



Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Land East of
Carpenders Park,
Oxhey Lane,
Hertfordshire

August 2025 | Project Ref 11489A



Championing a sustainable
natural environment



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Non-Technical Summary

This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by HCUK Group, on behalf of Boyer Planning Ltd, as part of a planning application (25/1020/OUT) for up to 256 homes (C3 use class) (including affordable and self/custom build housing), housing with care (C2 use class), a children's home (for looked after children) (C2 use class) together with associated access, parking, open space and landscaping on land east of Carpenders Park, Oxhey Lane, Hertfordshire (centred at NGR TQ 12879 93520).

The assessment has confirmed that the Site contains no designated archaeological assets such as scheduled monuments or registered battlefields. The assessment identified 12 archaeological monument records, documented on the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HHER) within the 1km study area radius.

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

LiDAR analysis has shown the potential for a features of an unknown date to be present on the promontory running across the north-west and central fields. The function and date of this possible feature is currently undetermined but its alignment suggest that it is probably pre-Medieval.

Further LiDAR analysis shows Medieval ridge and furrow farming remains clearly in the south-eastern field of the Site. Both the central and north-western fields also display faint traces of ridge and furrow on a south-east to north-west alignment. The north-eastern boundary of the Site also forms the boundary between the parishes of Watford and Bushey, and suggest that the Site lay within the agricultural hinterland in between these two settlements.

Historic map regression has shown that the Site has remained largely unchanged since the mid-19th century, with the exception of some small variations in field boundaries and a short-lived building in the western end of the central field during the early-20th century.

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

1. Introduction

Background

1.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by James Danter ACIfA of HCUK Group on behalf of Boyer Planning Ltd. The proposed development is part of a planning application (25/1020/OUT) for up to 256 homes (C3 use class) (including affordable and self/custom build housing), housing with care (C2 use class), a children’s home (for looked after children) (C2 use class) together with associated access, parking, open space and landscaping.

1.2 The site in question is known as Land East of Carpenders Park, Oxhey Lane, Hertfordshire (Figure 1), occupying an area of c.12.86ha and centred at NGR TQ 12879 93520. It is hereafter referred to as the Site.

1.3 By way of introduction, the Site is formed of three fields which are all uncultivated meadow with long grass up to chest height. Patches of bramble were also noted as well as a number of young trees situated sparsely throughout the Site. A line of mature trees running south-east to north-west in the centre of the central field likely indicate the line of a former field boundary. Each field is enclosed by hedgerows and mature trees.

1.4 This assessment has been prepared in line with comments received from Peri Horsley, Historic Environment Advisor at Hertfordshire County Council on 1st July 2025:

'At this time we do not have enough information about the proposed development or the impact it will have on overarching site. The Design & Access Statement (March 2025) and Heritage Statement (March 2025) submitted with the application does not offer a sufficient assessment of the direct, below ground impact the proposed development will have on the historic environment, only focusing on the above ground heritage assets.

Given that the proposed development site should be regarded as having the potential to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest (NPPF para 207), we believe a Desk Based Assessment, at a minimum, should be produced by an appropriately experienced and recognised heritage and archaeology practice.

We, therefore, advise that an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Geophysical Survey be undertaken, in order to provide sufficient information about the significance of heritage assets that may be affected by the development. This work should be carried out prior to determination of the application.

The results of these assessments would determine whether any further archaeological work would be deemed necessary, either prior to the determination of the application, or following planning consent, should such consent be granted.'

- 1.5** The purpose of this assessment is to determine and assess the archaeological potential of the Site and to assess the significance of any relevant heritage assets identified. The report is informed by site inspection, historical information, and by data relating to heritage assets. It seeks to provide sufficient information to allow an informed understanding of the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of those assets, and to consider the need for solutions (design, engineering etc) where necessary. The report will not address designated or non-designated built heritage.
- 1.6** The report considers heritage assets of archaeological interest, including finds/findspots of artefactual and ecofactual material (e.g. stone tools, bone), and locations, features or objects referenced from historic documents. Where appropriate, it refers to archaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits, including sub-surface archaeological remains of features, buildings and structures.
- 1.7** This assessment has been prepared in accordance with Standards and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment¹ published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). It takes into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other local planning policy and guidance where relevant.
- 1.8** This desk-based assessment comprises an examination of digital data held by the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER) together with documentary research. It incorporates a map regression indicating the impact of change over time.
- 1.9** This data has been collected for an area comprising a 1km radius of the Site boundary, which is referred to as the 'study area'. This radius has been selected on

¹ CIfA 2022

the basis of professional judgment as being sufficient to determine the archaeological potential of the Site, taking into account its location, topography, and character.

Geology and Topography

- 1.10** The British Geological Survey identifies the underlying solid geology across most of the Site as being clay, silt and sand of the London Clay Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed between 56 and 47.8 million years ago during the Palaeogene period. A small area in the west extent of the Site has been identified as clay, silt and sand of the Lambeth Group, a sedimentary bedrock formed between 59.2 and 47.8 million years ago during the Palaeogene period. No superficial geological deposits have been identified within the Site.²
- 1.11** The soils of the Site are classified as being within the Soilscape 18 class, which are described as Soilscape 18: 'Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils'.³
- 1.12** A public footpath runs south-west to north-east through the north-western end of the Site and is noted on historic mapping as having been in place since at least 1896.
- 1.13** The topography of the Site is variable with a high ridge running north-east to south-west through the northern part of the Site and with lower, sloping ground either side in the north-west and south-eastern parts of the Site. The highest point in the Site is in the northern corner at c.104m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), and the lowest point is in the southern end of the Site at c.82m aOD.

Site Visit

- 1.14** A site visit/walkover was undertaken on 13th August 2025 in clear, sunny conditions with good visibility. No above ground archaeological features were noted during the Site visit.
- 1.15** Photographs taken on the site visit:

² British Geological Survey. 2025.

³ Cranfield University. 2025.



Photograph 1: View west showing the north-west corner of the Site.



Photograph 2: View south-west from the northern corner of the Site.



Photograph 3: View south from the northern corner of the Site.



Photograph 4: View south-west from the south-east corner of the north-western field.



Photograph 5: View south-east showing the former farm gate between the north-western field and the central field.



Photograph 6: View south-west from the central field looking towards Carpenders Park Care Home.



Photograph 7: View north-east looking across the central field.



Photograph 8: View south-east looking across the central field.



Photograph 9: View south-east looking across the central field.



Photograph 10: View north-west from the south-east corner of the central field.



Photograph 11: View south-west from the south-east corner of the central field.



Photograph 12: View north-west showing the line of mature trees within the central field.



Photograph 13: View north-east looking across the south-eastern field.



Photograph 14: View east looking across the south-eastern field.



Photograph 15: View south-east looking across the south-eastern field.



Photograph 16: View south-west looking across the south-eastern field.

2. Methodology

Sources

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

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

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

Assessment

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

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

Table 1: Criteria for Assessing the Importance of Heritage Assets

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

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

Archaeological Potential

2.6 The report includes:

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

3. Relevant Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework

3.1 The significance of a heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 as being made up of four main constituents, architectural interest, historical interest, archaeological interest and artistic interest.

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

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

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

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

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

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

those that have yet to be formally assessed for designation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Relevant Local Policies

3.5 The following local policies are relevant to the historic environment and this assessment. The Three Rivers Core Strategy which sets out the planning framework for the area.⁴

⁴ <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/planning-policy/development-plan#Core%20Strategy>

Table 2: Local Policies

Local Plan	Relevant Policy
<p>The Three Rivers Core Strategy</p>	<p>Policy S10 To conserve and enhance the historic environment by resisting the loss of, or damage to, heritage assets including important buildings and to ensure that new development respects the unique character and identity of the towns and villages in the District.</p> <p>Three Rivers has a rich historic environment including many historic buildings, archaeological sites, historic structures, historic landscapes, spaces and conservation areas. It will be important to conserve heritage assets and their settings through appropriate control of development but also to enhance the historic environment where opportunities arise.</p>
<p>The Three Rivers Development Management Policies Local Development Document</p>	<p>Policy DM3 The Historic Built Environment</p> <p>j) Archaeology</p> <p>Where an application site includes, or is considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, it must be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation. There is a presumption against any harm to Scheduled Monuments and heritage assets with archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments. Where the loss of the whole or a material part of a heritage asset’s significance (archaeological interest) is justified, planning conditions will be included in any permission to ensure that an adequate record is made of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost. This will be secured through an archaeological written scheme of investigation (WSI) which must include provision for appropriate publication of the evidence.</p>

4. Archaeological Background

Introduction

- 4.1** There are no designated archaeological monuments, such as scheduled monuments or registered battlefields within the Site or wider 1km study area.
- 4.2** There are 12 archaeological monuments recorded on the HHER within the 1km study area, of which none are within the Site itself. (Figure 3)
- 4.3** The hedgerow on the north-eastern boundary of the Site forms part of the parish boundary between Watford and Bushey, parishes which were both in existence prior to 1850, and as such qualify as being an 'important' hedgerow under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulation Act (Appendix 1). One of the criteria for determining what an 'important' hedgerow is, if the hedgerow marks the boundary, or part of the boundary, of at least one historic parish or township; and for this purpose "historic" means existing before 1850.
- 4.4** The HHER contains records of five previous archaeological investigations within the 1km study area, of which none have taken place within the Site itself. (Figure 4)
- 4.5** Assessment of potential impacts to non-designated or designated heritage assets of the built environment such as standing buildings are outside the scope of this archaeological assessment.

Timescales

4.6 Timescales used in this assessment:

Table 3: Timescales

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

Designated Archaeological Monuments

4.7 There are no designated archaeological monuments within the Site or 1km study area .

Listed Buildings

4.8 There are five Listed Buildings recorded within the 1km study area, all of which are Grade II listed buildings.

Non-Designated Archaeological Monuments

4.9 There are 12 non-designated archaeological assets within the 1km study area.

Prehistoric

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

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

Reference Number	Name/Description	Monument Type	Period
MHT10780	Prehistoric flints and Medieval & later pottery, Merry Hill, Bushey	Findspot	Prehistoric

Palaeolithic

4.11 The earliest phase of the Prehistoric period is the Palaeolithic. This is considered the earliest known period of human culture and evidence from this period often consists of lithic scatters, found within river gravels and terraces. In approximately 46,000BC, during the Anglian Glaciation, there were major variations in climate which affected where people settled. During the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic (30,000-10,000 BC) Britain was still connected to Europe. No finds of Palaeolithic date are known within the Site or study area.

Mesolithic

4.12 During the subsequent Mesolithic period the ice sheets had receded, temperatures and sea-levels were rising, and Britain was still connected to the continent by land bridge. The hunter-gatherers who utilised the area were highly mobile, and due to the changing conditions often only settled seasonally. Finds from this period tend to come in the form of stray finds within disturbed deposits, and *in situ* settlement sites are a rare find. No finds of Mesolithic date are known within the Site or study area.

