AH
Heritage Planning

ARMOUR HERITAGE

LEIGHTON PARK SCHOOL
SHINFIELD ROAD
READING
WEST BERKSHIRE

HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF NEW MUSIC AND MEDIA FACILITIES

NOVEMBER 2015

AH DOCUMENT REF.
AH344/1

AH
Heritage Planning

Leighton Park School
Shinfield Road
Reading
West Berkshire

Heritage Statement
for
Proposed Development of New Music and Media Facilities

AH Project Ref: AH344
AH Report Ref: AH344/1

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Date	November 2015
Issue no.	01
Approved	Sue Farr (26/11/15)

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 4

2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT 5

3. METHODOLOGY 8

4. SITE ASSESSMENT 16

5. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE 19

6. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON HERITAGE ASSETS 25

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 27

8. SOURCES AND REFERENCES 29

Figures and Plates

Fig. 1 Location of Leighton Park School, showing area of assessment
Fig. 2 Historic mapping: 1756 plan of Lordship and Liberty of Earley
Fig. 3 Historic mapping: 1820 plan of the tithings of Sonning Town, Woodley & Sandford and Earley
Fig. 4 Historic mapping: 1877 Ordnance Survey map
Fig. 5 Historic mapping: 1899 Ordnance Survey map
Fig. 6 Historic mapping: 1912 Ordnance Survey map
Fig. 7 Historic mapping: 1932 Ordnance Survey map
Fig. 8 Historic mapping: 1959 Ordnance Survey map
Fig. 9 Historic mapping: Buildings and buildings plans 1960 (courtesy of Leighton Park School)
Fig. 10 Historic mapping: Buildings and buildings plans 1990 (courtesy of Leighton Park School)
Fig. 11 Site boundary and 500m study area showing significant heritage assets
Fig. 12 Significance plan

Plate 1 School House and attached Waterhouse laboratories, looking southeast
Plate 2 School House and attached Waterhouse laboratories, looking east
Plate 3 School Theatre (New Hall), looking west
Plate 4 Leighton Park, south elevation, late 19th century (courtesy NVB Architects)
Plate 5 Surviving parkland and Grove House, looking northwest
Plate 6 Townson House, looking northeast
Plate 7 Peckover Hall, looking northeast
Plate 8 Key View 1, looking east toward School House
Plate 9 Key View 2, looking east toward School House and attached Waterhouse laboratory wing
Plate 10 View east from car park to south of main entrance to School House

Appendix 1 Proposed Development plans and elevations
Appendix 2 Historic England List Entry

SUMMARY

Project Name: Leighton Park School

Location: Shinfield Road, Reading, West Berkshire

NGR: 473267, 171459

Type: Heritage Statement

In February 2015 Armour Heritage was commissioned by Leighton Park School to complete a Heritage Statement with regard to the Proposed Development of new music and media facilities at Leighton Park School, Shinfield Road, Reading, West Berkshire, centred on NGR 473267, 171459.

The development proposals, in broad terms, comprise a full planning application for new music and media facilities located adjacent to the existing school theatre (New Hall). The proposed works include:

- Removal of existing temporary practice rooms;
- Creation of new foyer;
- New music teaching facilities;
- Creation of pedestrian friendly hard landscaping; and
- Provision of new parking areas adjacent to existing building to replace visitor parking and informal parking on drive.

The Proposed Development represents a single storey construction attached to the existing 1970s New Hall building which is proposed to be built on a curve. The low-level construction of the new build allows the profile of the existing Grade II Listed Old School building and its attached Waterhouse wing to remain visible from the wider parkland. The new build is proposed to occupy a footprint of *c*. 930 sq. m.

This Heritage Statement has identified one Listed Building, and three historic undesignated buildings within the Site, which may be subject to adverse effects as a result of the development proposal, although it is considered that the setting of Grade II Listed School House and the attached Waterhouse laboratories has clearly been compromised through the construction of New Hall in the 1970s.

The impact assessment has identified that, whilst there are a number of areas in which adverse effects may occur, none may be deemed as resulting in substantial harm, which is interpreted as destruction of part or all of the Listed Building, or the loss of a large proportion of its setting. Neither of these circumstances is predicted as the result of the implementation of the development proposals, which it has been assessed has the potential to lead to less than substantial harm, in terms of the NPPF, and that the public benefits within the context of an educational establishment, demonstrably outweigh any harm.

1. INTRODUCTION

Outline

1.1. In February 2015 Armour Heritage was commissioned by Leighton Park School to complete a Heritage Statement (HS) with regard to the Proposed Development of new music and media facilities at Leighton Park School, Shinfield Road, Reading, West Berkshire, hereafter referred to as 'the Site', centred on NGR 473267, 171459 (Fig. 1).

1.2. For the purposes of this assessment, the northern half of the parkland within which the main school buildings are set has been assessed in detail (Blue Line area; Fig. 1). The remaining buildings and parkland to the south has also been considered, although detailed assessment with regard to heritage assets has been confined to the northern area where it is considered most likely that any adverse effects may occur.

1.3. The school comprises a complex of buildings dating from the mid-19th century to the later 20th century. School House, formerly Leighton Park House, and its attached laboratory block are protected as Grade II Listed Buildings under a single List Entry (School House and Attached Laboratories at Leighton Park School, List Entry No. 1113577).

Planning History

1.4. A proposal for similar development of facilities at the school was approved in 2007 (ref 07/00918/FUL), and was subsequently extended in 2010 (ref 10/00792/EXT). These proposals were, however, not implemented and have now expired. Subsequently new options were prepared to a similar brief but subsequently withdrawn following comments from the Principal Conservation Officer to Reading and Bracknell-Forest Councils.

1.5. Following further discussions and consultations, a new scheme has been adopted and it is this design which will be assessed in this document.

