



ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

SOUTH WEST MILTON KEYNES

ROB BOURN BA MA MIFA

NOVEMBER 2014

Planning • Heritage

Specialist & Independent Advisors to the Property Industry

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT

**SOUTH WEST MILTON
KEYNES**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
AYLESBURY DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SITE CENTRED AT:
SP 832 322**

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NOVEMBER 2014

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been researched by Kate Page-Smith and prepared by Rob Bourn of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Hallam Land Management, Taylor Wimpey, Bellcross Homes, Gleeson Homes and Willam Davis Ltd.
- 1.2 The assessment considers land known as SWMK, south west of Milton Keynes, at grid reference SP 832 322 (approximate centre of study site) (Figs 1 & 2).
- 1.3 In accordance with government guidance on the historic environment and planning (NPPF Section 12) this assessment draws together the available archaeological, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the site and assess nearby designated heritage assets.
- 1.4 The assessment comprises an examination of evidence held by the Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), the Milton Keynes HER, and incorporates published and unpublished material, and charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise.
- 1.5 As a result, the assessment enables relevant parties to assess the archaeological potential of the site and to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and/or archaeological solutions to the potential identified.

2.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

2.1 Government policy relating to the historic environment is contained in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Section 12, entitled *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 12 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:

- Delivery of sustainable development
- Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment
- Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and
- Recognition of the contribution that heritage assets make to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

2.2 Section 12 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term.

2.3 Paragraph 128 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset, and that level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.

2.4 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 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. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

2.5 *Archaeological Interest* is defined as a heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

2.6 *Designated Heritage Assets* comprise of: World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas.

- 2.7 *Significance* is defined as: The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 2.8 *Setting* is defined as: The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
- 2.9 In short, government policy provides a framework which:
- Protects nationally important designated Heritage Assets
 - Protects the settings of such designations
 - In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from desk based assessment and field evaluation where necessary) to enable informed decisions
 - Provides for the excavation and investigation of heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence publicly accessible
- 2.10 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.
- 2.11 The Local Plan framework is provided by the Aylesbury District Local Plan (January 2004) which contains the following saved relevant policies:

POLICY GP.59

IN DEALING WITH DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AFFECTING A SITE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE THE COUNCIL WILL PROTECT, ENHANCE AND PRESERVE THE HISTORIC INTEREST AND ITS SETTING.

WHERE RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT HISTORIC REMAINS MAY BE PRESENT ON A DEVELOPMENT SITE PLANNING APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SUPPORTED BY DETAILS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION. IN SUCH CASES THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT PROPOSALS TO PRESERVE THE HISTORIC INTEREST WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE.

WHERE PERMISSION IS GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING SITES CONTAINING ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS THE COUNCIL WILL IMPOSE CONDITIONS OR SEEK PLANNING OBLIGATIONS TO SECURE THE EXCAVATION AND RECORDING OF THE REMAINS AND PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS.

- 2.12 Milton Keynes Core Strategy (2013) policy CS19 covers the historic environment:

POLICY CS19 - THE HISTORIC AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

DEVELOPMENTS WILL PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BOROUGH'S HERITAGE ASSETS, INCLUDING IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY NEW TOWN ARCHITECTURE. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS MUST CONSIDER THE CHARACTER, APPEARANCE AND SETTING OF SITES, BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AREAS, PARKS AND GARDENS AND LANDSCAPES THAT ARE OF HISTORIC, ARCHITECTURAL, CULTURAL, BIODIVERSITY OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

- 2.13 Relevant saved historic environment policies in the Milton Keynes Local Plan 2001-2011 (December 2005) are:

POLICY HE1 - PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE REFUSED FOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THAT WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT UPON A SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT OR ITS SETTING, OR UNSCHEDULED SITE OF LOCAL, REGIONAL OR NATIONAL IMPORTANCE OR THEIR SETTINGS.

WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS PROPOSED AFFECTING AN UNSCHEDULED SITE OF KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST THEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS WILL NEED TO BE CARRIED OUT TO ESTABLISH A MITIGATION AND/OR EXCAVATION STRATEGY PRIOR TO DEVELOPMENT BEING PERMITTED.