Neolithic

4.13 The subsequent Neolithic period in Britain is characterised by the advent of farming practices which signal a move away from the more itinerant hunter-gatherer type lifestyle of preceding periods. Although farming encouraged a more permanently, or at least seasonally, settled landscape during this period, this practice was still supplemented by the gathering and hunting of food in the wild. Lithic finds of a core, scraper and burnt flints (MHT10780) were found c.490m to the east of the Site, likely to be of Neolithic date.

Bronze Age & Iron Age

- 4.14** The Bronze Age saw a continuation of the shift towards more permanent settlement and with much less hunter-gatherer type activity. Funerary monuments such as round barrows begin to be constructed on a larger and more frequent scale and the advent of bronze metalworking saw a technological revolution which permeated into many aspects of people's lives. The subsequent Iron Age continued the trends of the preceding periods. No finds of Bronze Age or Iron Age date have been found within the Site or study area.
- 4.15** It is considered that the potential to encounter remains dating to the Prehistoric period is low. There is a dearth of evidence for Prehistoric remains within the study area, and which may partially be the result of a lack of previous archaeological investigation within the study area. If remains were to be found, they would likely be considered of at least *low (local) importance*.

Roman

- 4.16** The HHER holds no records for monuments of Roman date within the 1km study area, or from within the Site itself.
- 4.17** Due to a paucity of archaeological remains associated with the Roman period, it is considered that there is a low potential for remains to be encountered, This may partly be a result of a lack of previous archaeological investigation within the study area. If Roman remains were present they would be considered to be of at least *low (local) importance*.

Early Medieval

- 4.18** The HHER holds records for one monument of Early Medieval date within the 1km study area, but which does not lie within the Site itself.

Table 5: Early Medieval monuments recorded on the HHER within the 1km of the Site.

Reference Number	Name/Description	Monument Type	Period
MHT2582	Historic lane, Merry Hill Road, Bushey	Trackway	Early Medieval

4.19 The only entry recorded on the HHER is a trackway (MHT2582) c.485m to the north of the Site and which has been only tentatively identified as dating to the Early Medieval period.

4.20 In 1007, the land at Oxhey, referred to as ‘Oxangehæge’ – which roughly translates as ‘enclosure or fenced-in place for oxen’ – was granted to St Albans Abbey⁵ where it became part of the Cassio estate. At the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066, Cassio was a well-developed estate which was valued at £30.⁶ The area remained in their possession after the conquest.

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

Medieval

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

4.23 At the time of the 1086 Domesday Survey the Site is included within the entry for Cassio, which roughly corresponds to the Watford area today. It was a large estate within the holding of St Albans Abbey and comprised 52 households with 2640 acres of arable land, woodland supporting 1000 pigs and four mills. In 1086 its value was recorded as £28.⁷ The land remained in the possession of St Albans Abbey throughout the Medieval period. The north-eastern boundary of the Site also

⁵ <https://epns.nottingham.ac.uk/browse/Hertfordshire/Watford/53285b92b47fc40ace000634-Oxhey>

⁶ <https://opendomesday.org/place/TQ1096/cassio/>

⁷ <https://opendomesday.org/place/TQ1096/cassio/>

forms the parish boundary between Watford and Bushey. As such, it is likely that the Site was located in between settlement areas during this time.

4.24 LiDAR analysis of the Site shows faint hints of possible ridge and furrow farming remains within the south-eastern field of the Site. A Google Earth satellite image from 2013 also appears to show cropmarks indicative of ridge and furrow in this same location. This suggests that at least some of the Site may have been utilised for arable farming activities during this period.

4.25 It is considered that the potential to encounter remains dating to the Medieval period is high. This is largely due to the possible identification of ridge and furrow earthworks within the Site through LiDAR analysis. These agricultural remains, if encountered, would be considered to be of at least *low (local) importance*.

Post Medieval & Modern

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

Table 6: Post Medieval and Modern monuments recorded on the HHER within the 1km of the Site.

Reference Number	Name/Description	Monument Type	Period
MHT12734	The Clays Brickworks, Brickfield Farm, Oxhey Lane, Watford	Brickworks; Clay Mill; Brick Kiln	Post Medieval
MHT13308	Site of Carpenders Park, Oxhey Lane, Watford Rural	Country House; Park	Post Medieval
MHT13309	Woodwalks, Carpenders Park, Watford Rural	Woodland Garden; Ornamental Garden; Fishpond	Post Medieval
MHT13310	Carpenders Park Farm, Oxhey Lane, Watford Rural	Farmstead; Model Farm?	Post Medieval
MHT13653	Oxhey Grange, Oxhey Lane, Watford Rural / Grade II listed (NHLE1101593)	Country House; Gate Lodge	Post Medieval
MHT5743	London Coal Duty Marker, Burntoak Farm, Oxhey / Grade II listed (NHLE1347904)	Coal Duty Boundary Marker	Post Medieval
MHT13224	Site of Oxhey Place, South Oxhey	Country House	Post Medieval
MHT13632	Hillside Studios, Merry Hill Road, Bushey	Private School; Television Studio	Modern
MHT15545	Salperton, Merry Hill Road, Bushey	Detached House	Modern

4.27 The earliest map which shows the Site in detail is the 1842 Watford Tithe Plan (Figure 8). The map shows the Site as being split across three fields and three plots of woodland. The accompanying tithe apportionment shows that much of the land in the area was split between Thomas Grimston Bucknall Estcourt, the owner of Oxhey Place (MHT13224) c.910m to the west of the Site, and Philip Longmore, the owner of Carpenders Park (MHT13308) c.10m to the west of the Site. The occupier of the central and south-eastern field is Samuel Vanderplank, who was also the occupier of Carpenders Park Farm (MHT13310), immediately to the south-west of the Site.

Table 7: Land holdings on the Watford Parish Tithe Apportionment, dated 20th March 1844.

Plot Number	Landowner	Occupier	Name and Description of Lands and Premises	Cultivation Type
1968	Philip Longmore	Samuel Vanderplank	Sawpit Field	Arable
1969	Woodland Not Tithable			Woodland
1970	Woodland Not Tithable			Woodland
1971	Woodland Not Tithable			Woodland
1974	Philip Longmore	Samuel Vanderplank	Rick Yard Field	Meadow
1975	Thomas Grimston Bucknall Estcourt	Francis Matthews	Hill Field	Meadow

4.28 The 1896-9 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 9) shows that the field boundary between the north-west and central field has been altered, likely as part of the rebuilding of Carpenders Park Farm which has also seen considerable change. A small field has been established in the western end of the central field and a new band of woodland has been established on the boundary between the farmyard and the central field. Additionally, the woodland belt separating the central and south-eastern fields are no longer illustrated, though the field boundary is shown to continue to run along this alignment. A small enclosed area is also depicted on the northern side of this same boundary within the central field, and which was possibly used as some form of animal enclosure. Similarly, another small enclosed area is also visible in the north-west corner of the north-western field. To the west of the Site, Carpenders Park is also shown to have been substantially remodelled including considerable landscaping.

- 4.29** The 1912-3 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 10) shows little significant change to the Site other than a possible building in the western end of the central field which fronts on to Oxhey Lane. No change to the Site is discernible on the 1919-20 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 11). The 1938 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 12) shows that the two small enclosed areas are no longer illustrated, nor is the building in the western end of the central field. To the west of the Site, the map shows the beginnings of significant residential development to the north of Carpenders Park. The 1959 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 13) shows no discernible change to the Site but does show continued residential development to the west as well as the transition of Carpenders Park from a country house to a school known as 'Highfield'.
- 4.30** The 1969 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 14) also shows no change to the Site. It does show further residential development to the west, including that Carpenders Park has been demolished to make way for 'married quarters'. The main house was demolished in 1960 to make way for married quarters used by United States Air Force personnel who were based at nearby facilities such as Ruislip and Northwood.⁸ The 1978 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 15) shows no change to the Site, but with some additional buildings constructed within the farmyard at Carpenders Park Farm, to the south-west of the Site. No change is discernible on the 1992 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 16).
- 4.31** Similarly, there is no change visible within the Site on the 2001 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 17). To the west of the Site, the USAF married quarters had been demolished and replaced by further residential development. No change is visible on the 2010 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 18). The 2025 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 19) shows that, to the south-west of the Site, Carpenders Park Farm has been demolished and replaced with the current Carpenders Park Care Home.
- 4.32** It is considered that the potential to encounter remains dating to the Post Medieval and Modern periods is high. This would primarily relate to small changes in field boundaries during this period as well as the potential of a building of unknown

⁸ <https://trmt.org.uk/local-history/our-town-and-villages/carpenders-park>

function shown on historic mapping in the early-20th century. These remains, if encountered, are considered to be of at least *low (local) importance*.

Undated

4.33 The HHER holds records for no Undated monuments within the 1km study area, or from within the Site itself.

Previous Archaeological Work

4.34 The HHER holds records for five previous archaeological investigation within the 1km study area. (Figure 4)

Table 8: Previous archaeological investigations recorded on the HHER within 1km of the Site.

Event ID	Name	Event Type
EHT1313	Building recording at Salperton, Merry Hill Road, Bushey, 2008	Historic Building Recording
EHT4239	Watching brief at Carpenders Park, Oxhey Lane, Watford, 1997	Watching Brief
EHT4263	Fieldwalking on land at Merry Hill, Bushey	Fieldwalking
EHT7829	Kebbell House, Delta Gain, Carpenders Park	Watching Brief
EHT8596	Evaluation at 37 Bucks Avenue, Watford, 2017	Evaluation Trenching

Aerial Photographs

4.35 Historic aerial photographs of the Site do not show any significant features not present on the historic mapping.

4.36 A review of modern aerial photographs through Google Earth shows little significant change to the Site between the 1992 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 16) and the time of writing. To the south-west of the Site, the former Carpenders Park Farm is shown to have been demolished between 2016-2017 and then replaced with a new building. After this point the land use of the Site changed from agricultural pasture to uncultivated meadow.

LiDAR

- 4.37** LiDAR data (1m resolution from 2022, Figure 5) has been downloaded for the Site to enable interrogation through QGIS software using hillshade settings and variations of light angles and azimuth heights.
- 4.38** Stradling the north-western and central fields are hints of linear features of indeterminate origin located on the natural topographic promontory running north-east to south-west through the Site. This feature does not line up with any known field boundaries and is on a different alignment to the post-enclosure fields in the area and the Site. (Figure 6)
- 4.39** Ridge and furrow farming remains are clearly visible in the north-western and south-eastern field of the Site, with some faint hints in the central field. A roughly circular depression in the northern part of the Site might be the remains of a former pond or small quarry pit.

Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC)

- 4.40** The Site contains one historic landscape characterisation (HLC) type: 'Irregular Enclosure'. (Figure 7)

5. Impact Assessment

Proposed Development

5.1 The proposed development is part of a planning application (25/1020/OUT) for up to 256 homes (C3 use class) (including affordable and self/custom build housing), housing with care (C2 use class), a children's home (for looked after children) (C2 use class) together with associated access, parking, open space and landscaping.

Factors Affecting Archaeological Survival

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

5.3 The subject of archaeological preservation has been covered comprehensively elsewhere⁹, and it is a subject which is subject to ongoing review as our understanding grows. The following addresses some familiar scenarios for assessment reports such as this, to allow the reader an insight into some 'typical' scenarios.

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

Assessment of Significance

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

⁹ Historic England 2016.

*'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.'*¹⁰

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

*'heritage values that can be ascribed to place' can be grouped into four values: Evidential, Historic (illustrative or associative), Aesthetic and Communal.*¹¹

5.6 The potential for previously unknown archaeological remains from the Prehistoric, Roman, and Early Medieval periods to survive within the proposed development area should not be discounted, and any such remains will have significance due to evidential value, as they would provide proof of earlier unknown human activity, and would possess *illustrative historical* value, as such remains would expand the current historical timeline of the area. The significance of such remains cannot be assessed without archaeological evaluation. LiDAR analysis has shown the potential for features to be present on the promontory running north-east to south-west through the north-western and central fields. The alignment of this feature suggests a pre-Medieval origin.

5.7 LiDAR analysis shows Medieval ridge and furrow farming remains clearly in the south-eastern field of the Site. Both the central and north-western fields also display faint traces of ridge and furrow on a south-east to north-west alignment. The north-eastern boundary of the Site also forms the boundary between the parishes of Watford and Bushey, and suggest that the Site lay within the agricultural hinterland in between these two settlements. These remains would be of *evidential value* due to their ability to show how the Site was utilised during this period. They would also be of *historical illustrative value* as potential finds recovered from these features could assist in helping to identify a more precise date for when they were established and in use. These remains would likely be considered to be of *local significance*.

¹⁰ MHCLG 2023

¹¹ Historic England 2008

- 5.8** Historic map regression has shown that the Site has remained largely unchanged since the mid-19th century, with the exception of some small variations in field boundaries and a short-lived building in the western end of the central field during the early-20th century. These remains would be of *evidential value* due to their ability to show how the Site was utilised during this period. They would also be of *historical illustrative value* as potential finds recovered from these features could assist in helping to identify a more precise date for when they were established and in use. These remains would likely be considered to be of *local significance*.

Potential Effects

- 5.9** There is a potential for direct physical impacts to non-designated archaeological remains during the construction phase of any future development of the Site, as any ground moving activities associated with the proposed works would have the potential to expose, damage or destroy hitherto unknown remains. Such activities could include but are not exhaustive of; ground investigations, piling, topsoil stripping, ground reduction, digging of service trenches and landscaping as well as the construction of temporary compounds.
- 5.10** Historic map regression has shown that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon features dating from at least the Post Medieval period onwards.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The Site contains no known designated archaeological assets, where there would be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation *in situ* and against development.
- 6.2** The hedgerow on the north-eastern boundary of the Site forms part of the parish boundary between Watford and Bushey, parishes which were both in existence prior to 1850, and as such qualify as being an ‘important’ hedgerow under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulation Act.
- 6.3** Based on the information within the HHER, supplemented by historic mapping, and LiDAR analysis, the Site is considered to have a high potential for archaeological remains dating to the Medieval, Post Medieval and Modern periods, and a low potential for archaeological remains dating to the Prehistoric, Roman, and Early Medieval periods.
- 6.4** The following table details the archaeological potential ascribed to the Site by period and an assessment of the likely archaeological importance of any remains of those periods should they survive.

Table 9: Assessed Archaeological Potential and Importance by period

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

- 6.5** LiDAR analysis has shown the potential for a features of an unknown date to be present on the promontory running across the north-west and central fields. The function and date of this possible feature is currently undetermined but its alignment suggest that it is probably pre-Medieval.
- 6.6** Further LiDAR analysis shows Medieval ridge and furrow farming remains clearly in the south-eastern field of the Site. Both the central and north-western fields also display faint traces of ridge and furrow on a south-east to north-west alignment.

The north-eastern boundary of the Site also forms the boundary between the parishes of Watford and Bushey, and suggest that the Site lay within the agricultural hinterland in between these two settlements.

6.7 Historic map regression has shown that the Site has remained largely unchanged since the mid-19th century, with the exception of some small variations in field boundaries and a short-lived building in the western end of the central field during the early-20th century.

6.8 On the basis of available evidence, it is considered that the proposed development accords with current legislation, the planning policies contained within the NPPF. The site has been subject to desk-based assessment as required by the Historic Environment Advisor to Hertfordshire County Council in consultee comments delivered on 1st July 2025 and the archaeological potentials and importance have been assessed.

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

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The Genealogists. 1844 Watford Parish Tithe Apportionment
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1912-3 County Series Ordnance Survey map
1919-20 County Series Ordnance Survey map
1938 County Series Ordnance Survey map
1959 Provisional Ordnance Survey map
1968 Provisional Ordnance Survey map
1976 National Grid Ordnance Survey map
1992 National Grid Ordnance Survey map
2001 National Grid Ordnance Survey map
2010 National Grid Ordnance Survey map
2025 National Grid Ordnance Survey map
2023 Google Satellite Image
Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER)

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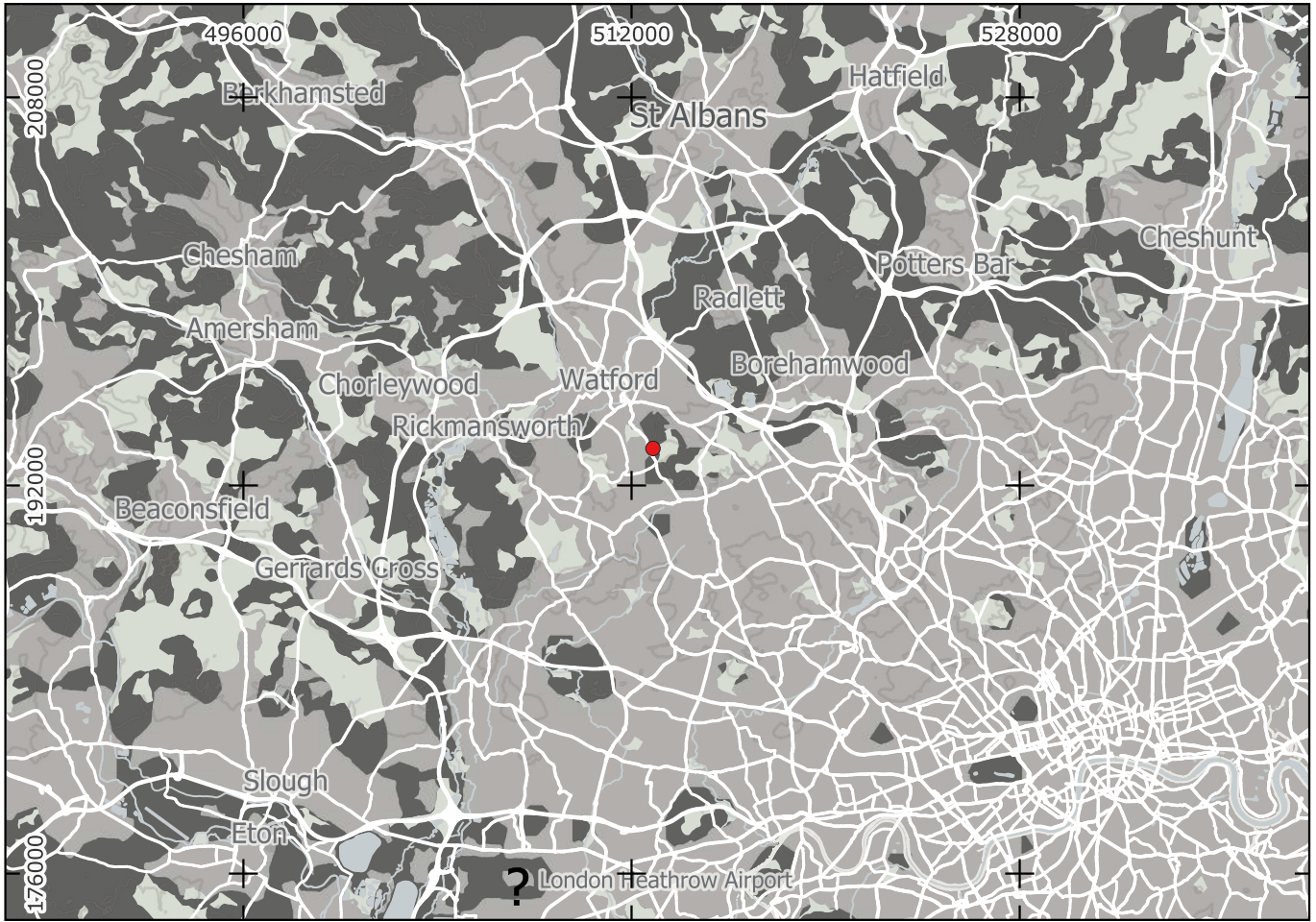
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8. Figures



