [...] to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'. The statutory duty under s.72 is not engaged in this case since no part of the Site forms land within a conservation area.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Levelling Housing and Communities, July 2021)

- 2.5 The NPPF is the principal document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It defines a heritage asset as a: '*building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest*'. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.6 Section 16: *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* relates to the conservation of heritage assets in the production of local plans and planning development control decision taking. It emphasises that heritage assets are '*an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance*'.
- 2.7 For proposals that have the potential to affect the significance of a heritage asset, paragraph 194 requires applicants to identify and describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected by developments, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets affected. This is supported by paragraph 195, which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.
- 2.8 Under '*Considering potential impacts*' paragraph 199 states that '*great weight*' should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential impact equates to total loss, substantial harm or less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage assets.

- 2.9 Paragraph 201 states that where a development will result in substantial harm to, or total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, permission should be refused, unless this harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits, or a number of criteria are met. Where less than substantial harm is identified paragraph 202 requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.
- 2.10 Paragraph 203 states that where an application will affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, a balanced judgement is required, having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.11 Paragraph 206 notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. It also states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset should be treated favourably.

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (DLHC)

- 2.12 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted 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. It also states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. 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.
- 2.13 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, 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.
- 2.14 Importantly, it is stated that harm may arise from work 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 must 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.
- 2.15 The PPG defines the different heritage interests as follows:
- **archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
 - **architectural and artistic interest:** These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
 - **historic interest:** An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

- 2.16 Historic England have published a series of documents to advise applicants, owners, decision-takers and other stakeholders on managing change within the historic environment. These include Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning (GPAs) documents and Historic England Advice Notes (HEANS).
- 2.17 These documents provide supporting guidance relating to good conservation practice. The documents focus in particular on how the good practice can be achieved through the principles included within national policy and guidance. As such, these documents provide information on good practice to assist LPAs, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants, and other interested parties when implementing policy found within the NPPF and PPG relating to the historic environment.
- 2.18 These GPAs are complemented by the Historic England Advice Notes in Planning which includes HEA1: *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (second edition; February 2018), 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)

- 2.19 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)

- 2.20 This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. 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.
- 2.21 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.

- 2.22 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 also stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects.
- 2.23 The document additionally 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.
- 2.24 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.

HEAN12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (October 2019)

- 2.25 This advice note provides information on how to assess the significance of a heritage asset. It also explores how this should be used as part of a staged approach to decision-making in which assessing significance precedes designing the proposal(s).
- 2.26 Historic England notes that the first stage in identifying the significance of a heritage asset is by understanding its form and history. This includes the historical development, an analysis of its surviving fabric and an analysis of the setting, including the contribution setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.27 To assess the significance of the heritage asset, Historic England advise that the analysis describes various interests. The headline heritage interests are identified in the NPPF and PPG and comprise: archaeological interest; architectural interest; artistic interest; and historic interest.

Local Planning Policy

North Somerset Development Plan 2012-2026

- 2.28 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.
- 2.29 In considering any planning application for development the Local Planning Authority, North Somerset Council's current development plan comprises Core Strategies, Site Allocation Plan and Development Management Policies and which has an end date of 2026. The current North Somerset Development Plan was adopted April 2012 and re-examined in 2015 and 2017.
- 2.30 The North Somerset Core Strategy, adopted 2017, includes:

CS5: Landscape and the historic environment

'Landscape

[...]

Historic environment

The council will conserve the historic environment of North Somerset, having regard to the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings, buildings of local significance, scheduled monuments, other archaeological sites, registered and other historic parks and gardens.

Particular attention will be given to aspects of the historic environment which contribute to the distinctive character of North Somerset, such as the Victorian townscapes and seafronts in Weston and Clevedon’.

- 2.31 North Somerset’s Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 development management policies was adopted July 2016 and includes:

Policy DM4 Listed Buildings

‘Development will be expected to preserve and where appropriate enhance the character, appearance and special interest of the listed building and its setting. Opportunities will be sought to repair or remove harm caused from past unsympathetic alterations and additions.

In some cases contributions may be sought towards enhancement of the setting of the listed building in order to mitigate other unavoidable harm caused.

Where a building is identified to be at risk the council will seek to secure the protection of the building to prevent its continued deterioration, such as through the use of enforcement powers to protect the building.

Applicants should provide the council with sufficient information to enable an assessment to be made of the impact of the proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the Listed Building and its setting. A high standard of design and detailing will be expected where alterations to a Listed Building are proposed’.

Policy DM7 Non-designated Heritage Assets

‘When considering proposals involving non-designated heritage assets the council will take into account their local significance and whether they warrant protection where possible from removal or inappropriate change including harm to their setting’.

- 2.32 North Somerset Council is preparing a new local plan with a fifteen-year period 2023-2038. Once adopted it will replace the current development plan. The Preferred Options Consultation statement – August 2022, includes appendix 1 summary of development policies. These policies are currently under consultation and include Policy DP38 Built heritage.

Wraxall and Failand Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2038

- 2.33 The Wraxall and Failand Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared. The Regulation 18 consultation draft of the Neighbourhood Plan was published 5th December 2022. Under the History section [from 2.16] the Battleaxes is noted and a photograph of the northern frontage included.

- 2.34 Emerging draft neighbourhood plan policies relevant to this case include the following which specifically identifies the Battleaxes as a community facility:

Policy WF1 Community Facilities

‘Development proposals affecting the following Community Facilities (shown within Appendix B and identified within the inset maps) should safeguard and, where practicable enhance, the facility concerned. Proposals for development which would hinder access to an identified Community Facility, or unacceptably detract from its amenity value, will not be supported.

- [...]
- *Battleaxes public house*
- [...]

Proposals which make provision for services and facilities for young people, in particular, recreation, sport, informal leisure and youth provision, will be supported. [...]

Additional Planning Guidance – Heritage and Conservation

- 2.35 The Local Listed Building Consent Order 01 for secondary glazing at the Tyntesfield estate (July 2018) sets out an agreement between the Council and the Tyntesfield estate covering the specification and methodology for the installation of secondary glazing in named listed buildings across the estate.