Scope, Nature and Structure of Report

1.6. Following this Introduction, this assessment begins at Section 2, providing a summary of the planning and development context within which the assessment has been undertaken. This identifies that an appreciation of context and the historic environment in particular is embedded within relevant national and local planning policy.

1.7. Section 3 sets out the methodology that has been employed in developing the Heritage Statement. It explains how the assessment of the associated school buildings, the wider parkland and other potential sensitive receptors, helps provide context and background for the assessment of the Listed Building(s), and any impacts upon designated heritage assets which may result from the Proposed Development.

1.8. The nature and scope of the research is summarised and the assessment process and criteria are explained.

1.9. Section 4 describes the Site and, where considered appropriate, its wider environs, which provides context for the Proposed Development. The Site and its historical development is described with particular focus on the period from the mid-19th to later 20th centuries, regarded as a period of rapid and significant change at the Site.

1.10. Statutory designations are identified, and the character of the Site is described, as is the extent of survival and completeness of heritage assets within it.

1.11. Section 5 addresses the settings of individual heritage assets within the Site, in line with Historic England guidance, and in each instance, the contribution of its setting to its overall significance.

1.12. Section 6 provides an assessment of the potential impacts associated with the Proposed Development, based upon nationally recognised criteria and the assessments of significance set out in Section 5.

1.13. Section 7 comprises a series of recommendations and conclusions based upon the assessments in Sections 5 and 6.

2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Introduction

2.1. There is national legislation and guidance relating to the protection of, and Proposed Development on or near, important archaeological sites or historical buildings within planning regulations as defined under the provisions of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*. In addition, local authorities are responsible for the protection of the historic environment within the planning system.

Planning policy and guidance

2.2. The assessment has been written within the following legislative, planning policy and guidance context:

- National Heritage Act 1983 (amended 2002);
- Town and Country Planning Act (1990);
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990);
- National Planning Policy Framework (2012);
- Planning Practice Guidance: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (2015);
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 2 - Managing Significance in Decision-taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015)
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2015);
- Conservation Principles: policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment (English Heritage 2008); and the
- Reading Adopted Core Strategy Document (adopted January 2008, Revised January 2015).

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)

2.3. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the *Listed Buildings Act*) imposes a general duty in respect of Listed Buildings in the exercise of planning functions.

2.4. Subsection (1) provides: “In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State 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”.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.5. The *National Planning Policy Framework* sets out planning policies relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It defines the historic environment as all aspects of the

environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora. It further classifies 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.

2.6. Heritage assets include designated sites, buildings and monuments alongside assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listings). Policies relate to both the treatment of the assets themselves and their settings, both of which are a material consideration in development management decision making.

2.7. The NPPF states that: "The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The role the environment will play is described as contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use of natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy".

2.8. Within the over-arching roles that the planning system will play, a set of twelve core land-use planning principles have been developed to underpin place-shaping and decision making. The 10th principle is to "…conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations".

2.9. When determining planning applications local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.10. Further to this, local planning authorities can request that the applicant should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail required in the assessment should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance: "Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation".

2.11. A key policy within the NPPF (*Para*. 132) is that when considering the impact of any development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II Listed Building, Park or Garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck

Sites, Battlefields, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

2.12. However, where a Proposed Development 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.

2.13. With regard to non-designated heritage assets specific policy is provided in that a balanced judgement will be required having due regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset affected.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

2.14. With regard to heritage assets, whether designated or not, the PPG states: Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.

2.15. With regard to the setting of a heritage asset, the PPG states: A thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset under consideration and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

2.16. Setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not.

2.17. The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

2.18. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. This will vary over time and according to circumstance.

2.19. When assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

2.20. Of particular importance to the assessment process is the PPG Section titled How to assess if there is substantial harm. This section states: What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

2.21. Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy

Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

2.22. While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm.

Local planning policy: Reading Adopted Core Strategy Document (adopted January 2008, Revised January 2015)

Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

2.23. Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

2.24. Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

2.25. The Borough Council is committed to protecting and where appropriate, enhancing, the Borough's historic environment. This includes ensuring that buildings and features of local architectural and historic interest (which are not necessarily recognised components of the historic environment) are taken fully into account and safeguarded, as appropriate. Regard must also be had to Reading's buried archaeological evidence, some of which is known, and much of which remains to be discovered.

2.26. The character and integrity of Listed Buildings will be preserved, and the Council will seek to enhance the settings of Listed Buildings wherever appropriate, by ensuring that new development in their vicinity is sympathetic.

3. METHODOLOGY

Guidance

3.1. This assessment has been carried out in respect of a number of guidance documents produced by Historic England (English Heritage prior to April 2015) since 2008, and, where appropriate, in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (CIfA 2014a).

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 2 - Managing Significance in Decision-taking in the Historic Environment

3.2. The GPA note advises a 6-stage approach to the identification of the significance of a heritage asset and the potential effects on its significance as a result of any development.

3.3. The significance of a heritage asset is the sum of its archaeological, architectural, historic, and artistic interest. A variety of terms are used in designation criteria (for example outstanding universal value for world heritage sites, national importance for Scheduled Monuments and special interest for Listed Buildings and conservation areas), but all of these refer to a heritage asset's significance.

3.4. The list of *Steps* is set out below, however the GPA does add…*it is good practice to check individual stages of this list but they may not be appropriate in all cases and the level of detail applied should be proportionate. For example, where significance and/or impact are relatively low, as will be the case in many applications, only a few paragraphs of information might be needed, but if significance and impact are high then much more information may be necessary.*

3.5. The recommended *Steps* are as follows:

- 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 and the need for change; and
- 6. Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

3.6. With regard to the application process, the GPA offers the following advice: "Understanding the *nature of the significance* is important to understanding the need for and best means of conservation. For example, a modern building of high architectural interest will have quite different sensitivities from an archaeological site where the interest arises from the possibility of gaining new understanding of the past.