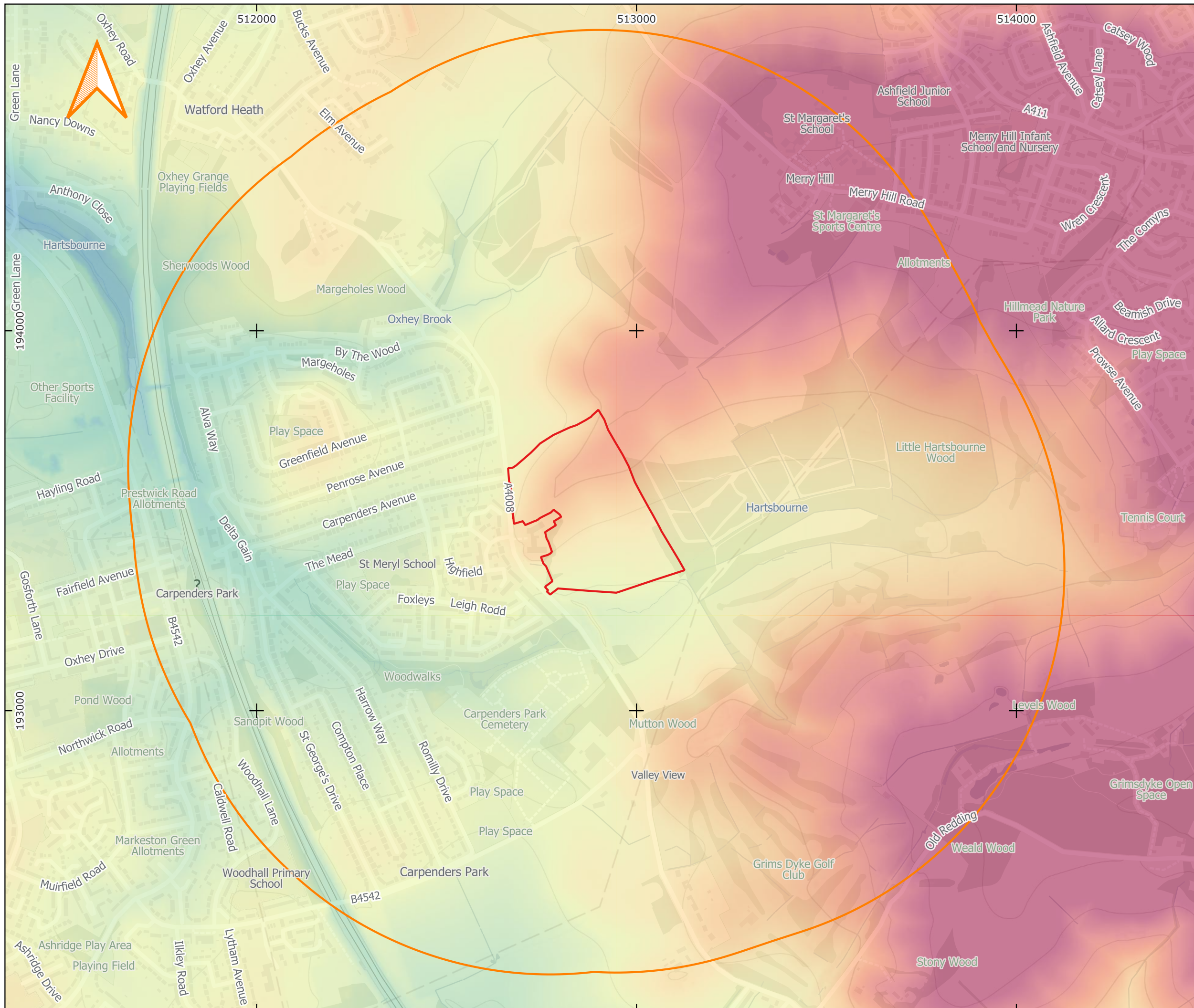
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Figure 1: Site Location

August 2025

Land East of Carpenders Park,
Oxhey Lane, Hertfordshire





Key:

- Site Boundary
- 1km Study Area

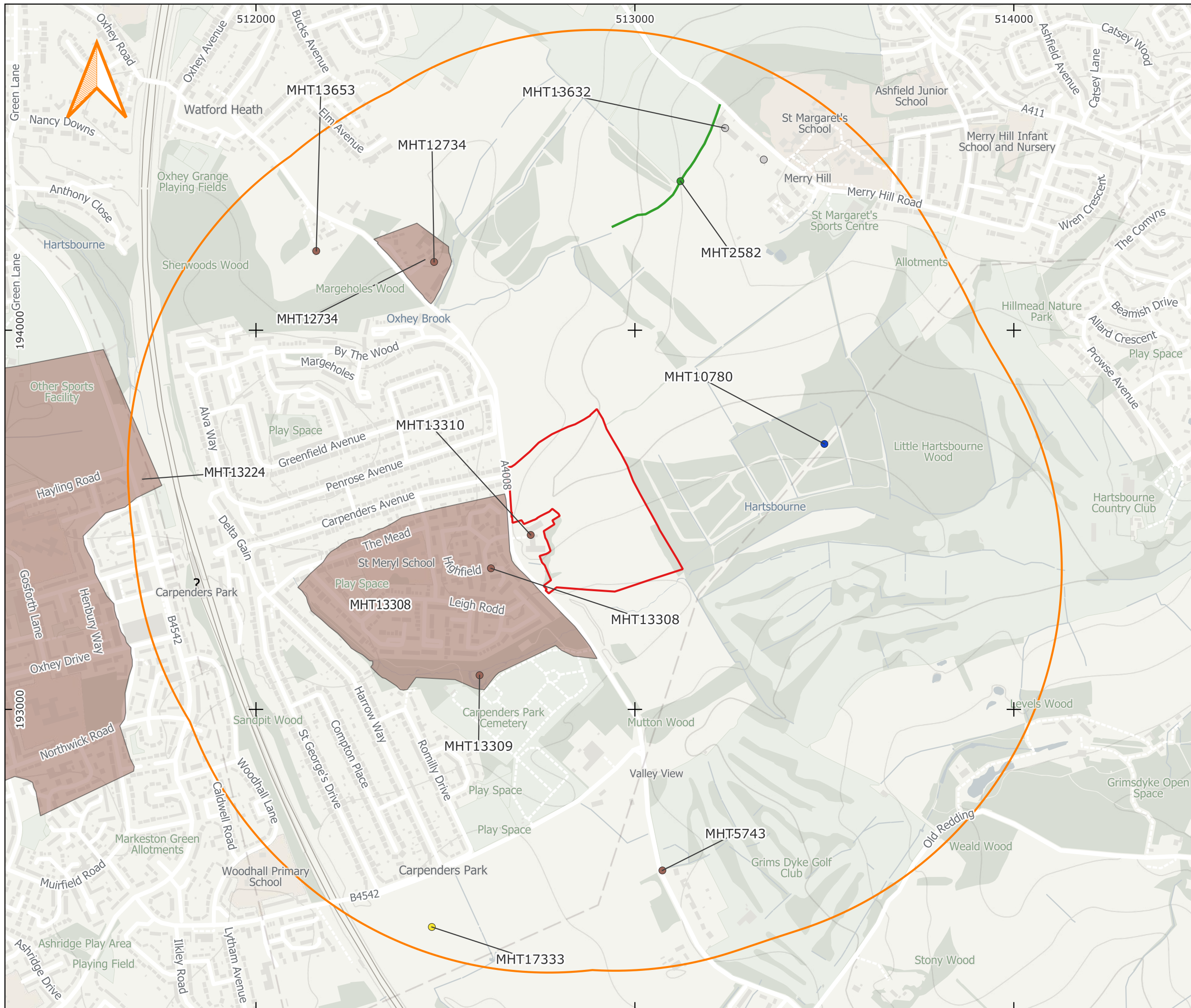
Height aOD, metres

- 48
- 56
- 64
- 72
- 80
- 88
- 96
- 104
- 112
- 120

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Land East of Carpenders Park, Oxhey Lane, Hertfordshire

Figure 2
Topography of the 1km study area



Key:

- Site Boundary
- 1km Study Area
- Monument (polygon)
- Post Medieval
- Monument (line)
- Early Medieval
- Monument (point)
- Prehistoric
- Early Medieval
- Medieval
- Post Medieval
- Modern

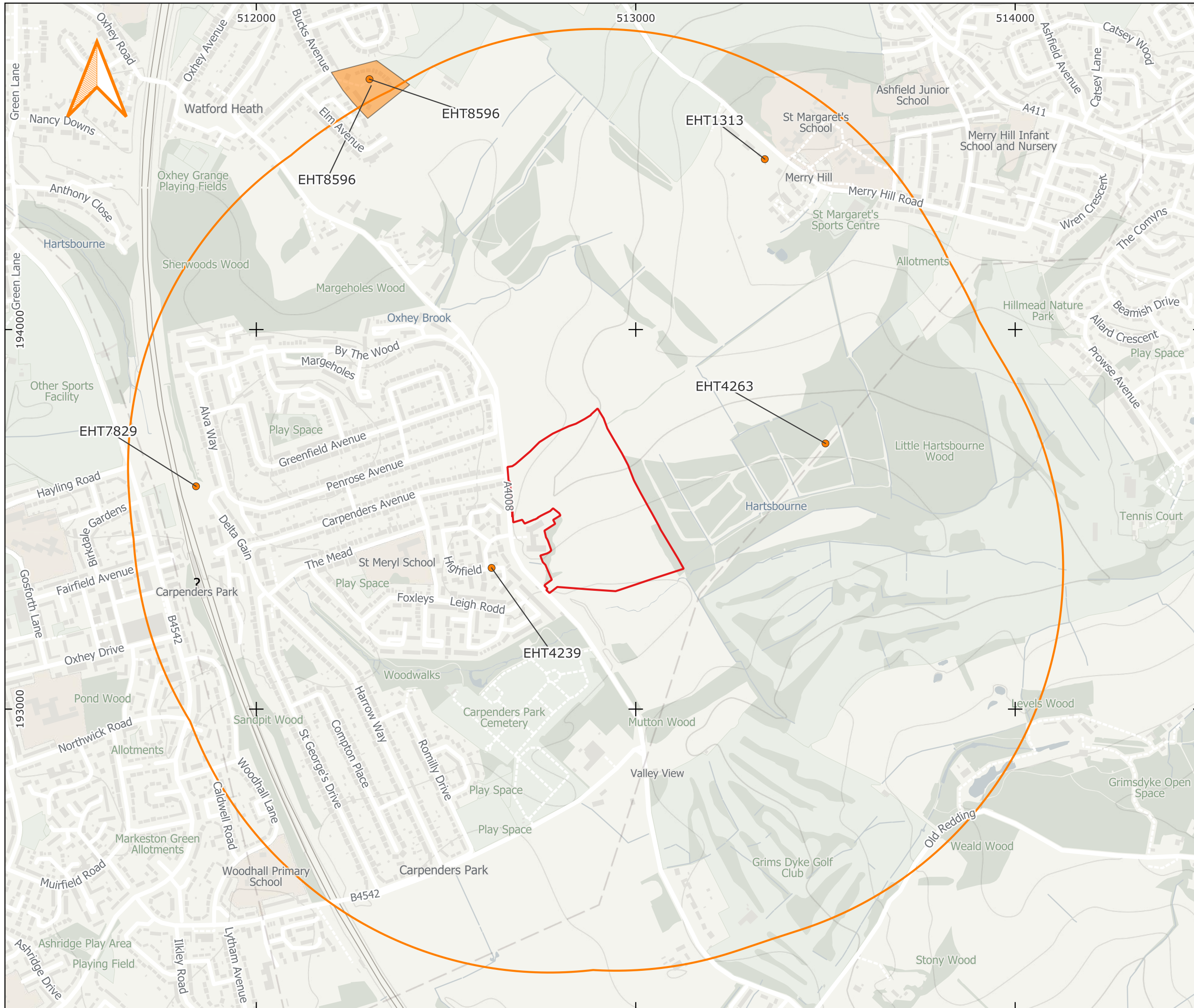
0 100 200 300 400 500 m

Land East of Carpenders Park, Oxhey Lane, Hertfordshire

HCUK GROUP

Figure 3
Archaeological monuments recorded on the HHER within the 1km study area

Project No.11489A | 15/8/2025 | Drawn By: JD



Key:

- Site Boundary
- 1km Study Area
- Event (polygon)
- Event (point)