3 HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT APPRAISAL

Introduction

- 3.1 The Site is located on the south-western side of the B3130 Bristol Road, Wraxall, BS48 1LQ [Plate 1] and is centred on NGR ST 49538 71520 [Fig.1]. The Site is c.0.41 ha. in area. The village of Wraxall is spread out along the Road with the parish church to the northwest. The valley side is mainly of fields set to pasture with the upper slopes densely wooded. Tyntesfield House at the centre of an associated estate is located c.1.1km to the east. The Battleaxes has a strong historic association with the Tyntesfield Estate, having originally been part of the estate.
- 3.2 The building is set along the Bristol Road on the upper part of the Site with the western extension of the former caretaker's house (not included in the red line) turning the corner of The Grove to the west [Plate 2]. The grounds are a series of terraced car parks with linking ramps. To the southeast are two square-plan ancillary buildings and a terracing revetment, the surviving northern wall of the demolished (following fire) long garaging and cart shed range. The far eastern end of the Site remains unterraced and set to rough grass, so sits higher than the adjoining parts of the Site.
- 3.3 Rock Farm House is set upslope to the north side of the Bristol Road c.15m at its nearest from the Site [Fig.2]. Like the Battleaxes it is statutorily designated at Grade II. The listing citation notes that the House is:

'A two storey, double-pile house with single span tiled roof. Walls are random rubble, front, back and spine walls all 22" thick. All front windows (southwest) are sashes in boxes flush in the outer wall face, but the sashes have thin glazing bars and are nineteenth-century refurbishment in eighteenth-century frames. Beyond the north-western gable, where the ground is falling steeply, is an added cellar with room over. Behind the cellar is a further addition forming a lean-to scullery to the kitchen which is in the left-hand (north-western) rear room. Original back door of the kitchen is now a window, and entry is into the lean-to with inserted door in the gable into the kitchen. The other (southeast) room at the back is an unheated dairy. [...]. Near the original back door is a well, stone trough and remains of a hand pump'.

- 3.4 Rock Farm House, though upslope from the Battleaxes, is largely screened from the northern edge of the Site behind a high revetment wall and a dense hedgerow [Plate 3]. Additionally, where the House is not fully screened from the Site, it addresses only the Battleaxes building itself. The House is, therefore, wholly screened by the Battleaxes from the parts of the Site that will be subject to the development of new build. Consequently, the significance of Rock Farm House cannot face any impact from the proposed development of the Site and, as such, is not discussed further in this statement.

Historic Development and Significance of the Battleaxes

Description

- 3.5 The Battleaxes [NHLE:1129051] was designated at Grade II April 1973. The listing citation, where the asset is recorded as the Widdicombe Arms, notes that the asset was a:

'Village temperance inn, estate club house and caretaker's house, now a public house with integral restaurant and accommodation. Designed 1880-1881, dated 1882, by William Butterfield for Anthony Gibbs of Tyntesfield. Coursed rubble with freestone dressings and irregular quoins; mock timber framing to some of the first floor; plain tiled roofs; ashlar and rubble stacks. An irregular and asymmetrical group with the inn at the south-east and the former club hall and former caretaker's house to the north-west.

The inn is of two storeys [as it addresses the grounds – the building is of three storeys] with a central section of two coped gables with finials; the left gable has a chequer-board pattern; single light casement and cross windows on ground floor; two and five-lights on first floor. The right window has a plain architrave and is surmounted by a flat gable with pinnacles; downpipe

with a decorative Gothic style hopper and the letter G (Gibbs); off-centre gabled projecting porch with clasping buttresses, panelled doors in a hollow-chamfered, pointed surround under a hoodmould. To the left of the centre is a two-bay section of irregular heights: at the right is a two-light casement window with shouldered heads, and a timber-framed first floor; at the left is a projecting, single-storey, gabled wing with two-light casement windows.

To the right of the centre is a further irregular two-bay section with a blocked door to the left and a twentieth-century bow-fronted extension to the right; timber-framed first floor with a gabled dormer on corbels. The twentieth-century extension joins the inn to the former club hall, through a porch with a hipped roof. The hall is of a single storey, five bays; timber-framed on a rubble base; single light casement windows; the centre projects as a 1:2:1 light canted stone bay, the windows have ashlar surrounds and shouldered heads, half pyramidal roof with a cast-iron finial. The north-west gable end is stone and has a two-light Geometrical style window.

Set back at the right is a single-storey entrance wing; plank door in an ashlar surround with a cusped head and flanking buttress. Behind this - facing onto the Grove [and not part of the Site] - is the former caretaker's house: two storeys, a flat roof concealed behind a moulded cornice, moulded string course; two bays, two and three-light casement windows with, chamfered mullions and under relieving arches on the ground floor; central plank door in a segmental headed surround and under a triangular drip mould. The rear elevations are also quite irregular and asymmetrical with bows, bays and turrets on three floors. The interior of the inn is altered but the former hall has a timbered roof'.

- 3.6 Internally the public house is formed over three storeys [Plate 4]. The first floor is largely as it was originally laid out [Fig.9], with the addition of later twentieth-century *en suite* bathrooms and possible enclosure of the staircase. The lower ground floor originally had two drawing rooms/salons to the south (the eastern with a bay) addressing the gardens (divided by a back-to-back hearth, with cellaring and servicing to the rear, north [Plate 5]). The barrel drop is to the garden side in a narrow later twentieth-century extension.
- 3.7 The upper ground floor [Fig.9] (ground floor to the road, to the north) exhibits the most change and remodelling with the re-enclosure of the entrance lobby; the addition to the frontage, northern elevation to effect access between the public house and the hall (with change of levels) [Plate 6]; the removal of many internal walls (most notably mirroring the opening up of the lower ground floor previously divided by back-to-back hearths); the extension to the south to form a back-of-house to the bar (above the barrel drop); and the associated service entrance stairs.
- 3.8 The hall retains its full height in the central bay, but of each of the two opposing end bays, the formerly open 'attic' has been enclosed thereby blocking and partially blocking a number of original windows [Plate 7].
- 3.9 In terms of the ancillary buildings in the grounds, the surviving two elements, though not from the original period of construction of the Battleaxes are early additions. They are finished in materials and Gothic architectural detailing that is consistent with the listed building. This is most particularly the case for the northern ancillary building [Plate 8].

History

- 3.10 The Wraxall tithe map of 1837 [Fig.3] shows the Site as broadly two plots. The western plot [608] includes the Gordon Crest Inn, with gardens, set in the north-eastern corner addressing the road. That plot to the east [607] is described on the apportionment as 'yard and buildings'. A single range addresses the road in parallel and a more complex building is at the very eastern end. Both plots are recorded as having the same owner and the same occupant.
- 3.11 The 1884 OS mapping [Fig.4] shows the newly built Battleaxes in place (1882). Its grounds largely fill the area of the Site, which extends a little into the orchard to the southwest and is cut back by later flattening of the road's bend. There is a well in the garden and a multi-structured linear range of buildings to the southeast. A two-cell building or enclosures address the road to the east.