3.7. Understanding the *extent of that significance* is also important because this can, among other things, lead to a better understanding of how adaptable the asset may be and therefore improve viability and the prospects for long term conservation.

3.8. Understanding the *level of significance* is important as it provides the essential guide to how the policies should be applied. This is intrinsic to decision-taking where there is unavoidable conflict with other planning objectives".

3.9. With regard to the assessment of the significance of a heritage asset, the GPA also states that the "...reason why society places a value on heritage assets beyond their mere utility has been explored at a more philosophical level by English Heritage in Conservation Principles (2008). Conservation Principles identifies four types of heritage value that an asset may hold: aesthetic, communal, historic and evidential value. This is simply another way of analysing its significance. Heritage values can help in deciding the most efficient and effective way of managing the heritage asset so as to sustain its overall value to society". For the purposes of this assessment and in line with Conservation Principles, the assessment of significance will include an assessment of a heritage asset's communal value.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets

3.10. GPA note 3. expands on the six stages outlined in GPA Note 2, as set out above.

Step 1: identifying the heritage assets affected and their settings

3.11. The starting point of any assessment is the identification of those heritage assets likely to be affected by the proposed development. For this purpose, if the proposed development is seen to be capable of affecting the contribution of a heritage asset's setting to its significance or the appreciation of its significance, it can be considered as falling within the asset's setting.

Step 2: Assessing whether, how and to what degree these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s)

3.12. This *Step* provides a check-list of the potential attributes of a setting that it may be appropriate to consider in order to define its contribution to the asset's heritage values and significance. Only a limited selection of the possible attributes listed below is likely to be important in terms of any single asset.

<u>The asset's physical surroundings</u>

- Topography;
- Other heritage assets (including buildings, structures, landscapes, areas or archaeological remains);
- Definition, scale and 'grain' of surrounding streetscape, landscape and spaces;
- Formal design;
- Historic materials and surfaces;
- Land use;
- Green space, trees and vegetation;
- Openness, enclosure and boundaries;
- Functional relationships and communications;
- History and degree of change over time;
- Integrity; and
- Issues such as soil chemistry and hydrology.

<u>Experience of the asset</u>

- Surrounding landscape or townscape character;
- Views from, towards, through, across and including the asset;
- Visual dominance, prominence or role as focal point;
- Intentional intervisibility with other historic and natural features;
- Noise, vibration and other pollutants or nuisances;
- Tranquillity, remoteness, 'wildness';
- Sense of enclosure, seclusion, intimacy or privacy;
- Dynamism and activity;
- Accessibility, permeability and patterns of movement;
- Degree of interpretation or promotion to the public;
- The rarity of comparable survivals of setting;
- The asset's associative attributes;
- Associative relationships between heritage assets;
- Cultural associations;
- Celebrated artistic representations; and

- Traditions.

Step 3: Assessing the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset(s)

3.13. The third stage of the analysis is to identify the range of effects that any proposed development may have on setting(s), and to evaluate the resultant degree of harm or benefit to the significance of the heritage asset(s).

3.14. The following check-list sets out the potential attributes of any proposed development which may affect setting, and thus its implications for the significance of the heritage asset. Only a limited selection of these is likely to be particularly important in terms of any particular development.

Location and siting of development

- Proximity to asset;
- Extent;
- Position in relation to landform;
- Degree to which location will physically or visually isolate asset; and
- Position in relation to key views.

The form and appearance of the development

- Prominence, dominance, or conspicuousness;
- Competition with or distraction from the asset;
- Dimensions, scale and massing;
- Proportions;
- Visual permeability (extent to which it can be seen through);
- Materials (texture, colour, reflectiveness, etc);
- Architectural style or design;
- Introduction of movement or activity; and
- Diurnal or seasonal change.

Other effects of the development

- Change to built surroundings and spaces;
- Change to skyline;
- Noise, odour, vibration, dust, etc.;
- Lighting effects and 'light spill';
- Change to general character (e.g. suburbanising or industrialising);
- Changes to public access, use or amenity;
- Changes to land use, land cover, tree cover;
- Changes to archaeological context, soil chemistry, or hydrology; and
- Changes to communications/accessibility/permeability.

Permanence of the development

- Anticipated lifetime/temporariness;
- Recurrence; and
- Reversibility.

Longer term or consequential effects of the development

- Changes to ownership arrangements;
- Economic and social viability; and

- Communal use and social viability.

Step 4: Maximising enhancement and minimising harm

3.15. Enhancement, as specified in the NPPF para.137, may be achieved by actions including:

- removing or re-modelling an intrusive building or feature;
- replacement of a detrimental feature by a new and more harmonious one;
- restoring or revealing a lost historic feature or view;
- introducing a wholly new feature that adds to the public appreciation of the asset;
- introducing new views (including glimpses or better framed views) that add to the public experience of the asset; or
- improving public access to, or interpretation of, the asset including its setting.

3.16. Options for reducing the harm arising from development may include the relocation of a development or its elements, changes to its design, the creation of effective long-term visual or acoustic screening, or management measures secured by planning conditions or legal agreements.

Step 5: Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes

3.17. Step 5 identifies the desirability of making and documenting the decision-making process and monitoring outcomes. For the purposes of the current assessment Stages 1 to 3 have been followed, with Stage 4 forming, if/where appropriate, part of the recommendations.

3.18. For the purposes of this assessment, Steps 1-4 have been followed.

3.19. For the purposes of archaeological context and setting assessment, this study has considered all heritage assets within the Site and, where considered appropriate, a study area of 500m measured from the Site boundaries (Fig. 11).

Standards & best practice

3.20. This assessment has been carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' publications *Standard and Guidance for desk-based assessment* (CIfA 2014a) and *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (CIfA 2014b).

Limitations of data

3.21. Much of the data used in this assessment consists of secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined for the purposes of this assessment. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from other secondary sources, is reasonably accurate.