WHERE DEVELOPMENT IS PERMITTED, CONSENT WILL BE SUBJECT TO A LEGAL AGREEMENT AND/OR CONDITIONS, TO ENSURE THAT:

- (i) ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS ARE PRESERVED IN SITU; OR**
- (ii) IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES, PROVISION IS MADE FOR THE EVALUATION, EXCAVATION AND RECORDING OF BELOW AND ABOVE GROUND ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS PRIOR TO AND DURING DEVELOPMENT, FOLLOWED BY POST EXCAVATION RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION.**

3.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 Geology

- 3.1.1 The solid geology of the area as shown on the BGS map sheet 220 (Leighton Buzzard) is Boulder Clay with a narrow band of alluvial deposits on both sides of a stream that cuts through the site.

3.2 Topography

- 3.2.1 The study site is in an area of gently rolling landscape lying between 120m OD and 90m OD. At the eastern end of the site, Weasel Lane runs approximately along the top of a ridge (at c. 118m OD) from which the land falls away to the south toward the former railway at c. 90m and more gently to the north toward the A421 (at c. 105m OD).

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Timescales used in this report.

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000 – 12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 – 4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 – 2,200 BC
Bronze Age	2,200 – 700 BC
Iron Age	700BC – 43AD

Historic

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

4.2 Examination of data in the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes HERs and various published and unpublished sources, indicate that the study site itself contains very few recorded archaeological remains. This may be due to a lack of systematic archaeological survey within the area. However, archaeological remains in the vicinity of the study site are dominated by Roman, Saxon and Post-Medieval remains. This report, while considering all of the evidence, will concentrate on these periods but will draw upon relevant evidence for all periods. The location of sites referred to are shown on Fig. 3.

4.3 Prehistoric

4.3.1 Pre Iron Age remains are scarce in the general vicinity of the study site. Mesolithic worked flints have been recorded c. 1.1km to the (Site 1) and c. 1.5km to the southwest (Site 2) of the study site. A single Neolithic stone axe has been recorded c. 1.3km to the north west (Site 3). No other finds or features of pre Iron Age date have been recorded within c.1km radius of the study site.

4.3.2 The cropmark of a rectangular enclosure along with a possible ring ditch has been recorded at the eastern edge of the site (Site 4). Although this feature is undated it is likely to be Prehistoric in date.

- 4.3.3 Recent evaluation and excavation at Tattenhoe Park to the north of the site revealed the remains of a middle to late Iron Age open settlement (i.e. not defended) (Site 5). This comprised at least 21 roundhouses, an area of copper working and possibly grain storage. The settlement was partially enclosed in the late Iron Age.
- 4.3.4 Although the general lack of recorded pre Iron Age remains may be the result of low levels of systematic survey in the vicinity, it is suggestive of possibly a low level of activity during much of early Prehistory. However, in recent years archaeological investigations undertaken ahead of large scale developments in the Milton Keynes area has often revealed a higher than anticipated level of early Prehistoric remains. It is therefore considered possible that the site has a moderate potential for as yet unrecorded earlier Prehistoric remains.
- 4.3.5 The recent excavation of a large Iron Age settlement at Tattenhoe c. 400m to the north of the site is a clear indication that, while there are no known late Prehistoric remains within the site, the area was clearly occupied at the time. Therefore, the study site is considered to have moderate potential for as yet unrecorded Iron Age remains.

4.4 **Roman**

- 4.4.1 The study site is located immediately to the south the A421 which follows the route of a Roman road leading from the small town of *Magiovinium* (to the east) to Alchester (to the west). This road was part of what appears to have been a reasonably well-organised relatively dense occupation of the area. A geophysical survey of an area between the study site and the former Swanbourne Railway Sidings identified a small Roman settlement or farmstead comprising of ditched enclosures, pits and a possible hearth/kiln, all associated with a spread of Roman pottery and tile, c. 400m to the south east of the site (Site 6) (Fig. 4). Information from Buckinghamshire County Council indicates that this survey was subsequently extended with positive results but no report on this work has been made public. Therefore, the results of the geophysical survey are taken to be indicative of the minimum extent of these remains rather than the absolute extent.
- 4.4.2 A small Roman settlement/farmstead was recently recorded during evaluation and excavation works at Snellshall East, immediately to the north of the A421/ Buckingham Road roundabout (Site 7). This had been heavily truncated by ploughing and so was not fully understood but was interpreted as a settlement and its field system.