- 3.12 Around the Site is mainly orchards with woodland on the higher slopes to the north. Rocks Farm House can be seen and the nearby quarry too. The Grove is in place abutting the north-western end of the Site, though is unnamed.
- 3.13 The Battleaxes itself, marked as a public house, is clearly two abutting buildings set along the road. The eastern public house element exhibits an asymmetric plan. There is a dog-leg staircase dropping to the lower ground floor around the eastern end. The projecting bay facing southwards to the gardens can be seen and an external, straight stairway from the garden to the upper ground floor against the western return is shown. A box bay can be seen to the west of this facing the gardens. Addressing the road, the only feature is the entrance porch.
- 3.14 The temperance hall to the west has a similarly asymmetric plan but is broader and shorter than the public house element. We can see the hall's central bay window in the north elevation and what is now the kitchen wing to the south. We can also see the entrance lobby at the western end and what is probably a further entrance in the hall's eastern wall set in the corner.
- 3.15 The main elements that we do not see in the public house are the projecting gable wing added to the eastern end of the northern elevation; the remodelling of the south-eastern corner to extend the lower ground floor; the blocking of the southern external staircase; the remodelling of this entrance with an extension (to form a barrel drop and back-of-house to the bars); and the single-storey extension to the front, northern elevation to allow internal access between the public house and the hall. We do not see the extension to the west and southwest forming the former caretaker's house, such that the building does not yet extend to The Grove.
- 3.16 The Battleaxes was completed in 1882 to a design by the noted and prolific Anglican architect William Butterfield for Anthony Gibbs of Tyntesfield. Butterfield was an early and enduring acolyte of A.W.N Pugin and a leading light of the Camden Ecclesiological Society, which advised on how to build and restore churches according to the 'correct' principles. The Society saw Gothic architecture as the only style appropriate for a Christian country. The Society also promoted the use of local materials; asymmetrical layouts and planning; and a concern for good 'honest' craftsmanship [Tyack, 2019]. All of these characteristics that can be seen in the Battleaxes.
- 3.17 The 1903 OS mapping [Fig.5] shows extensions to the buildings: the deep eastern gable wing on the north elevation addressing the road [Fig.12] and the former caretaker's house has been added to the west addressing The Grove. There is stronger division between the two plots, with the gardens more clearly terraced and the southwestern boundary extended beyond the Site's red line to take in part of the orchard.
- 3.18 The eastern plot has had the previous buildings cleared and replaced with a north-western range, set against the plot's divide, and a long, linear range set against the terrace, both in the lower terrace towards the orchard. In the wider area, orchards still predominate. Further residences have been added on the north-western side of The Grove.
- 3.19 The 1931 OS mapping [Fig.6] shows almost no change. There are some additions to the south-western elevation of the caretaker's house. The temperance hall is now labelled as a 'Club'.
- 3.20 The 1977 OS mapping [Fig.7] shows that the public house is now named 'Widdecombe Arms'. This reflects the separation of ownership from the Tyntesfield estate. The front, north elevation has been extended to allow internal access between the public house and the hall (club). There is also an extension on the south elevation to remodel access from the garden and provide a barrel drop with a back-of-house to the bars above. The eastern wing on the north elevation has been significantly cut back in reflection of the remodelling of the road closer to the building.
- 3.21 The ancillary buildings in the eastern plot exhibit some change. The western range is expressed as three elements. The eastern range has been extended to the southeast but is not marked as roofed.
- 3.22 There has been great change in the surrounding area. There is now no sign of any orchards. The Grove, now named, has been extended to the south of the Site and numerous council housing units

developed. These include two tenement blocks, Northampton House to the southeast and the long, linear range of Frythe House set close to the Site boundary of the eastern plot.

Setting

- 3.23 The Battleaxes' immediate setting is formed of the immediately adjacent stretch of the Bristol Road and the asset's grounds [Plate 1], with the ancillary buildings therein [Plate 8]. These buildings continue the division of the grounds into two plots, as seen on the Wraxall tithe map [Fig.3] and help visually to maintain the legibility of this historic division. The grounds are split into a higher and lower terrace, but the only surviving element of the gardens is the central steps with some small trees on the intervening bank [Plate 9]. Otherwise, the grounds have been largely set to car parking with tarmac hard surfacing.
- 3.24 The southern boundary to the western plot is well-marked by an overgrown, unmanaged hedge with some trees. The eastern plot's southern boundary is strongly marked by the three-storey Frythe House immediately beyond the boundary [Plate 10].
- 3.25 The immediate setting of the Battleaxes, namely the two historic plots of its grounds, provides a notable contribution to the asset's significance. The extensive hard surfacing with the minimal garden planting and features has reduced the ground's positive contribution to the asset's significance. There is a notable group value between the Battleaxes and the early surviving ancillary buildings, due to their consistent materials and finishing, and the Gothic architectural detailing, particular so for the northern ancillary building, which exhibits a similar architectural quality to the Battleaxes.
- 3.26 The wider setting of the Battleaxes is largely enclosed by the built form in Wraxall to the south, west and north. Consequently, due to the drop of the land to the south and southeast, the wider setting is mainly open sky. However, it also includes the initial open fields on the slope to the valley's side to the east and northeast. At a greater distance this is visually terminated by the wooded upper slopes.
- 3.27 While there is no visual intervisibility with any landscape feature or building, the Tyntesfield estate forms part of the asset's wider setting. This is due to the strong historical association and former combined ownership between the estate and the asset. The Battleaxes was originally part of the estate and was developed by Tyntesfield's owner. This association endured well into the twentieth century.

Summary of Significance

- 3.28 The Battleaxes is a designated heritage asset of high (national) significance reflected by its statutory designation at Grade II. The asset's significance is principally derived from the architectural, aesthetic and historic special interest of the two buildings' fabric and form, which largely survive in their original form, most particularly externally but also to a degree internally. The asset's special interest remains readily legible from within its immediate setting, most notably the buildings' Gothic architectural detailing, the use of materials and the eclectic and asymmetrical planning of the buildings' multiple elements [Plates 1-3, 4 & 6], but also in many parts internally.
- 3.29 The latter is principally so where there is fenestration, which mainly survives in original forms, and in the hall where the Gothic-styled roof woodwork of the central bay remains legible. However, it is internally where the effects of remodelling and removal of some walls, particularly on the upper ground floor, has caused a degree of masking and some confusion to the internal legibility of the asset's special architectural, aesthetic and historic interest. This is also the case in the hall with the enclosure of the 'attic' which masks four bays of the roof woodwork and the large Gothic-styled window on the western elevation [Plate 11].
- 3.30 A further strong contributor to the asset's significance is its historical association with the very notable nineteenth-century architect William Butterfield. Further contribution is gained by the historical association and origins with the Tyntesfield estate. There is group value with the ancillary buildings in the grounds and the early extension of the former caretaker's house to the west and

southwest which, though flat-roofed, maintains some of the Gothic styling and material use of the original buildings [Plate 2].

- 3.31 The grounds, as the asset's immediate setting, due to its degraded character offers a secondary level of contribution to the asset's significance. The wider setting, which is largely peripheral to the asset also provides only a secondary level of contribution to the asset's significance.

4 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

Proposals

- 4.1 As set out in the Design and Access Statement, the Planning Statement and the associated plan drawings provided in support of the planning application, the proposed development and refurbishment of the Battleaxes and its grounds, and the residential development of the grounds comprises the:

Retention of ancillary bed & breakfast accommodation and part retention of licenced space, change of use of remainder to multi-use business and local community hub (including office and flexible work/collaboration/shop/café space falling within use class E and F(2)), internal re-configuration, internal and external fabric repairs and window refurbishment, refurbishment of boundary walls and out-buildings, hard and soft landscaping, circulation and car and cycle parking, together with rear two-storey extension with rooftop solar PV panels and the provision of residential development at The Battleaxes, Wraxall.