Copyright information

3.22. This report may contain material that is independently copyrighted (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Armour Heritage is able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of its own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable. The end-user is reminded that they remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

Instruction & limitations of this report

3.23. Armour Heritage Ltd were instructed by Leighton Park School to complete a heritage statement with regard to Proposed Development at Leighton Park School, Shinfield Road, Reading, West Berkshire.

3.24. This report is a response to a specific instruction for a specific end use, specific site layout with regard to historic setting as present at the time of the initial site visit on 10th February 2015 and Proposed Development within the assessment framework on the date of issue. It is prepared for the sole use of Leighton Park School and their agents at the time of instruction.

3.25. For the avoidance of doubt, any duty of care to any other end users or third parties is specifically excluded. If a period of one year passes prior to commencing site operations or the planning framework for assessment is changed, then, a further survey or assessment may be required to ensure compliance with the statutory legal responsibility of the developers. Please contact Armour Heritage if there is any doubt.

3.26. The assessment is based on the assumption that buildings, settings or records have not been accidentally or intentionally removed or destroyed prior to survey or assessment and that evidence of historic remains have not been accidentally or deliberately removed prior to survey.

3.27. Armour Heritage can accept no responsibility for the accuracy of the survey if the Site has been accidentally or deliberately disturbed to remove evidence of archaeological remains.

3.28. Assignment of this report without the written consent of Armour Heritage Limited is forbidden. An assignment can be easily arranged but may require a re-assessment.

In the case of a change of plans, site use, site layout or changes of use of the wider area or buildings and/or end use, a new assessment is required to ensure its fitness for purpose, for which a fee is levied. Please contact Armour Heritage Limited for assignments at rob.ac@armourheritage.co.uk.

Documentary research

3.29. Records of archaeological monuments, events, historic buildings and historic landscape character within a 500m radius of the site were viewed online through Heritage Gateway. Historic mapping was acquired from Landmark's *ProMap* service and the Berkshire Record Office, with additional documentary evidence researched online through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). Historic archive plans were sourced from Leighton Park School's private collection.

3.30. A synthesis of all relevant and significant information is presented below. A selection of historic maps are presented in Figs. 2-10. Photographs of the Listed Building, along with historic images and modern images documenting other parts of the Site are presented in Plates 1-10.

3.31. The baseline survey involved consultation of readily available archaeological and historical information from documentary and cartographic sources. The major repositories of information consulted comprised:

- National Heritage List for England:
- World Heritage Sites;
- Scheduled Monuments;

- Listed Buildings;
- Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Registered Battlefield Sites;

3.32. Other sources comprised:

- Berkshire Record Office;
- Leighton Park School archives;
- Reading.gov.uk
- Available historic Ordnance Survey maps (Landmark/ProMap);
- Online sources, including ADS;
- Site visit and photographic survey.

Assessment Process

3.33. Underlying the identification of significance is a considered assessment process, the aim of which is as far as possible to bring objectivity to bear on the understanding of historic value of the Site and its key sensitive receptors, in particular heritage assets, the setting of which, will be affected by any future development, both within the Site's boundary, and its immediate environs.

3.34. Individual buildings, features, places and areas are assessed as per the Historic England guidance set out above, but also in consideration of the following criteria:

- Historical development of the Site;
- Identifiable historic relationships between important buildings, groups of buildings and/or buildings and spaces/routes;
- The way in which undesignated buildings relate to one other and to the more significant Listed Building; and
- The way in which the suite of buildings within the Site relate to the surviving parkland.

Assessment Criteria

3.35. The criteria used in this assessment to assign a value to the potential magnitude of impact as a result of any Proposed Development are set out in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Impact Magnitude Criteria

Magnitude of Impact	Defined as
Substantial Adverse	Total loss or major alteration of the assets or change in its setting, leading to the total loss or major reduction in the significance of the asset
Moderate Adverse	Partial Loss or alteration of the assets or change in its setting leading to the partial loss or reduction in the significance of the asset
Slight Adverse	Slight change from pre-development conditions to the asset or change in its setting leading to the slight loss or reduction in the significance of the asset

Negligible	No change or very slight change to the asset or change in its setting resulting in no change or reduction in the significance of the asset
Slight Beneficial	Slight improvement to the asset or change in its setting which slightly enhances the significance of the asset
Moderate Beneficial	Moderate improvement to the asset or change in its setting which moderately enhances the significance of the asset
Substantial Beneficial	Major improvement to the asset or change in its setting which substantially enhances the significance of the asset

3.36. Table 2, below, establishes the importance of a heritage asset in line with national criteria.

Table 2: Value of Heritage Assets

Importance of Heritage Asset	**Criteria**
High	World Heritage Sites Scheduled Monuments Archaeological sites of Schedulable quality & importance Grade I & II* Listed Buildings and their settings Registered Parks and Gardens and their settings Registered Battlefields Conservation Areas
Medium	Grade II Listed Buildings, Local Authority designated sites e.g. locally listed buildings and their settings Undesignated sites of demonstrable regional importance
Low	Sites with importance locally

3.37. Table 3, below, represents a significance and magnitude of impact matrix which illustrates how levels of impact equate to 'harm' as employed in the NPPF.

Table 3: Significance and Magnitude of Impact Matrix

Significance of Receptor	**Magnitude of Impact**				
	Substantial Adverse	**Moderate Adverse**	**Slight Adverse**	**Negligible**	**Beneficial**
High	Substantial Harm	Less than Substantial Harm	Less than Substantial Harm	Less than Substantial Harm	Positive Effect
Medium	Less than Substantial Harm	Less than Substantial Harm	Less than Substantial Harm	No Effect	Positive Effect
Low	Less than Substantial Harm	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect	Positive Effect

4. SITE ASSESSMENT

Introduction

4.1. The assessment of the Site and individual heritage assets within it provides the context for the focused appraisal of the Proposed Development. This assessment has been carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in Section 3 above.