- 4.4.3 An unspecified quantity of pottery has been recorded within the site (Site 8). The nature of these findings is unclear but it is indicative of possible settlement. Further sherds of Roman pottery and a piece of tile have been recorded in the south eastern corner of the site beside the railway (Site 9). Again, the nature of these findings is unclear but it is indicative of possible settlement.
- 4.4.4 A pit containing Roman pottery and a 1st century coin was recorded during an excavation of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery ahead of the construction of the A421, c. 500m to the north east of the study site (Site 10). Whether this was a single isolated feature or was part of a larger Roman site is not known.
- 4.4.5 A 1st – 3rd century industrial site comprising a smelting hearth/kiln used for iron smelting, up to 2 timber framed buildings, pits, ditches, along with associated pottery, a coin and an inhumation burial, was recorded during the bulldozing of a former gravel pit and rubbish dump c. 1.2km to the south of the site (Site 11). This site is not fully understood as it is clear that the bulldozing of the site had resulted in significant damage to the remains. A probable settlement has also been recorded c. 600m to the north west of study site (Site 12) comprising a spread of pottery, tile, tegula, and a quern stone. The site has not been subject to intrusive archaeological investigation and therefore, the exact nature and extent of this site has not been fully established.
- 4.4.6 A number of isolated Roman finds have been recorded in the vicinity of the study site such as pottery c. 1.2km to the west (Site 13) and a 4th century coin c. 600m to the south (Site 14). Roman pottery sherds have been recorded c. 400m to the north east (Site 15) and c. 200m to the north (Site 16).
- 4.4.7 The presence of the Roman road and at least four probable settlement/farmstead sites in the immediate vicinity indicate that there was a significant Roman population present with known sites being c. 1km apart. There has been limited systematic archaeological investigation within the site. However, where there has been recent systematic survey in the immediate vicinity of the study site, a previously unsuspected Roman settlement site was recorded (Site 6). The presence of Roman pottery at a number of locations within and adjacent to the site are indicative that further settlement/farmstead sites may be present within the study site itself. The presence/absence, extent, etc. of any such sites are not known. Therefore, the study site is considered to have localised high potential for Roman remains (e.g. Sites 6, 8 & 9) and medium potential for further Roman remains, the location and significance of which is currently unknown within the rest of the site.

4.5 **Saxon - Early Medieval**

- 4.5.1 The study site is located away from the historic centres of the nearby villages which may have had Saxon origins. However, a metal detecting survey and an excavation ahead of the construction of the A421 at Bottle Dump Corner, immediately to the north of the central part of the study site, recorded the remains of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Site 10). Five adult inhumations burials, all aligned north-south were recorded along with grave goods comprising 2 spearheads, an iron knife, an unidentified copper object, an iron pin and, glass and amethyst beads. The grave goods were generally of 6th – 7th century date and therefore, the burials were pagan. The cemetery lies alongside the route of the Roman road and therefore it is possible that it has a direct association with the road which would probably have still be in use in the 6th – 7th century. The only other records of Saxon/early Medieval finds in the vicinity of the study site is a single Edward the Elder penny (899-925 AD) (Site 16) and an early Medieval stud (Site 17).
- 4.5.2 The presence of the cemetery is a clear indication of a contemporary settlement somewhere in the vicinity of the study site. The location of such a settlement is unknown. It is therefore possible that this settlement could be within the study site. However, there is no evidence available to suggest that this is specifically the case. The full extent of the cemetery is not known, therefore it is possible that it could extend into the site. Therefore the area in the vicinity of cemetery is considered to have high potential for Saxon remains. The northern part of the site is also considered to have moderate potential for a Saxon settlement, although its existence and location is unknown. Therefore, although there is no direct evidence available, it is considered that the study site has moderate potential for Saxon remains.

4.6 **Medieval**

- 4.6.1 The study site was originally to the south east of Whaddon Chase which originated as a hunting chase possibly soon after the Norman Conquest and from c. 1242 became a hunting forest. The Chase persisted until it was enclosed in the early 19th century, however, it is clear that it was subject to partial and piecemeal enclosure prior to this. The north western corner of the site beside Thrift Wood lay within the Whaddon Chase but the rest of the site lay to the south east of the chase throughout the medieval and post medieval periods.

4.6.2 The earthwork of a moated site lies c.500m to the south west of the study site (Site 18). The site is presumed to be of Medieval date. It was formerly within a wood called Lodge Coppice and therefore, it may have contained the keeper's lodge.

4.6.3 Examination of aerial photographs of the site reveal the ploughed remains of large areas of ridge and furrow within the site (Fig. 5). An area of ridge and furrow, noted on the Bucks SMR as being locally important, has been recorded to the south of Bletchley Leys Farm. However, there is little trace of these earthworks on the ground and therefore they are presumed to have been ploughed down.