0 100 200 300 400 500 m

Land East of Carpenders Park, Oxhey Lane, Hertfordshire

HCUK GROUP

Figure 4
Previous archaeological investigations recorded on the HHER within the 1km study area

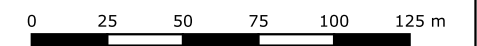
Project No.11489A | 15/8/2025 | Drawn By: JD



Key:

 Site Boundary

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**Land East of Carpenders
Park, Oxhey Lane,
Hertfordshire**



Figure 5

LiDAR coverage of the Site



Key:

- Site Boundary
- LiDAR Feature

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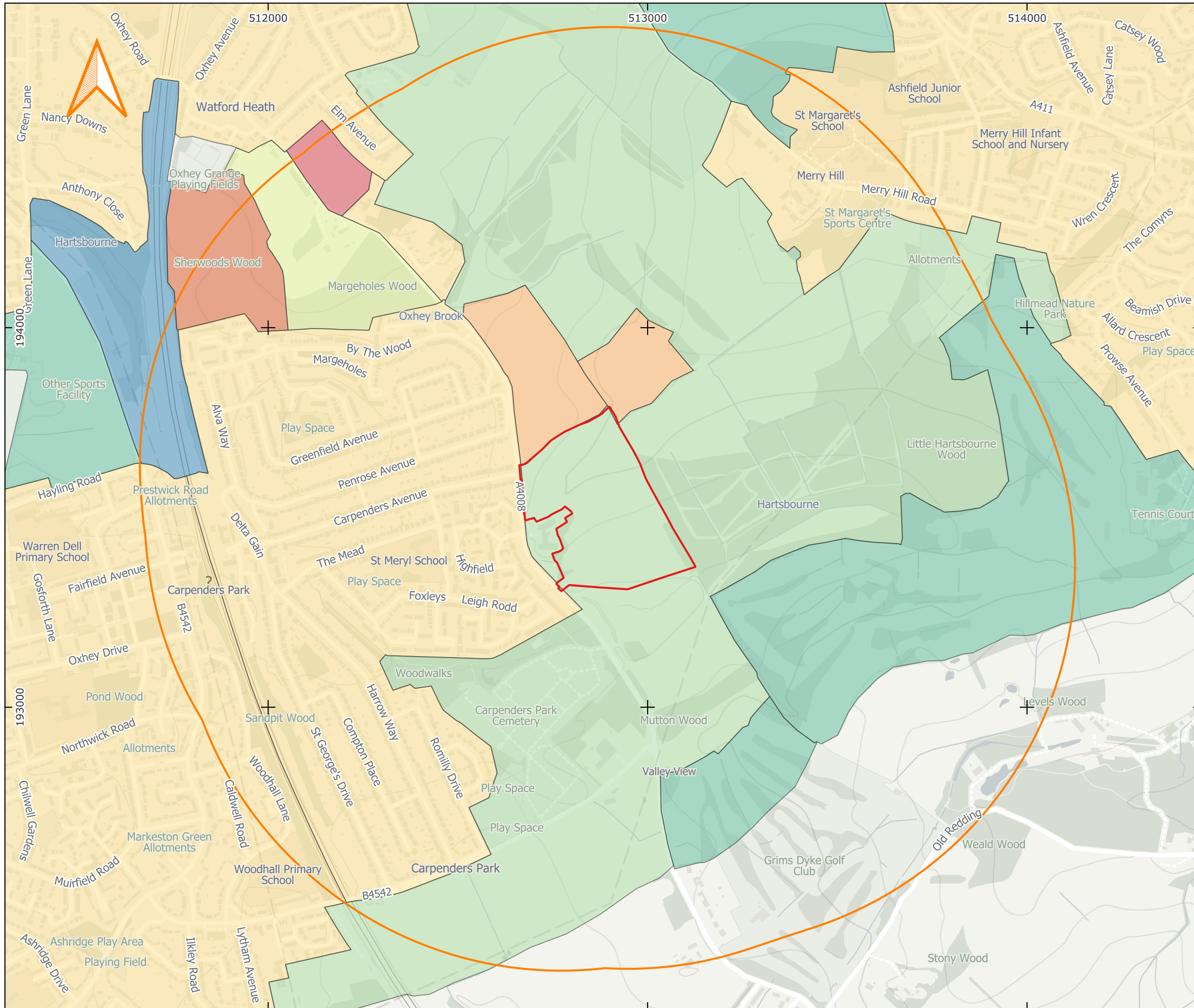


Land East of Carpenders Park, Oxhey Lane, Hertfordshire



Figure 6

Undated LiDAR feature identified through analysis



Key:

- Site Boundary
- HLC Types**
- "20thC" Enclosure
- Ancient Woodland
- Boundary Loss - With Relict Elements
- Built-Up Areas - Urban Development
- Informal Parkland
- Irregular Enclosure
- Leisure / Recreation
- Motorway, Railway

0 100 200 300 400 500 m

Land East of Carpenders Park, Oxhey Lane, Hertfordshire

HCUK GROUP

Figure 7
Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) types recorded on the HHER within the 1km study area