The Site

4.2. Leighton Park School is situated some 2km south of Reading town centre, between Shinfield Road and Pepper Lane, and immediately adjacent to the University of Reading's Whiteknights campus.

4.3. The school is set in approximately 26.3ha of parkland, which is considered to form an attractive setting to the school. It has two primary entrances; one off Shinfield Road and a service access off Pepper Lane. The area of the wider Leighton Park School site under consideration within the scope of this assessment comprises an area of land of *c*. 14.85ha (Fig. 1).

4.4. A number of the school buildings, whilst undesignated, are considered in this assessment, and are generally arranged along the eastern boundary of the Site, adjacent to Pepper Lane, with playing fields and areas of open meadow extending through the centre of the parkland. A woodland strip forms the western boundary of the Site, effectively forming a buffer to Shinfield Road.

4.5. School House (Plates 1-2) is located to the east of centre of the Site, and is accessed via a perimeter road and axial avenue. The building and its attached laboratories are Grade II Listed.

4.6. The School Theatre (New Hall) is located immediately opposite (west of) the main entrance to School House. The theatre building was constructed in the 1970s and comprises an austere brick built structure over two storeys (Plate 3). This building includes an auditorium which can accommodate up to 300, and a range of music practice rooms, storage and green room at the rear.

4.7. The setting and condition of the Listed Building, and a number of associated undesignated heritage assets, are discussed in detail in Sections 4-5 of this document.

Geology

4.8. The Site slopes very gently up from 76m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north, to 82m aOD in the south.

4.9. The underlying geology of the Site is described by the British Geological Survey (BGS) as London Clay Formation, comprising clay, silt and sand, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 34 to 56 million years BP. Superficial geological deposits are recorded as River Terrace Deposits: sand and gravel, formed up to 3 million years BP in the Quaternary Period.

Statutory Designations

Introduction

4.10. For the purposes of this study, and for completeness, a study area of 500m was established, measured from the Site's blue line boundary. This study area was considered to ascertain whether the Proposed Development had the potential to adversely affect designated sites

and monuments outside the Site's boundaries. Designated heritage assets identified within the 500m study area are included in the table below (Table 4). In addition, three undesignated assets within the Site's boundary have been considered. These comprise Grove House (1894), Peckover Hall (1916) and Townson House (1910). Within the body of Table 4, distances from the Site are measured from the centre of the existing 1970s music block for uniformity.

Table 4: Designated and undesignated heritage assets considered by this assessment

Ref.	Name	Date	Designation	Distance from Site
LB1	School House & Attached Laboratories at Leighton Park School	1830	Grade II	67m
n/a	Grove House	1894	None	159m
n/a	Townson House	1910	None	95m
n/a	Peckover Hall	1916	None	129m
LB2	Lodge to Whiteknights Park House	Late 19th century	Grade II	425m
LB3	Landscape Garden feature at NGR SU 7390 7158	Early 19th century	Grade II	703m
LB4	Blandford Lodge	Late 19th century	Grade II	242m
LB5	Whiteknights House Annexe	Late 19th century	Grade II	471m
CA1	Redlands Conservation Area	n/a	Conservation Area	698m

Scoping

4.11. Due to the nature of the very effective screening afforded by the many mature trees at the Site's perimeters, all designated heritage assets which lie outside the Site's boundary have been scoped out of any further assessment. It is considered the Proposed Development will have no adverse effect upon the sites or their settings.

4.12. For the purposes of this assessment, therefore, the following heritage assets have been considered with regard to the potential impact of the Proposed Development: School House, Grove House and Townson House. In addition, a small number of key visual receptors have also been included (Fig 12). These comprise the extent of the surviving parkland, key view west down the existing approach toward School House, views from the ha-ha and rectangular area to the immediate south of School House, and views from the North and South Lodges.

Historic map regression and the developmental history of the Site

4.13. The earliest manuscript mapping accessed for this assessment was the 1756 plan of the Lordship and Liberty of Earley (Fig. 2). Whilst only the fields to the east and south of the area of the Site are named and numbered, the Site itself lies within a broad area of land annotated as Pepper Farm. This will refer to the original name of School House which was formerly Pepper House, built in 1830 and in the ownership of the Cobham family.

4.14. The 1820 plan of the tithings of Sonning Town, Woodley & Sandford and Earley (Fig. 3), illustrates a similar situation. Although there is now no reference to Pepper Farm, the area is still shown although again with no field/plot numbering. There is, however, some degree of uniformity to the lines of trees illustrated within the Site, suggesting formal avenues in place and thus at least the beginnings of the formal parkland apparent by the later 19th century.

4.15. The earliest mapping accessed which illustrates Leighton Park is the 1877 First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS; Fig. 4). This map shows Leighton Park as formal parkland complete with unnamed house – the former Pepper House, possibly now known simply as Leighton Park. The north and south lodges are shown along with the two approaches to the west end of the main drive. Both approaches pass through dense tree cover, as seen today, prior to the house being 'revealed' at the convergence of the two drives.

4.16. In June 1886, The Times advertised the sale of *The Freehold Residential Estate known as Leighton Park* (Leighton Park School 1989) and in 1890 School House was opened to its first four pupils (Plate 4).

4.17. In 1891 School House was extended by the renowned British architect Alfred Waterhouse, with the addition of a gymnasium, a fives court, laboratories and a lecture room. This extension is included in School House's Grade II Listing.

4.18. A small pavilion sanatorium was constructed in 1893 on the site of the present Townson House, and in 1894 Grove House was built to the northwest.

4.19. The 1899 OS illustrates these additional structures, along with a swimming bath to the rear (east) of School House which was added in 1895. This OS edition also illustrates considerable division of land within the school's grounds, presumably for recreation/sports purposes.

4.20. By 1912 (Fig. 6), very few changes are evident within the school complex. A pavilion is noted between South Lodge and the main east-west drive and the ha-ha and lawn area has been added to the immediate south of School House.