4.6.4 The location of the site within an essentially wooded environment which comprised part of a hunting chase/park and the general lack of Medieval finds or features located within 500m radius indicate that the study has low potential for Medieval remains.

4.7 **Post-Medieval**

4.7.1 The first map, which shows the site at a reasonable and nearly accurate scale, is a plan of the demesne of Salden dated 1599. The site is depicted as straddling the boundary with Bletchley lying partly within The Old Chace (i.e. Whaddon Chase) and Salden Fields. No detail of the site is shown.

4.7.2 Jeffery's Map of Buckinghamshire (1770) depicts the site as being in open countryside (Fig. 6). It shows no detail of the site except the road layout.

4.7.3 A plan of Newton Longville parish dated 1779, depicts the majority of the southern half of the site (Fig. 7). At this time, this portion of the site lay within Wood Field. The layout of the pre-enclosure field system is shown in some detail and basically accords with the layout of the ridge and furrow noted from post WWII aerial photographs. No structures are shown.

4.7.4 Bryant's map of Buckinghamshire (1825) depicts the site much as Jeffery's map of 1770 did (Fig. 8).

4.7.5 The site was enclosed between 1813 and 1841 (depicted on the Newton Longville and Bletchley Inclosure maps – not reproduced here). The existing field boundaries reflect the enclosure layout albeit with many field boundaries removed.

4.7.6 The first edition OS 6" scale map (1885) depicts the site essentially the same as it is today (Fig. 9). The site remains unchanged throughout the succeeding editions of the

OS 6" scale maps until the 1938 OS map at which point the Swanbourne Railway Sidings are first shown (Fig. 10). The sidings had been closed and removed by 1977 by which time there had been some piecemeal hedgerow loss (Fig. 11). There has been some further piecemeal hedgerow loss since 1977 and the A421 was constructed in the 1990s (Fig. 2). Therefore, the site has remained largely unchanged from the when it was enclosed in the 19th century until the present day (Fig. 2).

- 4.7.7 The earthwork remains of possible water cultivation works have been recorded at the western end of the site (Site 14). However, there is some doubt as to authenticity of this report and the field has been ploughed leading to the destruction of these possible earthworks. A possible site of a Post-Medieval gallows lies within the site, of which there is no trace of today (Site 15).

5.0 SITE CONDITIONS AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Site Conditions

- 5.1.1 The site is currently a mixture of arable and pastureland containing a few agricultural buildings.

5.2 The Proposed Development & Potential Archaeological Impact

- 5.2.1 The proposed development comprises the construction of a residential scheme, neighbourhood centres, local centres, employment, schools, infrastructure, and open space.
- 5.2.2 The desk-based assessment has established that the site has moderate potential to contain late Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon settlement or associated remains. In places, the potential for Roman (e.g. to the north of the former railway sidings) and Saxon (to east of Bottledump roundabout) is high or even certain. The presence or absence of such remains has not been established and if such remains are present, their location is unknown. The geophysical survey of Site 6 has demonstrated that there are the remains of Roman settlements present within the vicinity of the site that have no visible above ground features.
- 5.2.3 If such remains are present, they may be impacted by earthmoving operations such as topsoil stripping, cutting foundations, and the construction of infrastructure. However, on the present evidence, it is considered unlikely that such remains, if present would be of more than local importance and therefore they will not require preservation in-situ. Therefore archaeology is not a constraint on principle of development. However, if the presence of such remains were to be established, it may be possible to accommodate preservation in-situ, depending on their importance and extent, by the use of open space allocation within the scheme. This would depend on the needs of the proposed scheme and the importance of any archaeological remains demonstrated to survive.
- 5.2.1 In the event that a planning application were to be submitted, it is considered likely that Buckinghamshire County Council may require further evaluation ahead of the determination of the application. If this were to be so, the first stage of such evaluation should be geophysical survey. Should such a survey record archaeological remains, a programme of evaluation trenching may be required. The timing of such a requirement would need to be negotiated with Buckinghamshire County Council.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The desk-based assessment has established that the site has the potential to contain late Prehistoric, Roman and possibly Saxon remains. Should as yet unrecorded remains be present within the site, they may be impacted upon by the proposed development. However, on the present evidence, the potential for such remains and the impact the proposed development may have upon them cannot be assessed.
- 6.2 In the light of the available evidence, it is considered unlikely that any as yet unrecorded remains that may be present will prejudice the principle of development. However, in the event of a planning application being submitted, it is considered likely that Buckinghamshire County Council may require further evaluation ahead of the determination of the application. If this were to be so, the first stage of such evaluation should be geophysical survey as this has been shown to be very successful to the south east of the site. Should such a survey record archaeological remains, a programme of evaluation trenching may be required. The timing of such a requirement would need to be negotiated with Buckinghamshire County Council