Figure 8: 1842 Watford Parish Tithe Plan

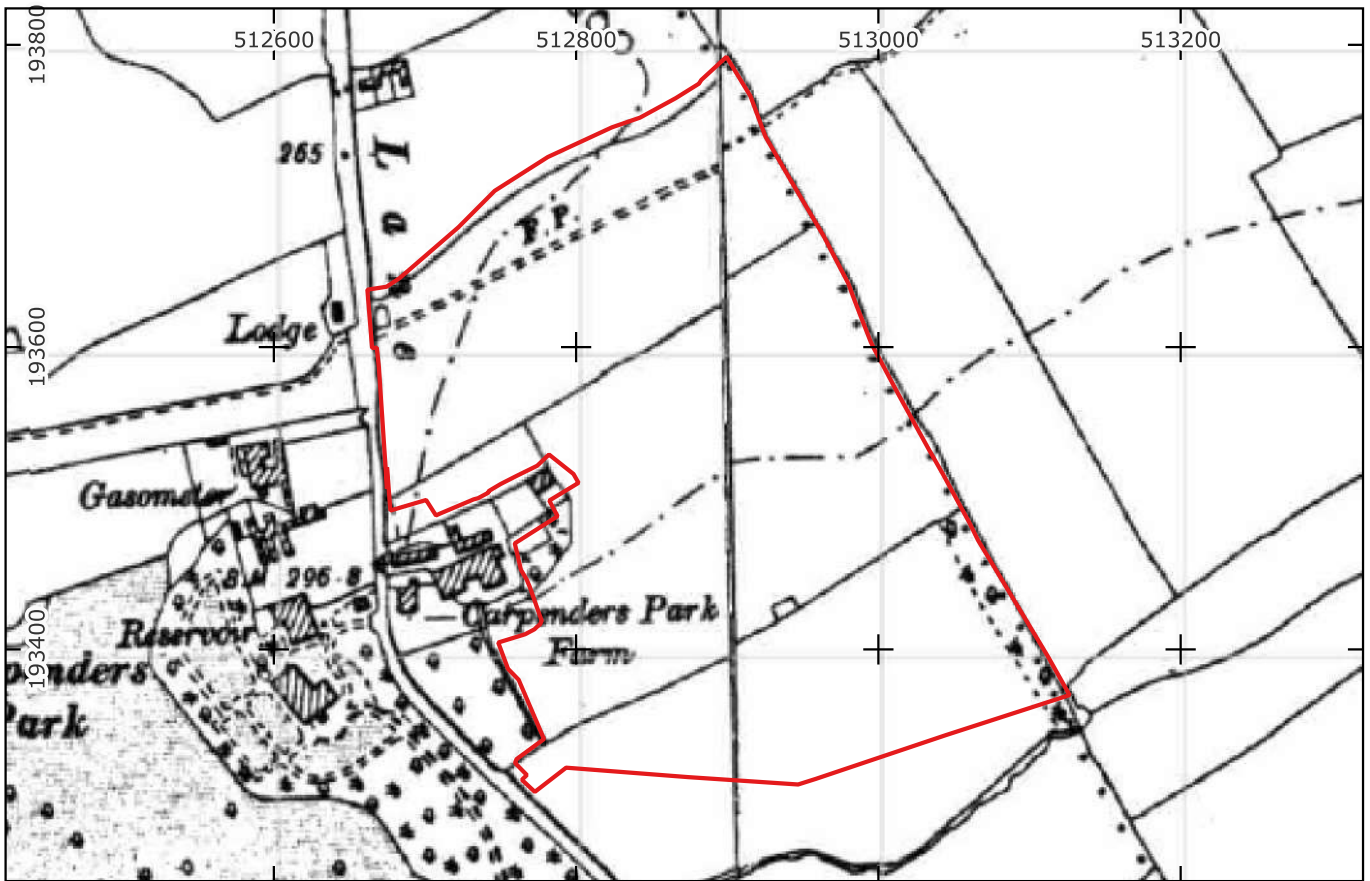


Figure 9: 1896-9 County Series Ordnance Survey map

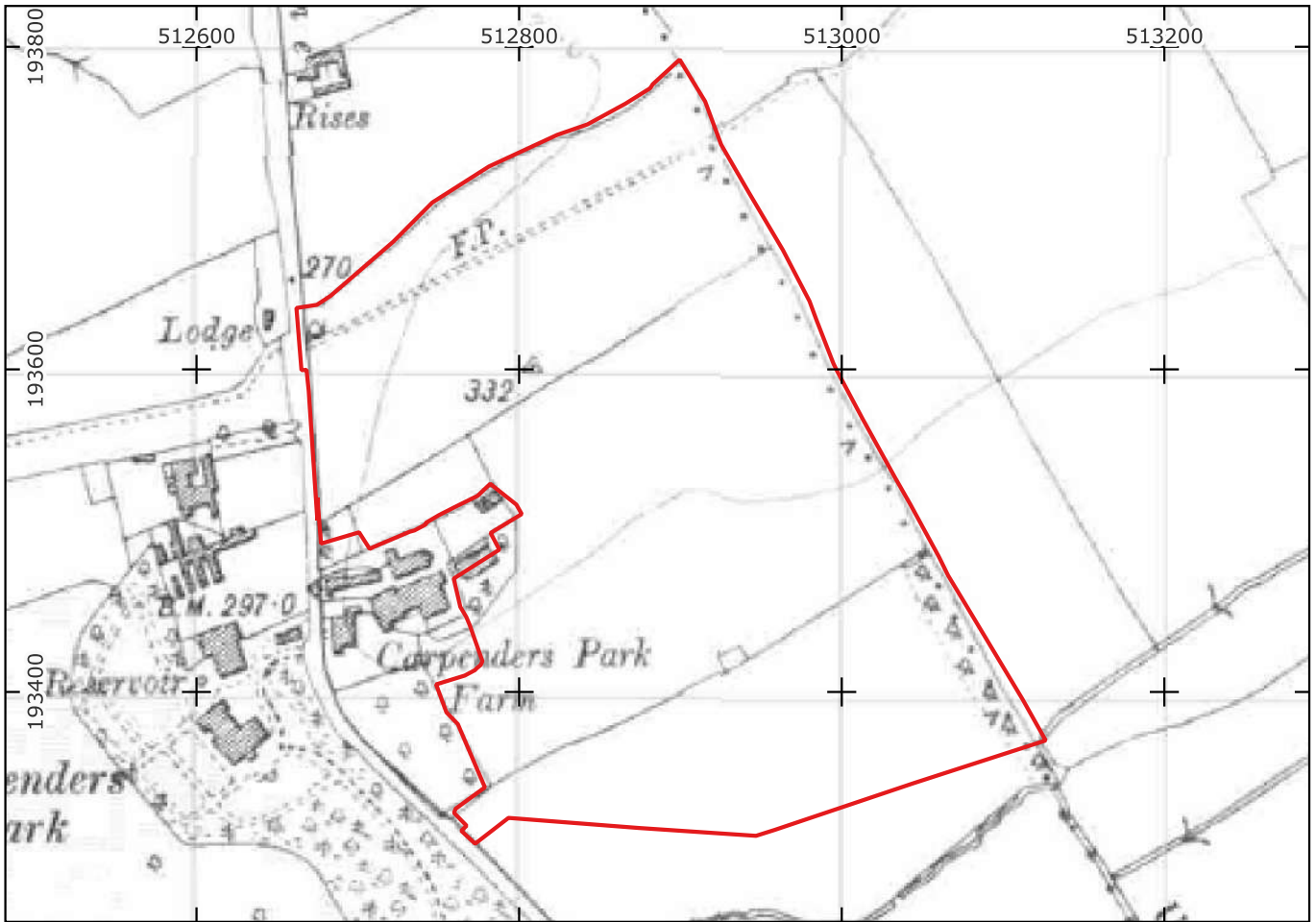


Figure 10: 1912-3 County Series Ordnance Survey map

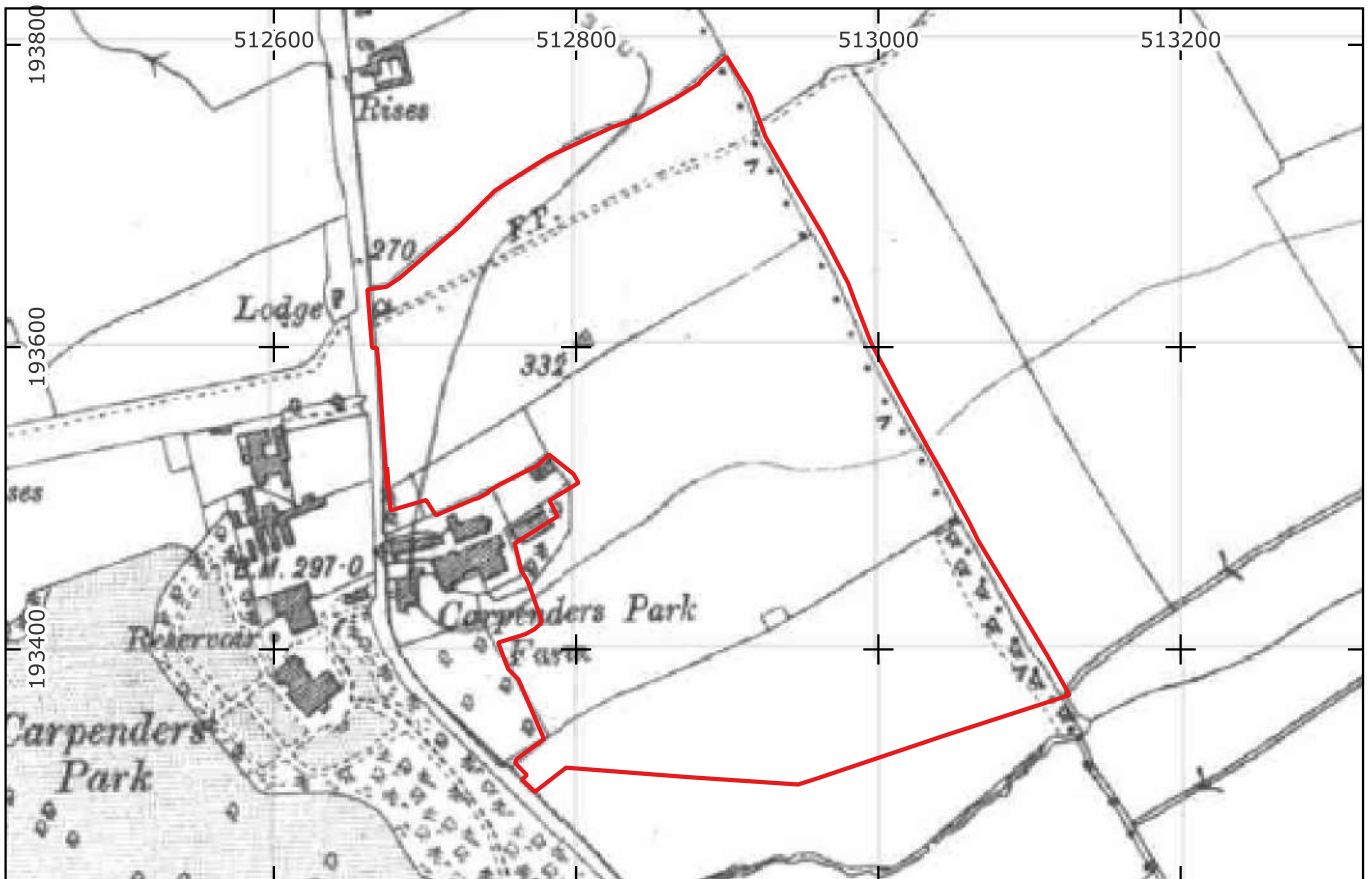


Figure 11: 1919-20 County Series Ordnance Survey map

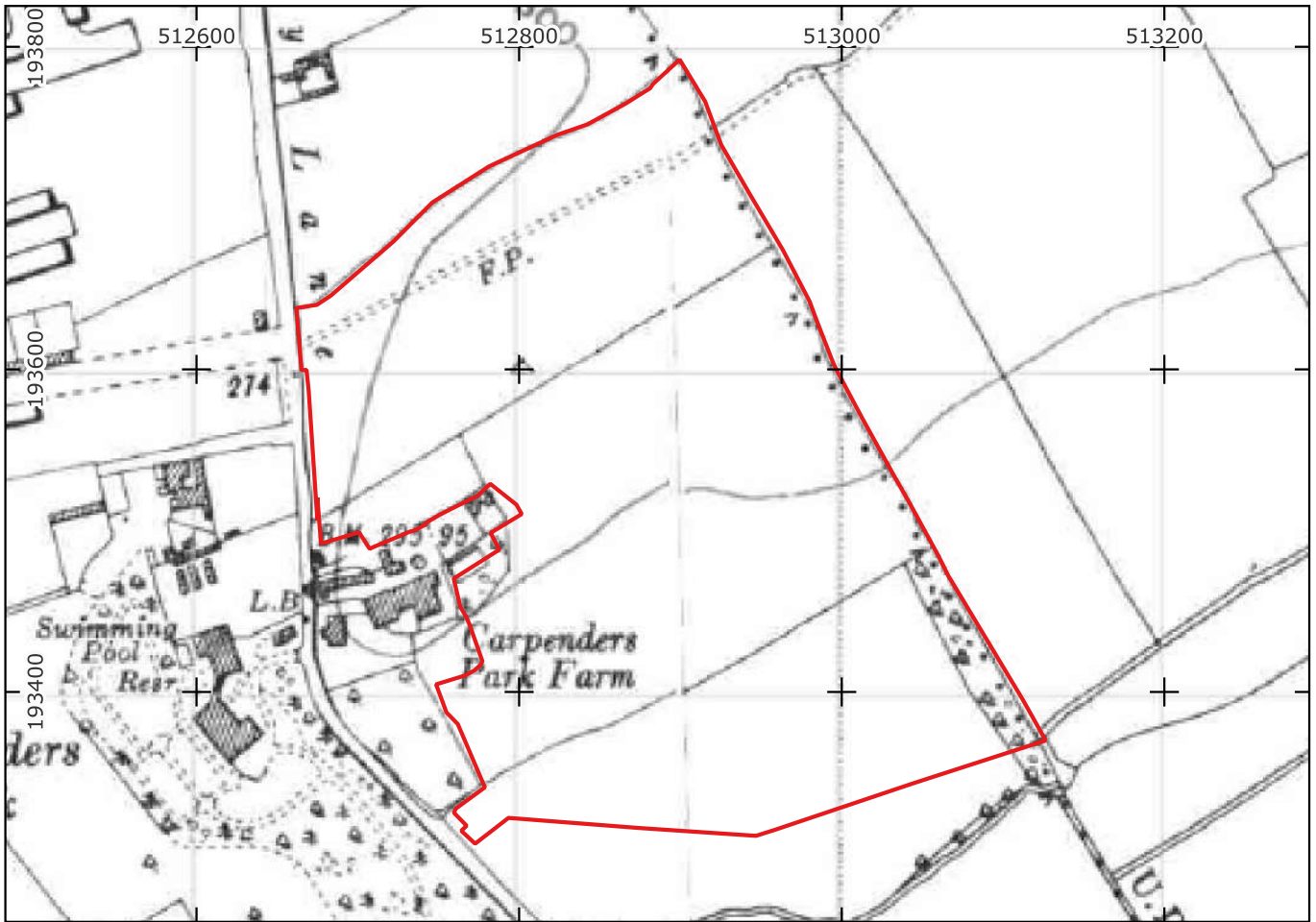


Figure 12: 1938 County Series Ordnance Survey map

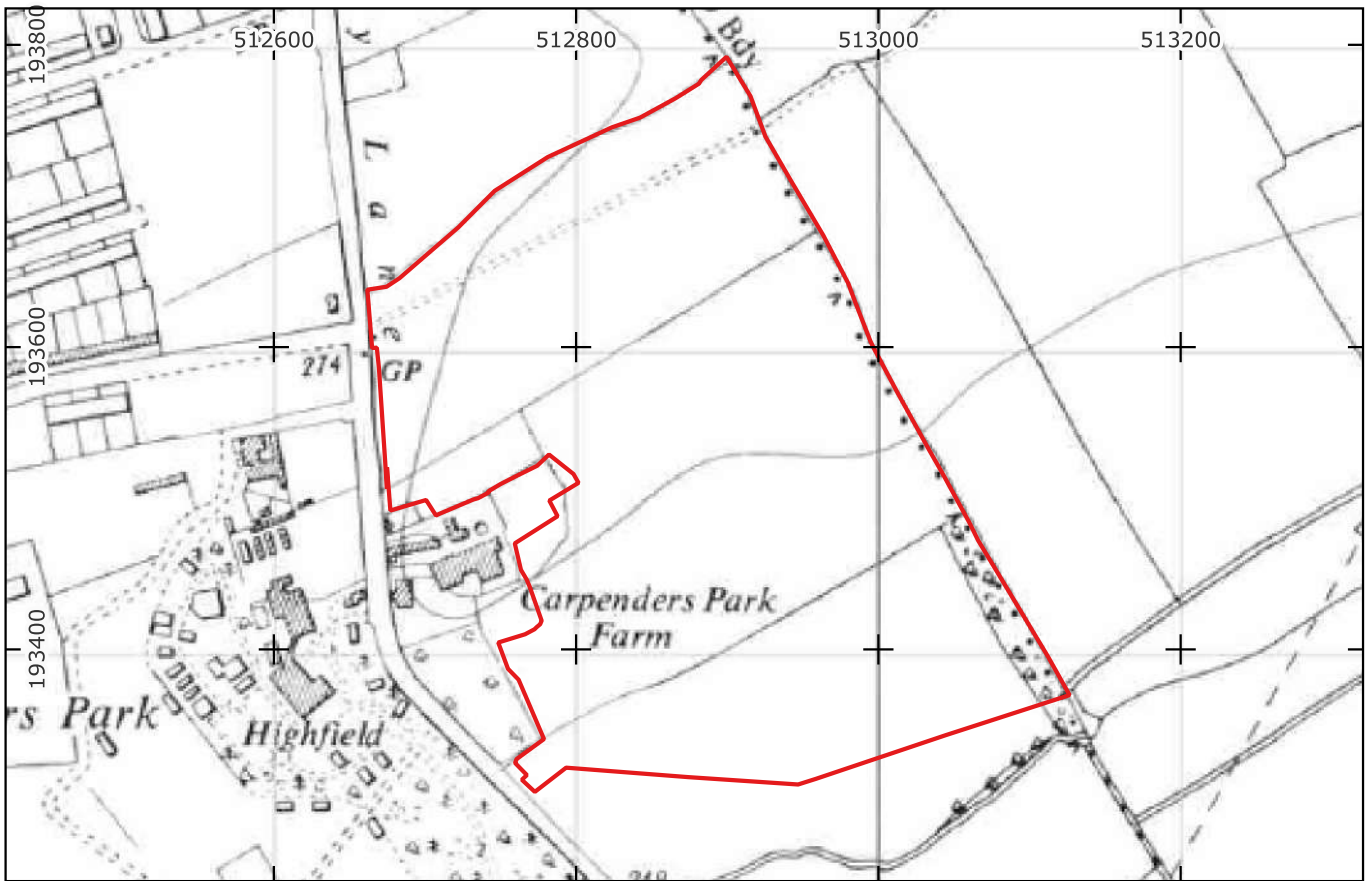


Figure 13: 1959 Provisional Ordnance Survey map

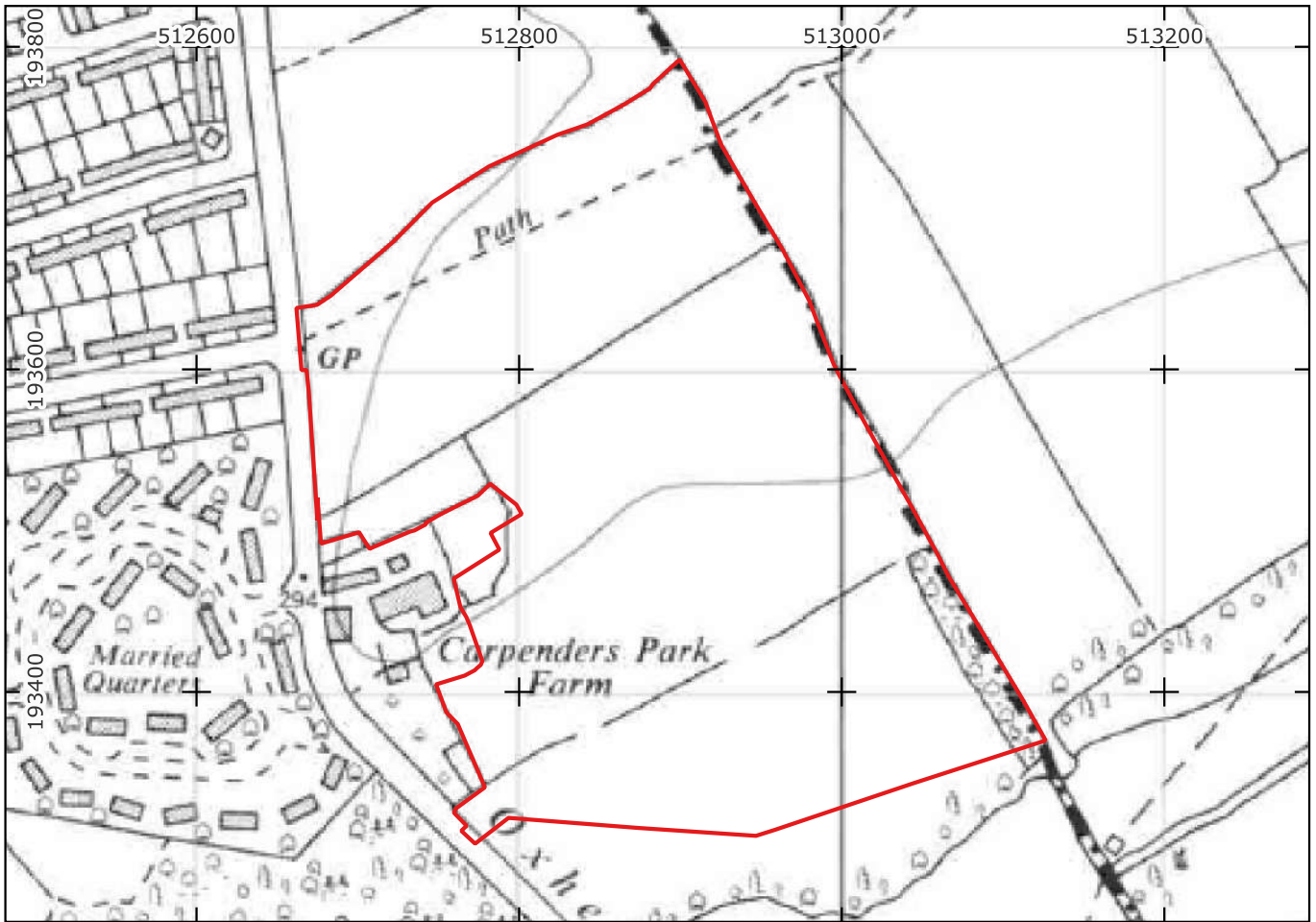


Figure 14: 1968 Provisional Ordnance Survey map

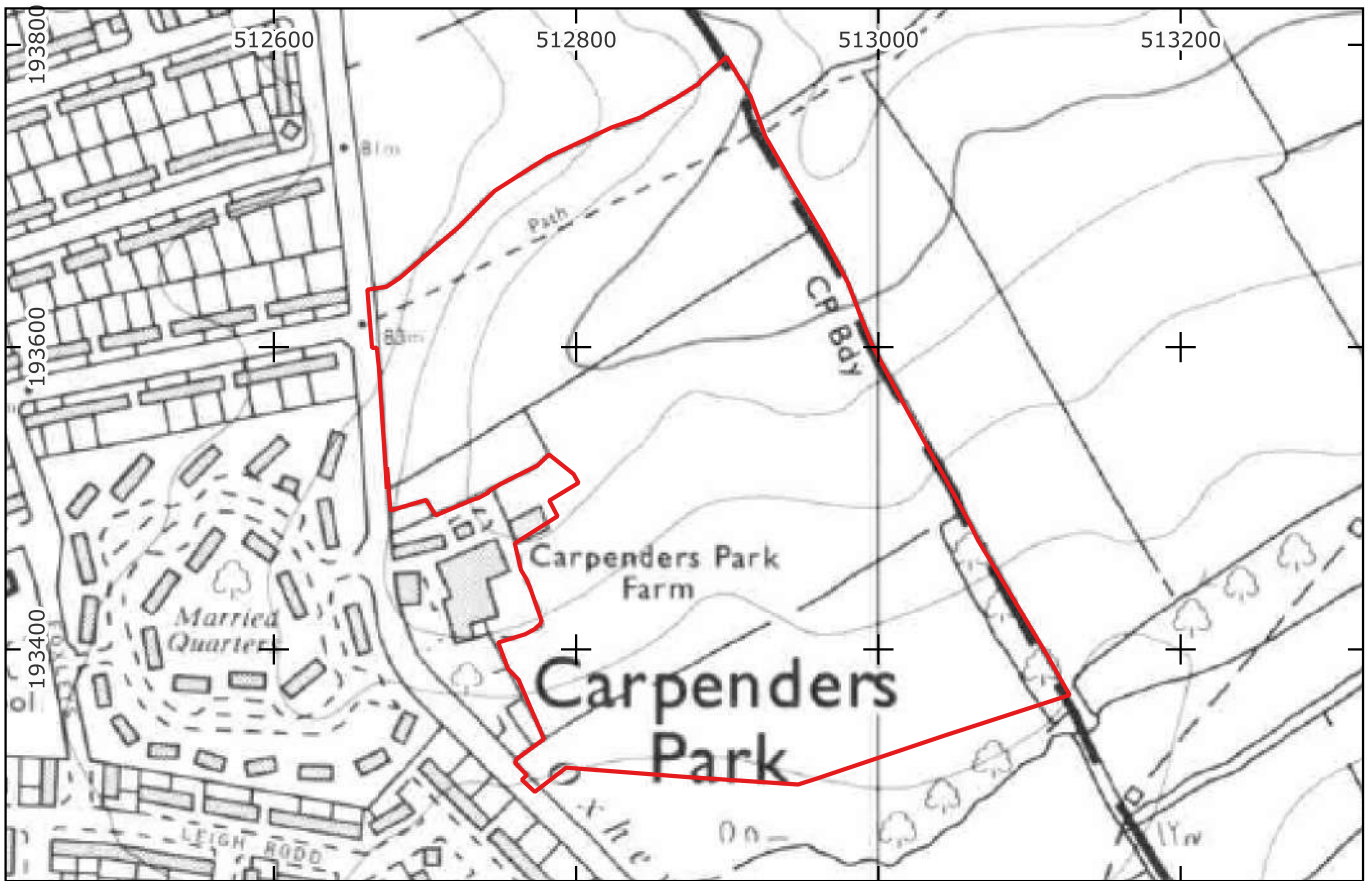


Figure 15: 1976 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

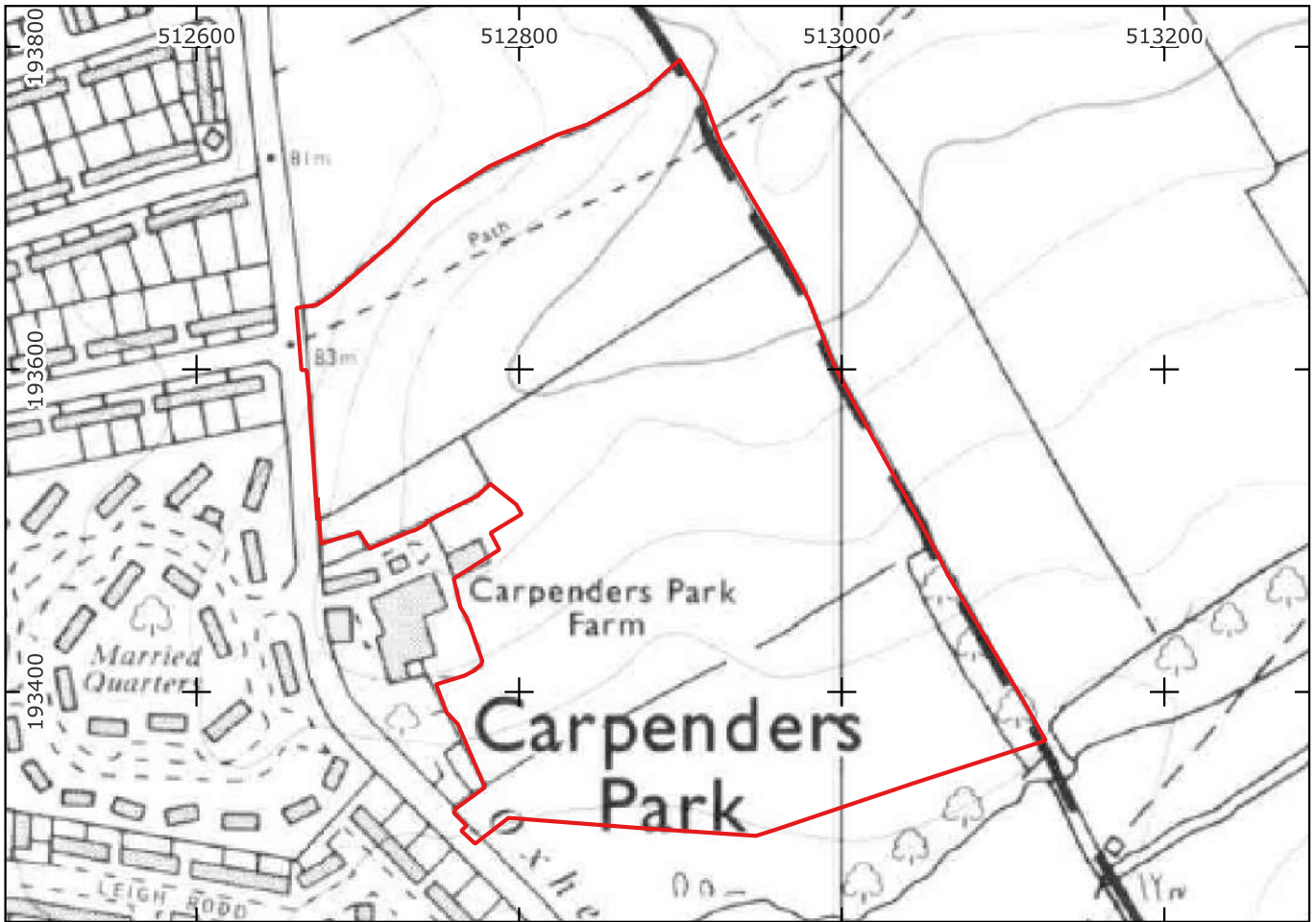


Figure 16: 1992 National Grid Ordnance Survey map



Figure 17: 2001 National Grid Ordnance Survey map

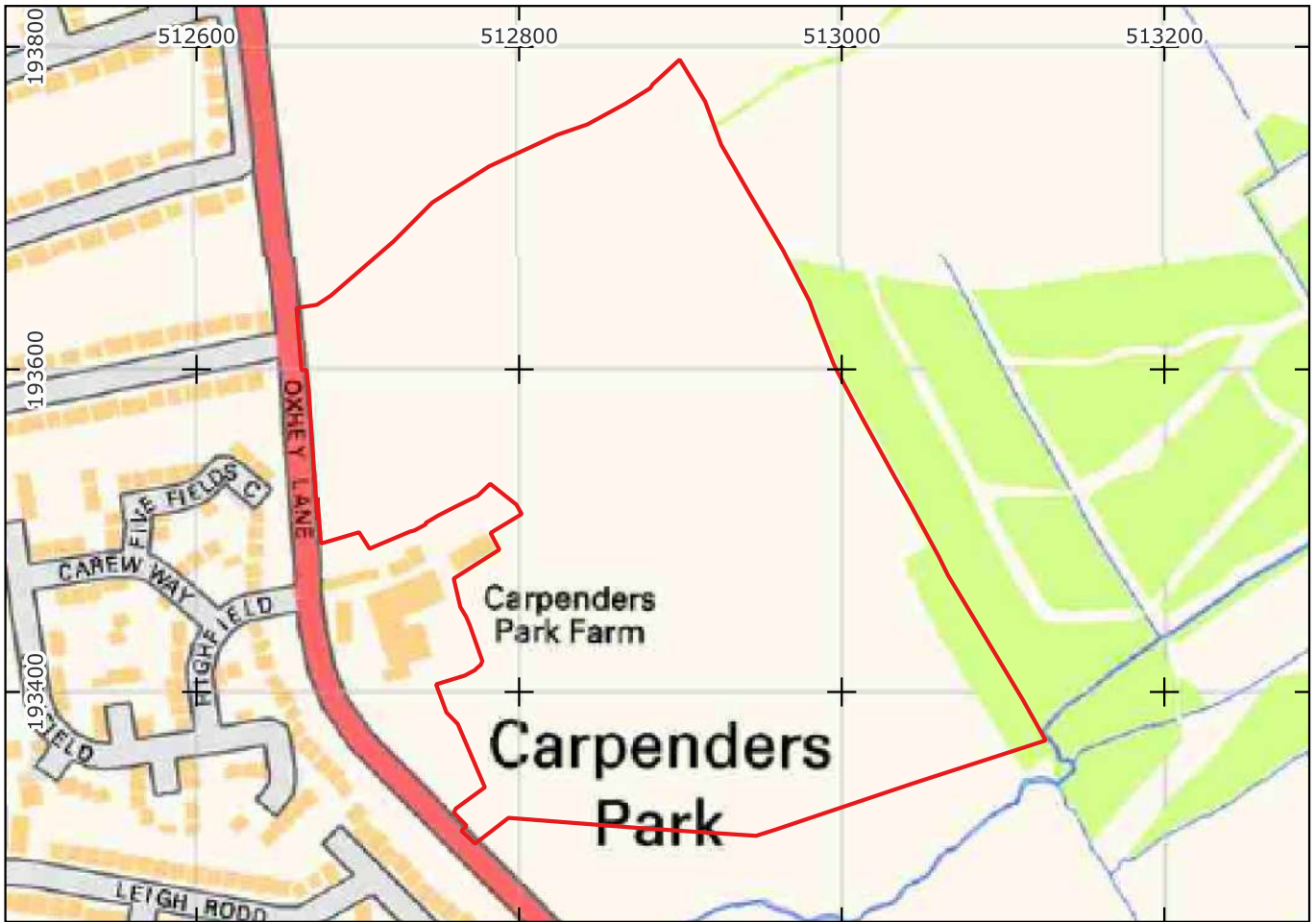


Figure 18: 2010 National Grid Ordnance Survey map



Figure 19: 2025 National Grid Ordnance Survey map



Key:

 Site Boundary

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**Land East of Carpenders
Park, Oxhey Lane,
Hertfordshire**



Figure 20

2023 Google Satellite image of
the Site

Project No.11489A | 15/8/2025 | Drawn By: JD

Appendix 1: 1997 Hedgerow Regulations

The regulations define a hedgerow as being;

'any hedgerow growing in, or adjacent to, any common land, protected land, or land used for agriculture, forestry or the breeding or keeping of horses, ponies or donkeys, if—