4.21. In the period 1915-16, Peckover Hall and the Central Buildings, including the Central Library, were completed, with Townson House renamed from Third House in 1920.

4.22. The 1932 OS (Fig. 7) illustrates the changes set out above and includes more detailed annotation, including playing fields. In 1934, the current Cricket Pavilion was donated to the school, and in 1938 a small dormitory extension was added to Grove House.

4.23. Between the later 1930s and the late 1950s there were few changes evident at the Site. The swimming baths at the rear of School House were covered and extended to include a new gymnasium (1953).

4.24. The year 1962 saw the construction of the East Lodge and Fryer House, with new classrooms and the Geography Block added in 1964. Further development is evident in 1964 with the opening later that year of Field House. Reckitt Lodge was added to the school complex in 1970.

4.25. The New Hall and Music Centre opened in May 1972 whilst in 1990 the New School House was completed.

4.26. Modern mapping and site visits indicate that little further development has been completed at the Site.

Archaeological Potential

4.27. A rapid appraisal of the archaeological potential of the Site has identified no known significant remains within the Site or in close proximity to it.

4.28. The main focus of early activity in the area is located further north, closer to the River Thames along the edge of the Thames Valley. The Thames river gravels are known for their Palaeolithic and wider prehistoric potential, and approximately 1.1km north east of the Site at Christchurch Gardens, thirteen hand axes were recovered. Within Redlands gravel pit, some 500m to the north, significant faunal remains (including mammoth teeth) have been identified along with a well-defined stratigraphic sequence. Mesolithic and Neolithic material is sparse, represented by single, isolated artefacts. A cluster of Bronze Age finds and features are noted approximately 200m to the west of the Site, where pottery, flint artefacts and a disc barrow are recorded. Within the wider area, a fairly typical pattern of activity for this period is noted, comprising a number of funerary monuments such as barrows and ring ditches, with limited tangible evidence of occupation.

4.29. Iron Age material is similarly sparse, represented by cropmarks indicating possible enclosures some 1.5km to the southeast, and a hoard of currency bars 1km to the northwest of the Site. Romano-British features and a quern stone found at Northcourt Avenue, some 250m to the west of the Site, and a nearby cremation, may indicate a small farmstead. A Romano-British cemetery to the north of the Site close to the Thames continued in use into the early medieval (Anglo-Saxon) period, with a limited number of stray finds recorded across the wider area indicating limited activity.

4.30. The Site falls immediately outside the Whiteknights estate, and cropmark evidence suggests some agricultural activity in the area, perhaps associated with either the Abbey, one of the nearby manors or more recently Pepper Farm which was still active in the early 19th century. Additional cropmark features suggest a ditch or earthwork features to the north of the site, within the Whiteknights campus, which may delineate the historic parish boundary.

5. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction

5.1. The site visit confirmed that all heritage assets scoped in for detailed setting assessment might have their setting affected as a result of the Proposed Development.

5.2. The detailed settings assessment set out below has been completed in line with the principles set out in the English Heritage document The Setting of Heritage Assets (EH 2011b), as detailed above.

Detailed Assessment

School House & Attached Laboratories at Leighton Park School (Grade II Listed; List Entry 1113577 – Appendix 2; Plates 1-2)

The asset and its setting

5.3. As a Grade II Listed Building, School House is regarded as of moderate significance and local to regional importance.

5.4. The Grade II Listing covers School House, formerly Pepper House, originally constructed in 1830, and in the ownership of the Cobham family. The building was extended in 1891 by Alfred

Waterhouse with the addition of a laboratory block attached to the north of School House. This block is also covered by the Grade II Listing.

5.5. School House comprises a two storey structure with basement and is constructed of painted brick on plinth with flanking corner piers, stone architraves and bracket sills, moulded string courses are included at 1st floor level. There is also a small extension to the east featuring a tile-hung lavatory oriel.

5.6. The Listed Building is situated within a well-defined area of parkland, associated with the original Pepper House although clearly the subject of much landscaping since, particularly in the formation of sports pitches to the south of the main drive.

5.7. Away from the sports pitches, predominantly to the north of the main drive, the parkland features broad areas of lawn interspersed with impressive mature trees, both individually and in groups.

5.8. School House is accessed via an entrance off Shinfield Road, utilising the northern of two original entrances which include lodges. The southern entrance no longer serves the school, with alternative access now available off Pepper Lane to the east.

5.9. The school, its associated buildings and remnant parkland are well-screened, particularly from Shinfield Road, by mature tree growth, a feature of the park, and possibly the site's precursor Pepper Farm, since at least the early 19th century.

5.10. The laboratories, which also form part of the Listing, have been significantly remodelled since 1890. These alterations include a 1920s alteration to the small single storey section at the front of the Annex, and a group of classrooms attached to the rear in 1960.

5.11. School House forms the principal building of the school complex, which features buildings dating from the 19th century to the late 20th century.

Contributing factors to the significance of the heritage asset

5.12. Evidential value: The Listed Building will derive a limited degree of significance from the evidential value contained in its historic fabrics and features which survive well within the structure of this example of an early 19th century country house. This evidential value is compromised to a large degree by the considerable restorative works which the building has undergone, particularly in the period 1962-63.

5.13. There is further, though more limited, potential for evidential value in the form of buried archaeological deposits at the Site, given the archaeological potential of the area, particularly in terms of prehistoric remains, set out above. Further archaeological remains may reflect the Site's previous use as a country house and prior to that, a working farm.

5.14. Historical value: There is undoubted associative historical value which will contribute to the overall significance of the heritage asset.

5.15. From an illustrative perspective it is considered that the historic building represents one of many similar examples regionally, and thus will provide little unique evidence about the past.

5.16. However, from an associative viewpoint, the post-1890 history of the school is very well documented, as is the physical development and structural evolution of School House, from its inception as a school in 1890, through to the present day. The very well-kept records of former staff and pupils contribute further associative historical value.