The Battleaxes listed building

- 4.2 In terms of the buildings comprising the Battleaxes the works proposed to the listed building will include internal re-configuration, repairs and window refurbishment. The first floor will include no significant works other than to refurbish and upgrade the existing windows to improve u-values. This will not change the window frames and the current arrangement of the glazing bars but will comprise addition to the glazing with internal secondary glazing.
- 4.3 The upper ground floor will include removal of the central bar accessed through the existing pot-wash area, a later twentieth-century feature. The other two current bars will be retained. Any newly introduced partitioning will be light-touch stud walls and reversible. The current kitchen will be stripped out and the western enclosure to the hall's roof (and the blocking of the western window) will be removed. Fenestration will be treated as described above.
- 4.4 The lower ground floor will also see minimal impacts. There will be reconfiguration of the barrel drop with the addition of an enclosed bin store which will externally visually tidy up this area. Fenestration will be refurbished as described above.
- 4.5 A significant part of the proposal affecting the southern elevation of the building will be the two-storey predominantly glass, flat-roofed office element that will be attached only to the south elevation and will sit in the current recess between the kitchen wing/caretaker's house and the southern projecting element of the public house.

The Battleaxes' grounds

- 4.6 In terms of the historic western plot the proposed scheme will see the removal of the hard standing. The upper terrace will be re-landscaped as a communal garden with associated planting. The lower terrace will include the development of a three-storey residential terrace comprising six houses with vehicular access from The Grove to the south.
- 4.7 In terms of the eastern plot, the ancillary buildings will be consolidated, conserved and put to an optimum viable use. In the position of the former long range, two units of two-storey housing will be developed. These will include an undercroft for parking. A further residential unit will be developed at the far eastern end of the Site. Parking will be rationalised, the current quantum of hard standing reduced and landscaping carried out.

Assessment of Impact

Battleaxes listed building

- 4.8 The repair and refurbishment of the listed building, including the improvement of access, the opening up of some of the historic building (such as the large Gothic window at the west end of the hall and improvement to the central southern elevation extension); the improvement of the public realm; the reinstatement of the garden on the upper terrace; the rationalisation of parking; the significant reduction of hard standing; and the refurbishment of the ancillary historic buildings will deliver a moderate level of enhancement to the significance of the listed building directly and via its immediate setting. These elements of the proposed scheme will also deliver a greater legibility of the listed building's architectural, aesthetic and historic special interests.
- 4.9 The proposed subdivisions to parts of the upper ground floor of the listed building reflects the historic sub-division of the building into, effectively, two adjacent buildings, the hall and the public house. The proposed scheme returns the buildings to a mix of viable uses, again reflecting the historic multi-uses of the buildings. The subdivisions set out in the proposed scheme will deliver a neutral impact to the significance of the listed building. The proposed improvements to the u-value of the listed building's fenestration will deliver a neutral impact to the significance of the listed building.

Office extension

- 4.10 The proposed two-storey office extension to the southern, garden elevation will be a contemporary, predominantly glass addition to the listed building. In terms of height its flat roof will sit below the eaves level of the hall and the first floor of the public house. It is carefully positioned in the current recess between the kitchen wing/caretaker's house and the southern projection of the public house. It will be attached only to the southern elevation and cover a currently slightly confused section of the southern elevation that includes some not wholly sympathetic additions and remodelling to the original buildings. The flat roof will include an array of photovoltaic panels.
- 4.11 While this element will introduce new built form to this part of the listed building, its scale and materials are largely appropriate to the context and is placed in the most appropriate position for such an addition. It will be wholly legible as a sympathetic contemporary addition to the historic building and its time depth clearly apparent.
- 4.12 As such, the office element's development will cause a less than substantial level of harm to the significance of the listed building. The office alone will deliver a specifically low level of harm within the spectrum of less than substantial harm. Its development will not cause a meaningful restriction of the legibility of the asset's historic, aesthetic and architectural special interest.

Residential development in the grounds

- 4.13 The introduction of new built form to parts of the grounds, the immediate setting, of the Battleaxes listed building will cause some indirect harm to the significance of the asset by introducing some new built form into the asset's immediate setting.
- 4.14 The three units to be developed in the eastern plot are in the position of previous ancillary buildings. Only the terrace of six units represents a wholly new development of built form, being in an area that historically formed the lower part of the garden and latterly (over the last 50 years or so) an area of hard standing for car parking. None of the proposed residential elements are closer to the Battleaxes listed building than existing and historic ancillary buildings.
- 4.15 The proposed residential terrace does not meaningfully screen any current views of the listed building from the south and southwest. Any potential views are already screened by the boundary vegetation and the existing housing along The Grove. The proposed residential terrace also does not screen any notable views from the listed building towards the south and southwest. As such, the development of this proposed residential terrace would not change the current legibility of the listed building's historic, aesthetic and architectural special interest.

- 4.16 The proposed residential terrace will, however, introduce built form to a part of the asset's immediate setting where there is currently no built form. It will bring built form closer to the listed building from the south and southwest. This impact will result in a less than substantial level of harm to the significance of the listed building. This will specifically be a low/moderate level of harm within the spectrum of less than substantial harm.
- 4.17 The three units to be developed in the eastern plot will reintroduce built form in the eastern part of the Site in an area of previous built form. It is likely that the two-unit element is higher in height than the previous range in the historic footprint. They are, however, lower than the built form abutting the Site to the immediate south and will partly screen the tenement block from the Site. The eastern residential development's impact will result in a less than substantial level of harm to the significance of the listed building. This will specifically be a low level of harm within the spectrum of less than substantial harm.

Reinstatement of gardens in the grounds

- 4.18 Currently the grounds to the Battleaxes is almost entirely put to hardstanding for carparking. In addition to the areas where buildings are proposed in previous footprints and, in terms of the terrace, a new area of building, the hardstanding will be removed. Around the terrace and the eastern house, the immediate grounds will include landscaping associated with gardens. However, the main enhancement to the asset's immediate setting is the reinstatement of a planted garden on the upper terrace immediately to the south of the Battleaxes.
- 4.19 Collectively the re-greening and landscaping of the grounds, with the removal of much of the current hardstanding, most particularly with the proposed communal garden on the upper terrace, will deliver minor/moderate enhancement to the significance of the listed building.

Summary of Impact

- 4.20 The proposed development will cause both enhancements and harms to the significance of the listed building. Some of these impacts (both enhancements and harm) will be direct to the fabric of the asset and others will be impacts delivered via development in the asset's immediate setting. As an aggregate, the proposed development scheme will deliver a less than substantial harm to the significance (the historic, aesthetic and architectural special interest) of the Grade II listed Battleaxes. This is specifically concluded to be, as an aggregate, negligible within the spectrum of less than substantial harm, therefore at the lowest end of that spectrum.