SOURCES CONSULTED

General

Julia Wise – Buckinghamshire County Council
Nick Crank – Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer
Buckinghamshire SMR
Milton Keynes SMR
Buckinghamshire County Records Office
British History Online

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Cartographic

1599 Salden Estate Map

1770 Jeffery's Map of Buckinghamshire

1779 Plan of the Parish of Newton Longville in the County of Bucks

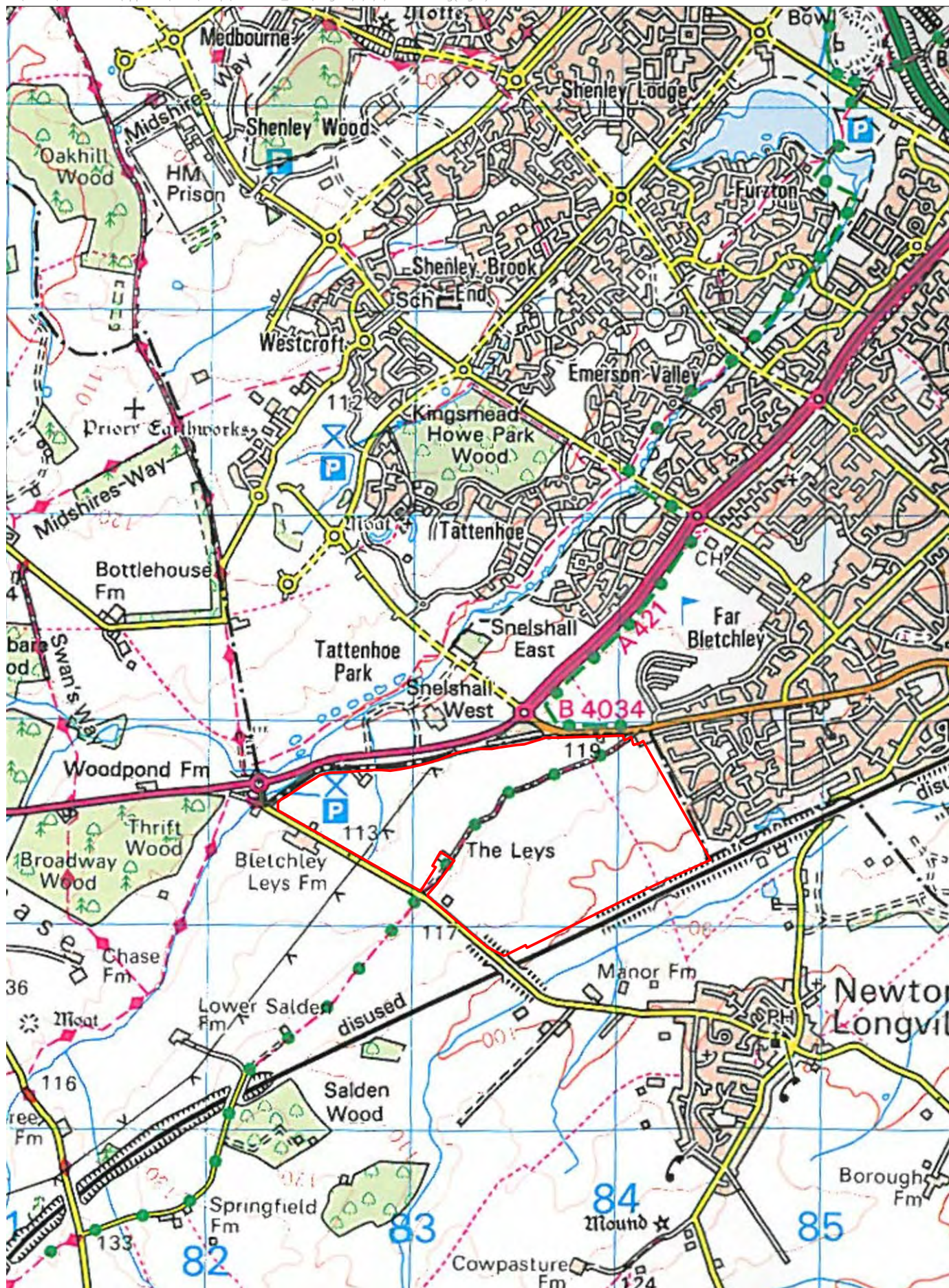
1813 Bletchley Inclosure Map

1825 Bryant's Map of Buckinghamshire

1841 Newton Longville Inclosure Map

1841 Bletchley Tithe Map