5.17. Aesthetic value: The architectural quality of the Listed Building adds little to the overall significance of the heritage asset. With regard to the overall contribution of the aesthetic value of the building to the asset's significance, original School House itself is of relatively modest design. The addition of the laboratory blocks by British architect Alfred Waterhouse in 1891-92, which differ greatly both in fabric and design, have left the 1830 building appearing rather incongruous when juxtaposed against these weightier more imposing wings. The whole Listed Building appears disproportionate and asymmetrical which detracts from its aesthetic value.

5.18. It is also considered that the alterations to the attached laboratories, detailed above, further detract from the building's aesthetic value.

5.19. In addition, it is assessed that the presence of the nearby busy Shinfield Road detracts from the Listed Building's setting. Whilst the road would have been in operation when the original Pepper House was constructed, the exponential increase in traffic volume in recent years impacts upon the heritage asset audibly, and significantly detracts from the sense of calm space within the parkland.

5.20. Communal value: It is assessed that the Listed Building derives communal value from its position as a school, which has been in existence since the late 19th century. Many local families will have attended the school, possibly across generations, and the building and its environs therefore contributes to a collective memory and sense of identity.

5.21. Communal value is detracted through the lack of public access or community uses associated with the building.

Grove House: Leighton Park School (Undesignated; Plate 5)

The asset and its setting

5.22. As an undesignated heritage asset, Grove House is assessed to be of low significance and local importance.

5.23. Grove House was constructed in 1894, the Governors of the school having received a windfall from Grove House School in Tottenham. Grove House remained one of the two buildings at the school site until 1914 when further construction was undertaken.

5.24. Grove House comprises a two storey structure in red brick with a red tile roof and a modern single storey extension to the front (south) of the main building.

5.25. The building lies at the northern extent of the surviving parkland, formerly associated with Pepper House, now School House. The parkland in this area of the wider Site features a broad area of lawn interspersed with impressive mature trees, both individually and in groups. A tarmac driveway/access road separates the building from the parkland.

5.26. Grove House, as with its associated buildings and remnant parkland, are well-screened, particularly from Shinfield Road, by mature tree growth. However, the modern buildings of the campus of the University of Reading are visible to the building's east. The building forms one of the more significant historic buildings on the school site.

Contributing factors to the significance of the heritage asset

5.27. Evidential value: The heritage asset will derive a limited degree of significance from the evidential value contained in its historic late 19th century fabrics and features which will survive well within the structure.

5.28. There is further limited potential for evidential value in the form of buried archaeological deposits at the Site, given the archaeological potential of the area, particularly in terms of prehistoric remains, set out above. Further archaeological remains may reflect the broader Site's previous use as a country house and, prior to that, a working farm.

5.29. Historical value: As with School House (above), there is considerable associative historical value which will contribute to the overall significance of this heritage asset, including detail of its construction, funding and first pupils and masters. The history of the school is well documented, including well-kept records of former staff and pupils which will contribute associative historical value.

5.30. Aesthetic value: The architectural quality of the building adds to the overall significance of the heritage asset. With regard to the overall contribution of the aesthetic value of the building to the asset's significance, Grove House is of recognisable late Victorian design with high gables and multiple stacks. The presence of the modern single story extension detracts considerably from the building's aesthetic value, in particular when viewed from the south/front. Its wider parkland setting contributes positively to its significance, as do the (albeit rather limited) views across the parkland.

5.31. The presence of the nearby busy Shinfield Road detracts further from the building's setting. Whilst the road would have been in operation when the original Grove House was constructed, the increase in traffic volume in recent years impacts upon the heritage asset audibly, and significantly detracts from the sense of calm space within the parkland.

5.32. Communal value: It is assessed that the building will derive communal value from its position as an element of the Leighton Park School, which has been in existence since the late 19th century. It can be assumed that a large number of local families will have attended the school, possibly across generations, and the building and its environs therefore contributes to a collective memory and sense of identity.

5.33. Communal value is detracted through the lack of public access or community uses associated with the building.

Townson House: Leighton Park School (Undesignated; Plate 6)

The asset and its setting

5.34. As an undesignated heritage asset, Townson House is assessed to be of low significance and local importance.

5.35. Townson House was constructed in 1910, at which time it was known as Third House. It was opened as Townson House in May 1920.

5.36. The building comprises a two storey structure in grey brick with red brick string course on the lower floor and a red tile roof, fronting on to a modern access.

5.37. Townson House lies some 20m to the north of School House and has views across the remaining parkland. The parkland in this area comprises a broad area of lawn interspersed

with impressive mature trees, both individually and in groups. A tarmac driveway/access road separates the building from the parkland.

5.38. Townson House, as is the case with its associated school buildings and remnant parkland, are well-screened, particularly from Shinfield Road, by mature tree growth. The building forms one of the more significant historic buildings on the school site.

Contributing factors to the significance of the heritage asset

5.39. Evidential value: The heritage asset will derive a limited degree of significance from the evidential value contained in its historic early 20th century fabrics and features which will survive well within the building.

5.40. There is further limited potential for evidential value in the form of buried archaeological deposits beneath and in close proximity to the heritage asset, given the archaeological potential of the area, particularly with regard to prehistoric remains, as set out above. Further archaeological remains may reflect the wider Site's previous incarnation as a modest country house and, prior to that, a working farm.

5.41. Historical value: As with the Listed School House (above), and indeed all buildings which make up the Leighton Park School complex, there is considerable associative historical value which will contribute to the overall significance of this heritage asset, including detail of its construction, past pupils and masters. The history of the school is well documented, including well-kept records of former staff and pupils which will contribute associative historical value.

5.42. Aesthetic value: The architectural quality of the building adds limited value to the overall significance of the heritage asset. Townson House is of austere design, functional and symmetrical, an appropriate design perhaps for a building constructed specifically as part of an educational establishment.