5 CONCLUSION

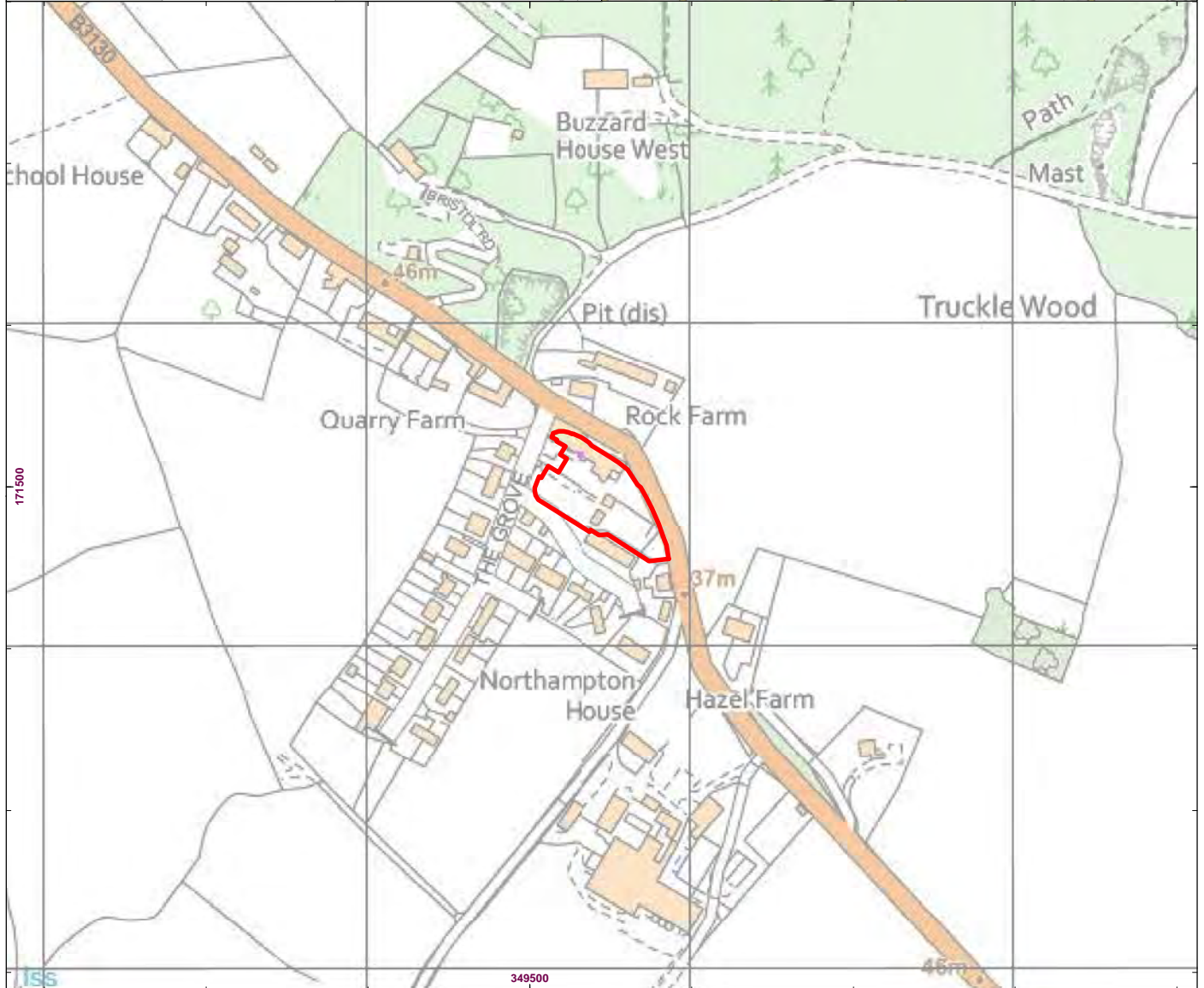
- 5.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by RPS, on behalf of Studio Hive Ltd, to assess the likely impacts on the Grade II listed Battleaxes, Wraxall from the proposed re-development and refurbishment of the Battleaxes itself and the residential development in part of its grounds. The Site is located on Bristol Road, Wraxall, BS48 1LQ and is centred on NGR ST 49538 71520.
- 5.2 This report meets the requirement under paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) for the applicant to explain the significance of the particular heritage asset, in this case only the Battleaxes itself, likely to be affected by development and demonstrate the impact that any proposals would have upon the asset's significance. This report accords with the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy and provides sufficient information and assessment to identify the potential impacts arising from the development of the Site on the historic built environment.
- 5.3 The assessment makes reference to the relevant legislative framework contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance has been consulted to inform the judgements made, notably Historic England's GPA3 *The Setting of Heritage Assets*.
- 5.4 Relevant information, including from the North Somerset Historic Environment Record, have also been consulted in preparing this Built Heritage Statement. The report is further informed by the findings of historical research, a Site, internal and area walkover survey and assessment, map studies and the application of professional judgement.
- 5.5 This Built Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed development of the Site will result in both enhancements and harms to the significance of the Grade II listed Battleaxes. Some of these impacts (both enhancements and harm) will be direct to the fabric of the asset and others will be impacts delivered via development in the asset's immediate setting. As an aggregate, the proposed development scheme will deliver a less than substantial harm to the significance (the historic, aesthetic and architectural special interest) of the Battleaxes. This is specifically concluded to be an aggregate negligible level of harm to the asset's significance within the spectrum of less than substantial harm, therefore at the lowest end of that spectrum.
- 5.6 As such, in relation to the negligible impact on the Battleaxes' significance, paragraph 202 of the NPPF is engaged in this case for the decision maker. It states that '*where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal*'. Paragraph 202, unlike paragraph 201, does not direct a decision maker to refuse an application where it is engaged, as is the case here.
- 5.7 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the statutory test, is also engaged for the decision maker in this case. This states that the decision maker '*shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*'.
- 5.8 The level of harm identified to this designated heritage asset is clearly and convincingly justified, as required by paragraph 200 of the NPPF, in the application's Planning Statement. This document also carries out the wider planning balance, where the scheme's public benefits are set out; this shows that the identified harm to the significance of the Battleaxes is outweighed by the scheme's public benefits.
- 5.9 The applications are also supported by a Viability Assessment. The Assessment sets out that, following extensive market testing and financial review, that the operation of the Battleaxes under one use is not sustainable and viable. To bridge this gap, the proposed scheme looks to return the asset to a multi-use. Historically the asset was originally in multiple use and subdivided into two

main elements. The Assessment details the how the proposed scheme will deliver an optimum viable use for the heritage asset.

- 5.10 It is concluded, in relation to built heritage considerations, there can be no material objection to the development proposals set out in the submitted planning application. Additionally, the proposal delivers an optimum viable use for the heritage asset that will secure the Battleaxes heritage significance for future generations.