it has a continuous length of, or exceeding, 20 metres; or

it has a continuous length of less than 20 metres and, at each end, meets (whether by intersection or junction) another hedgerow'.

In terms of the criteria for determining what an 'important' hedgerow is, for the purposes of this assessment these will be limited to those criteria within the Regulations which define a hedgerow which is considered 'important' in terms of archaeology and history. These are as follows:

'1. The hedgerow marks the boundary, or part of the boundary, of at least one historic parish or township; and for this purpose "historic" means existing before 1850.

2. The hedgerow incorporates an archaeological feature which is—

included in the schedule of monuments compiled by the Secretary of State under section 1 (schedule of monuments) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; or

recorded at the relevant date in a Sites and Monuments Record.

3. The hedgerow—

is situated wholly or partly within an archaeological site included or recorded as mentioned in paragraph 2 or on land adjacent to and associated with such a site; and

is associated with any monument or feature on that site.

4. The hedgerow—

marks the boundary of a pre-1600 AD estate or manor recorded at the relevant date in a Sites and Monuments Record or in a document held at that date at a Record Office; or

is visibly related to any building or other feature of such an estate or manor.

5. The hedgerow—

is recorded in a document held at the relevant date at a Record Office as an integral part of a field system pre-dating the Inclosure Acts; or

is part of, or visibly related to, any building or other feature associated with such a system, and that system—

is substantially complete; or

is of a pattern which is recorded in a document prepared before the relevant date by a local planning authority, within the meaning of the 1990 Act, for the purposes of development control within the authority's area, as a key landscape characteristic.'

Appendix 2: Proposed Parameter Plan

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- KEY: PARAMETER PLAN
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - PROPOSED VEHICULAR ACCESS
 - PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS
 - PROPOSED EMERGENCY ACCESS
 - PRIMARY ACCESS ROAD
 - OPEN SPACE (INCLUDING EXISTING VEGETATION AND PROPOSED INDICATIVE PLANTING)
 - INDICATIVE SURFACE WATER ATTENUATION BASIN
 - INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT PARCELS / ROAD ALIGNMENT CAN DEVIATE BY UP TO 10M UPON DETAILED DESIGN (UP TO 3 STOREYS)
 - INDICATIVE DEVELOPMENT PARCELS / ROAD ALIGNMENT CAN DEVIATE BY UP TO 10M UPON DETAILED DESIGN (UP TO 2 STOREYS)
 - HOUSING WITH CARE
 - INDICATIVE LOCATION FOR A CHILDREN'S HOME (FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN)
 - LEAP

LAND AT CARPENDERS PARK - PARAMETER PLAN