1841 Newton Longville Tithe Map
1844 Whaddon Chase Inclosure Map
1885 OS 1:10,560 scale map
1900 OS 1:10,560 scale map
1926 OS 1:10,560 scale map
1938 OS 1:10,560 scale map
1958 OS 1:10,560 scale map
1968 OS 1:10,560 scale map
1977 OS 1:10,000 scale map
1990 OS 1:10,000 scale map
1999 OS 1:10,000 scale map
2007 OS 1:10,000 scale map



 Site boundary



Project title: Salden Chase, South West
Milton Keynes

Date printed:
Nov 06, 2014

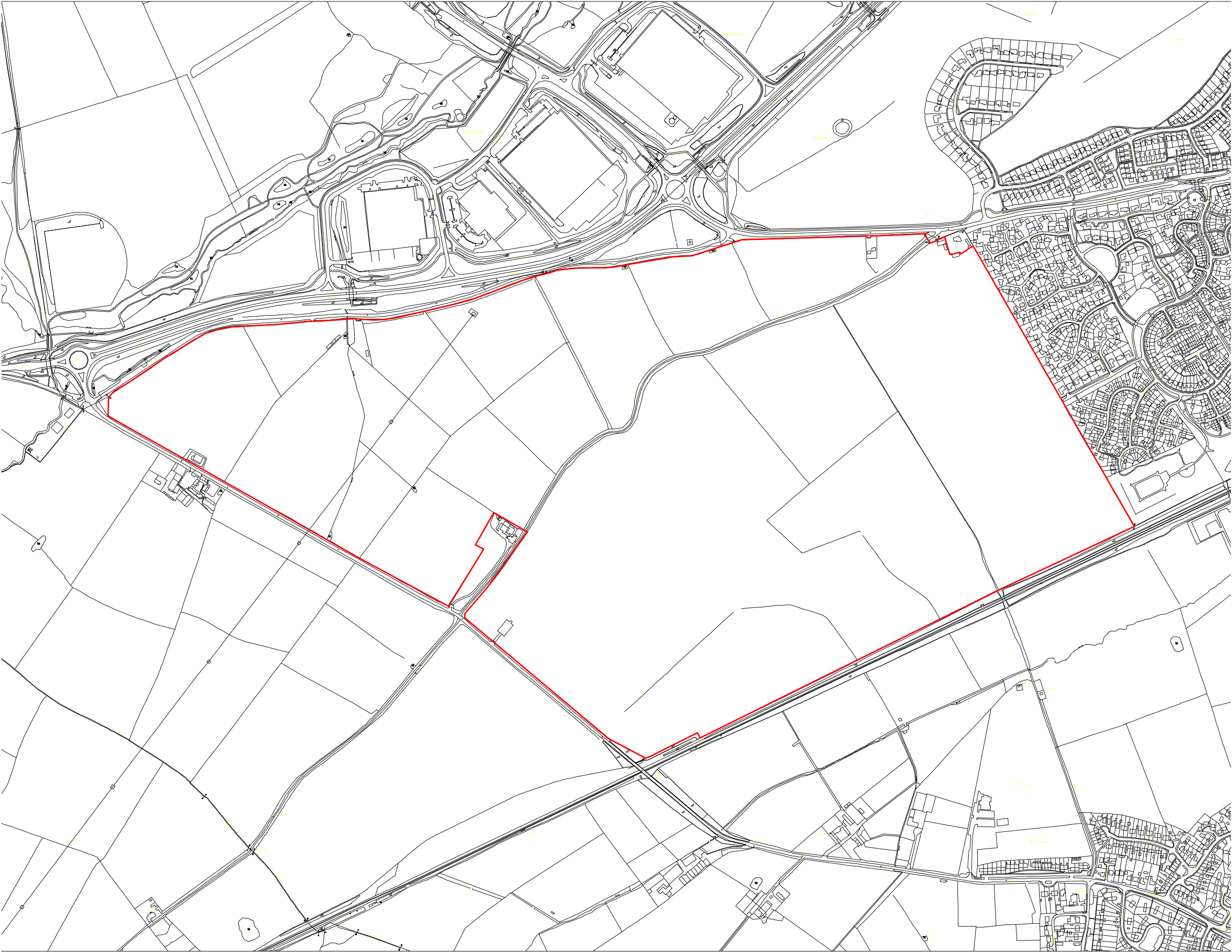
Drawn by: SD
Checked by: RB



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Figure 1: Site Location



Additional information:

Site boundary

N

Project title:

Salden Chase, SW Milton Keynes

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Scale at A3: 1:10,000

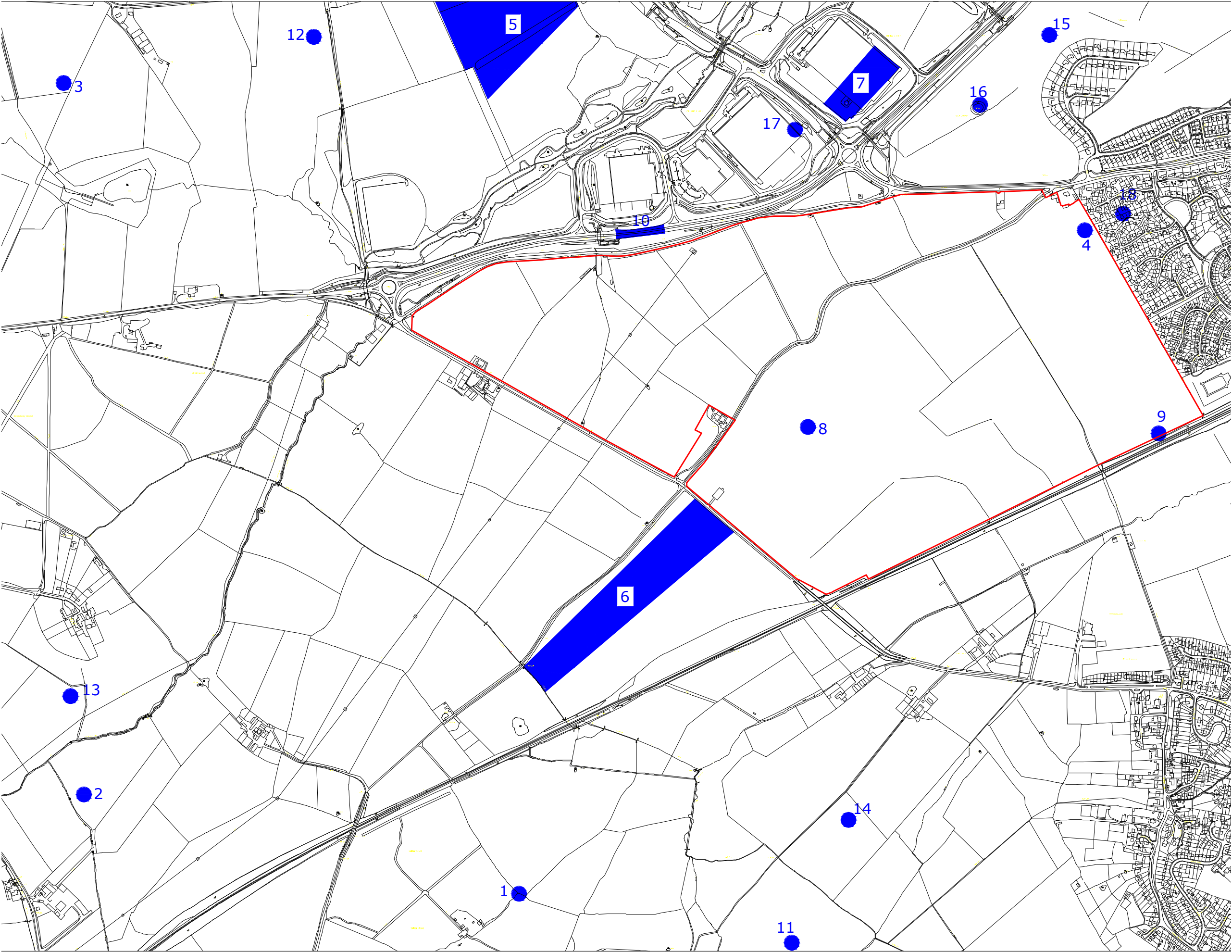
0 250 m

Date printed: Nov 06, 2014

Drawn by: SD

Checked by: RB

Figure 2: Site details



Additional information:

- Site boundary
- Sites in text



Project title:
Salden Chase, SW Milton Keynes

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Scale at A3: 1:10,000
0 250 m

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Figure 3: Location of sites mentioned in the text



Additional information:
- Survey by GeoQuest Associates

Project title:
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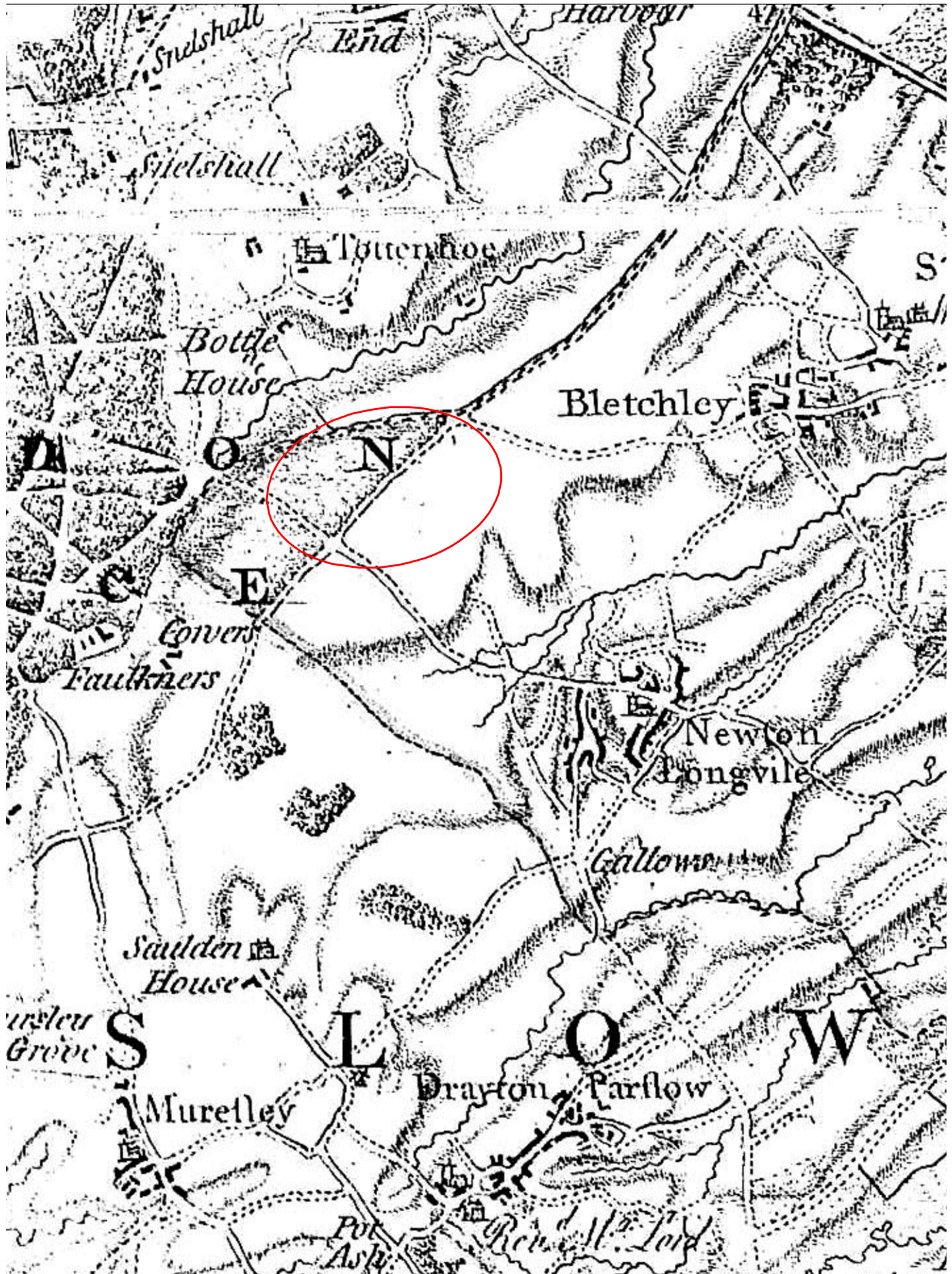
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Scale at A3: 1:2000
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Checked by: RB

Figure 4: Geophysical survey plot of Site 6



 Site location



Project title: Salden Chase, South
West Milton Keynes

Date printed:
Nov 06, 2014

Drawn by: SD

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Figure 5: Jeffery's Map 1770