FIGURES



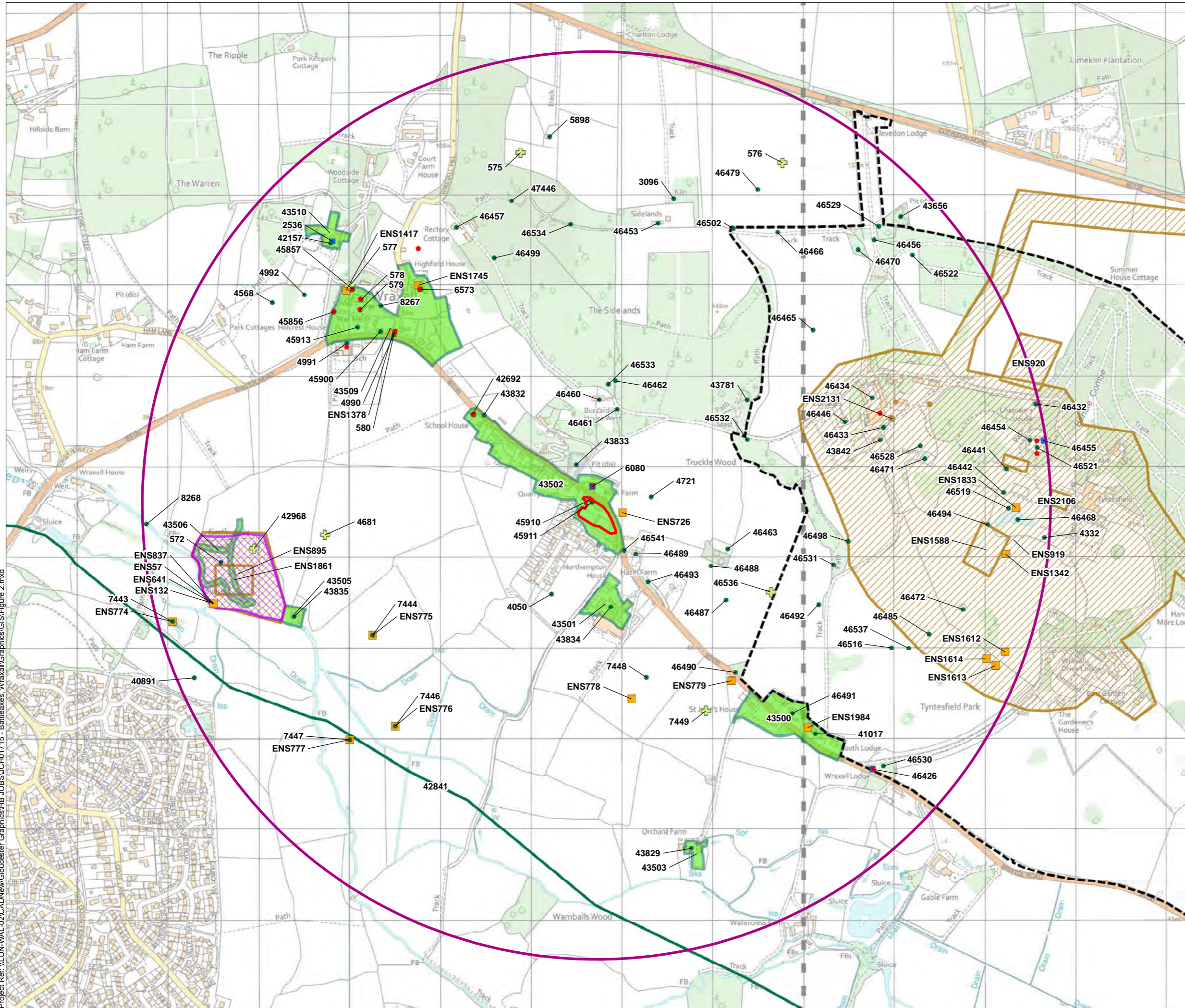
Site Boundary



0 50 100m
Scale at A4: 1:4,000



Figure 1
Site Location



Legend

- Site Boundary
- 1km Site Radius
- Designated Heritage Assets:
 - Listed Buildings
- Registered Parks and Gardens
 - DNS1607 Tyntesfield
- Scheduled Monument
 - DNS282 Deserted medieval settlement
300m ESE of Wraxall House
- Non-designated Heritage Assets:
 - HER record (linear)
- HER Record (point)
 - HER Building
 - + Findspot
 - Monument
- HER Record (polygon)
 - Monument
- Previous Archaeological Work:
 - Event Record (point)
 - Event Record (polygon)

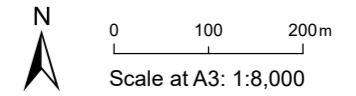



Figure 2
HER Plot
(data from North Somerset HER)



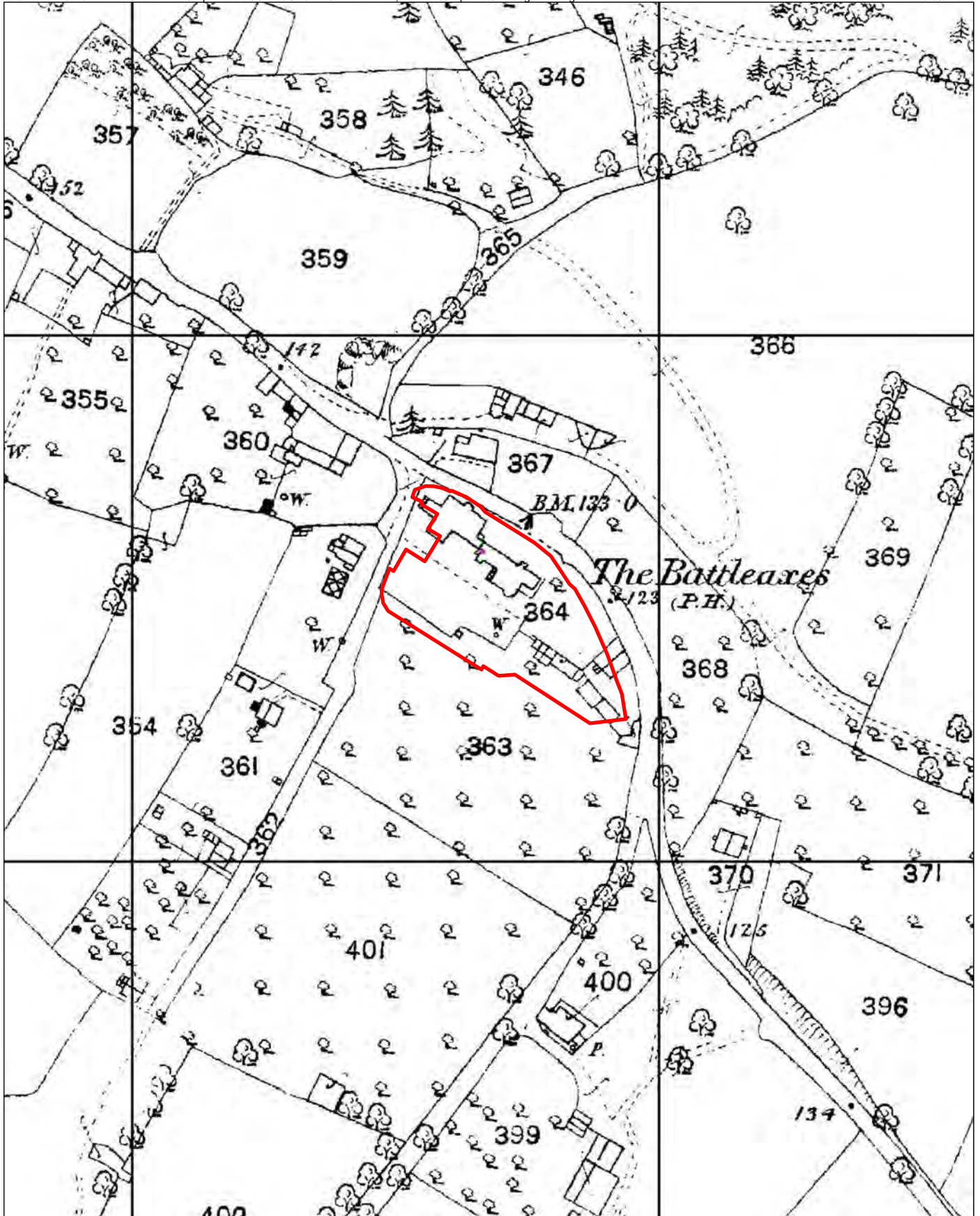
 Site Boundary (approximate)



Not to Scale:
Illustrative Only



Figure 3
1837 Wraxall Tithe Map



 Site Boundary

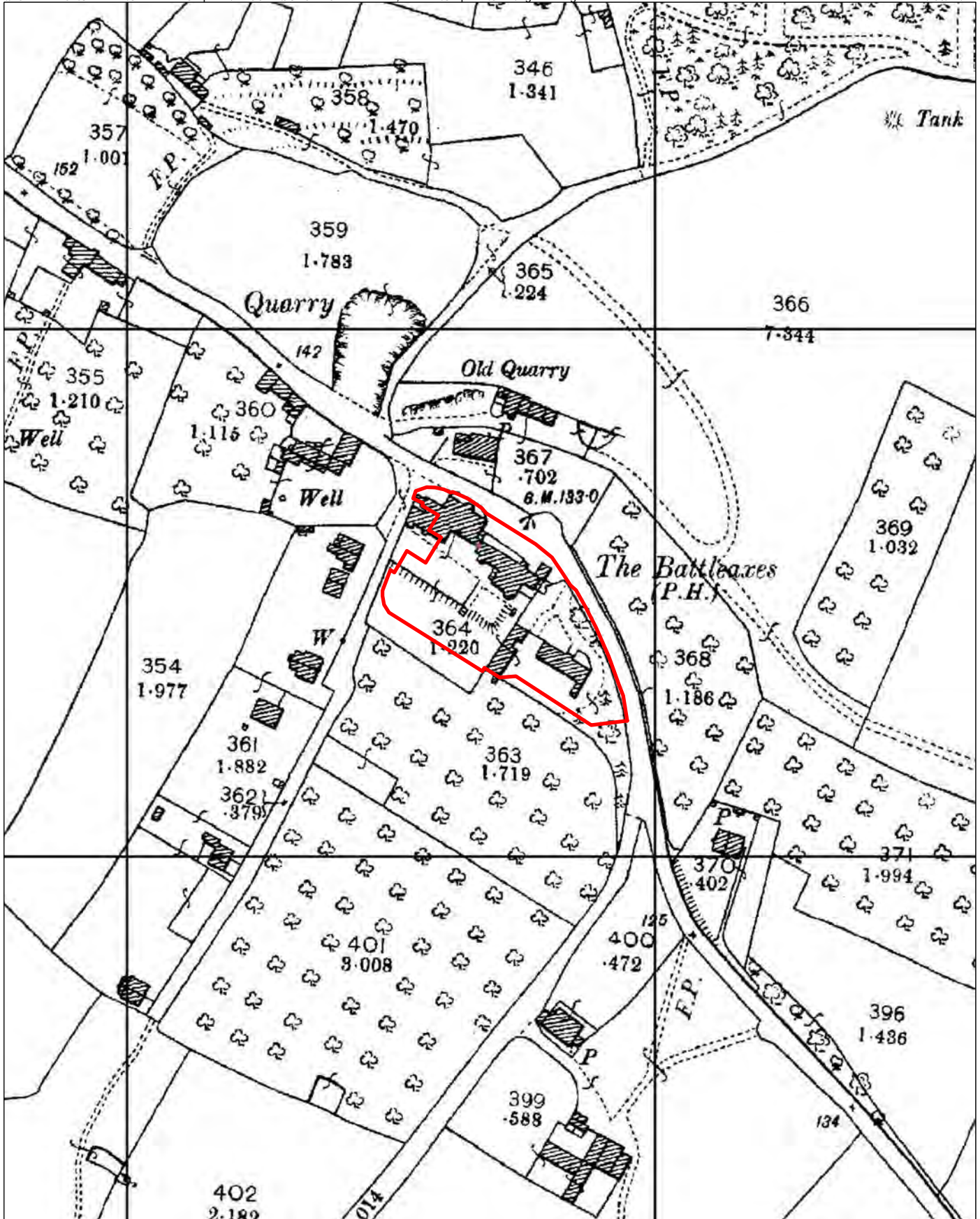


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Scale at A4: 1:2,000



Figure 4

1884 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary



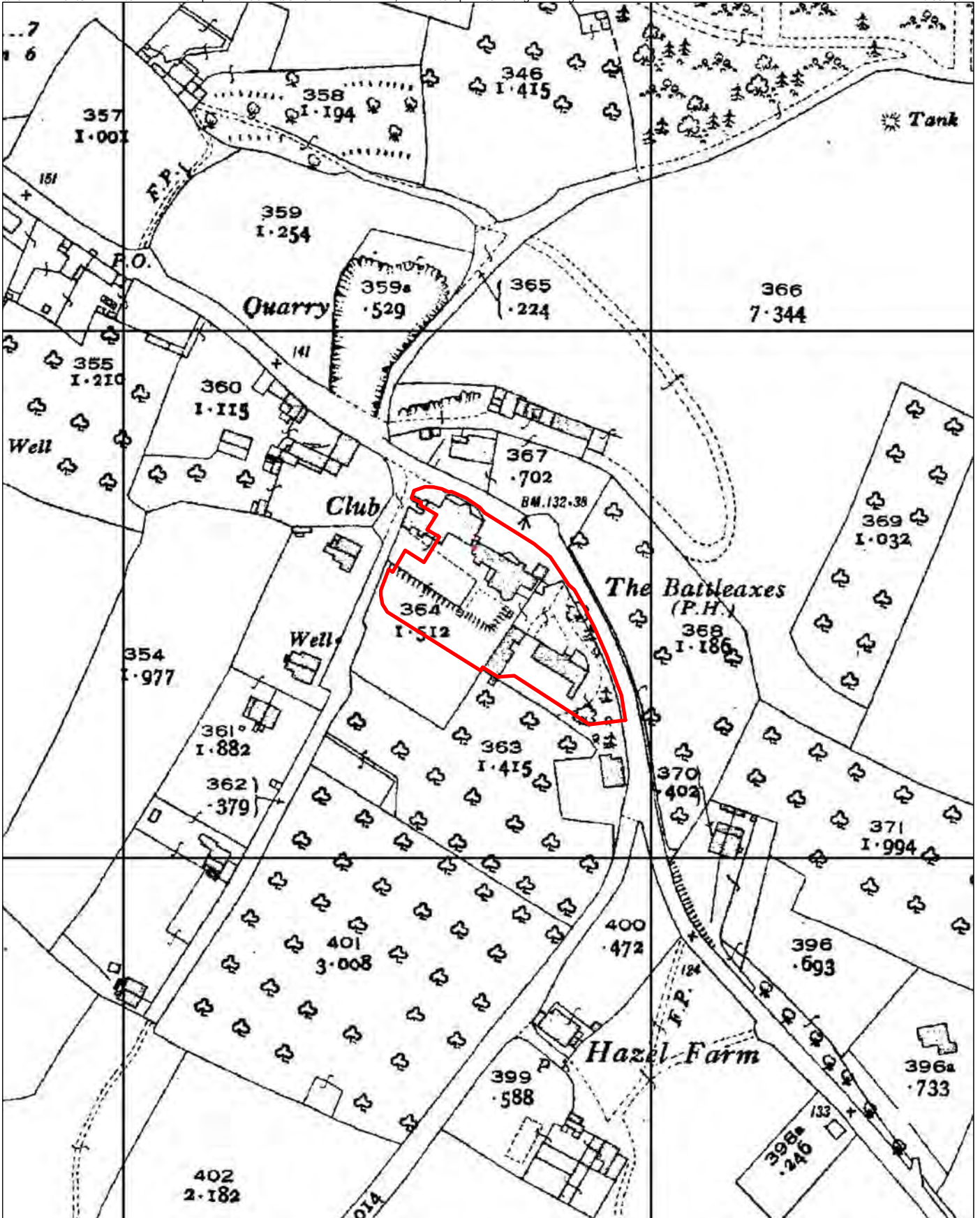
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Scale at A4: 1:2,000



Figure 5

1903 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary



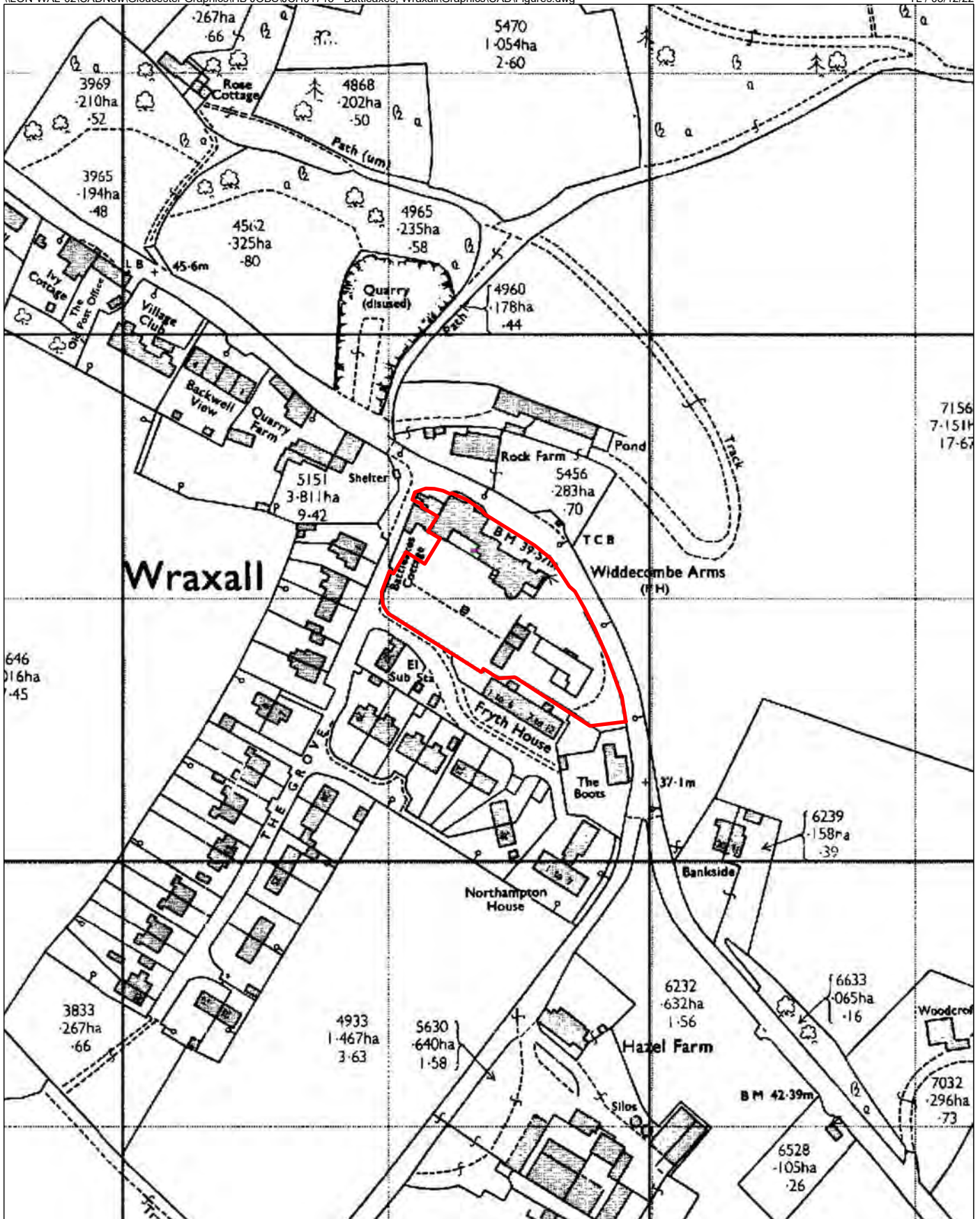
0 10 20 30 40 50m

Scale at A4: 1:2,000



Figure 6

1931 Ordnance Survey Map



Site Boundary



0 10 20 30 40 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,000



Figure 7
1977 Ordnance Survey Map



 Site Boundary



0 10 20 30 40 50m
Scale at A4: 1:2,000



Figure 8

2022 Ordnance Survey Map



PLATES



Plate 1: The Battleaxes from the southeast



Plate 2: Caretakers Cottage on The Grove with the Hall behind



Plate 3: The Battleaxes with Rock Farm upslope to the right



Plate 4: The public house element over three storeys, from the west



Plate 5: Former hearth opened out in PH upper ground floor



Plate 6: West end of the PH and connecting frontage element with the hall to the west



Plate 7: The Hall (internal) looking east towards the PH



Plate 8: Ancillary buildings from the southeast



Plate 9: The Battleaxes from the lower terrace



Plate 10: Northern ancillary building with Frythe House beyond the Site



Plate 11: Blocked western window to the Hall



Figure 12: North elevation of the PH showing the extended early C20th eastern wing



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