5.43. The presence of the nearby busy Shinfield Road, and to the rear Pepper Lane, detract from the building's setting. Whilst both roads would have been in operation when the original building was constructed, the increase in traffic volume in recent years impacts upon the heritage asset audibly, and significantly detracts from the sense of calm space within the parkland.

5.44. Communal value: It is assessed that the building will derive communal value from its position as an element of the Leighton Park School, which has been in existence since the late 19th century. Local families, residents and others will have attended the school, possibly across generations, and the building and its environs therefore contributes to a collective memory and sense of identity.

5.45. Communal value is detracted from through the lack of public access or community uses associated with the building.

Peckover Hall: Leighton Park School (Undesignated; Plate 7)

The asset and its setting

5.46. As an undesignated heritage asset, Peckover Hall is assessed to be of low significance and local importance.

5.47. Construction of Peckover Hall was begun in 1915, with the building opening in 1916. The building comprises a one/one and a half storey structure in red brick with a grey tile roof,

fronting on to a small area of lawn and a modern access road. A striking white clock and bell tower sits proud of the central roof area.

5.48. Peckover Hall lies some 83m to the northwest of School House and 30m southeast of Grove House. The building enjoys views across the remaining parkland, which comprises a broad area of lawn interspersed with impressive mature trees, both individually and in groups. A tarmac driveway/access road separates the building from the parkland.

5.49. Peckover Hall is relatively well-screened from areas outside of the school's boundaries, particularly from Shinfield Road, by mature tree growth, although screening is less effective to the east along Pepper Lane. The building forms one of the more significant historic buildings on the school site.

Contributing factors to the significance of the heritage asset

5.50. Evidential value: The heritage asset will derive a limited degree of significance from the evidential value contained in its historic earlier 20th century fabrics and features which will survive well within the building.

5.51. There is further limited potential for evidential value in the form of buried archaeological deposits beneath and in close proximity to the heritage asset, given the archaeological potential of the area, particularly with regard to prehistoric remains, as set out above. Further archaeological remains may reflect the wider Site's previous incarnation as a modest country house and, prior to that, a working farm.

5.52. Historical value: Peckover Hall, in common with the other buildings which make up the Leighton Park School complex, has considerable associative historical value which will contribute to the overall significance of this heritage asset, including detail of its construction, past pupils and masters. The history of the school is well documented, including well-kept records of former staff and pupils which will contribute associative historical value.

5.53. Aesthetic value: The architectural quality of the Listed Building adds value to the overall significance of the heritage asset. Peckover Hall is of an architecturally interesting design, almost reflective of a stand-alone traditional Victorian primary or secondary school, complete with bell tower and clock.

5.54. The presence of the adjacent Pepper Lane to the rear detracts from the building's setting. Whilst both roads would have been in operation when the original building was constructed, the increase in traffic volume in recent years impacts upon the heritage asset audibly, and significantly detracts from the sense of calm space within the parkland.

5.55. Communal value: It is assessed that the building will derive communal value from its position as an element of the Leighton Park School, which has been in existence since the late 19th century. A number of local families will have attended the school, possibly across generations, and the building and its environs therefore contributes to a collective memory and sense of identity. It is considered, however, that the asset's communal value is detracted from through the lack of public access or community uses associated with the building.

Key and Significant Views

Introduction

5.56. A number of views were assessed from what were regarded as potential sensitive receptors during the site visit. Subsequent to this, four views have been assessed as either key (very important) or significant (important). These are illustrated in Fig. 12 and discussed below.

Key View 1 (Plate 8)

5.57. In the Listed Building's original form, or certainly by 1890 when it became School House, this viewpoint would have offered the first 'opening up' of the view of the house after a short forest drive along either the southern or northern approaches which run parallel to Shinfield Road, as shown on earlier mapping.

5.58. The view now has clearly been seriously compromised by the presence of the New Hall and Music Centre which lies adjacent to the drive, and, on a more temporary basis the roadside parking. However, glimpses of elements of the parkland are available to the north, and to a degree the south although this area has been comprehensively landscaped into sports pitches.

Key View 2 (Plate 9)

5.59. It considered that Key View 2 effectively serves the same function in the modern site context, as Key View 1 would have done during the 19th and 20th centuries, prior to construction of New Hall. It is at this point of the traverse east along the drive, adjacent to New Hall, that the Listed Building becomes fully visible and can be fully appreciated.

5.60. At the end of the drive, views south across the former parkland are available, as a glimpses of the lawned area enclosed by the ha-ha to the immediate south of the Listed Building (Plate 10).

Significant Views 3 and 4

5.61. Views 3 and 4 have been selected as they offer wide views across the parkland to the south and west of the lawn and ha-ha area, to the south of the Listed Building's Cadbury Room, from what may be interpreted as the 'true' south-facing front of the property.

5.62. A smaller area of lawn formed part of the Listed Building's immediate environs by 1899 (Fig. 5), and was extended and landscaped with the addition of the ha-ha some time before 1912 (Fig. 6). The lawn area was clearly of importance and the wide parkland views would have been a significant factor in its design and positioning.

6. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ON HERITAGE ASSETS

Introduction

6.1. This section will describe the Proposed Development and present an assessment of its likely impacts in terms of the significance of heritage assets which may be affected.

Proposed Development

6.2. In its broadest terms, the Proposed Development will comprise a full planning application for new music and media facilities (MMC), located adjacent to the existing school theatre. The proposed works include:

- Removal of existing temporary practice rooms;
- Creation of new foyer;
- New music teaching facilities;
- Creation of pedestrian friendly hard landscaping; and
- Provision of new parking areas adjacent to existing building to replace visitor parking and informal parking on drive.

6.3. The Proposed Development (Appendix 1) represents a single storey construction attached to the existing 1970s New Hall building which is proposed to be built on a curve. It is shaped to enable an important purple maple to be retained. The low-level construction of the new build allows the profile of the existing Old School building and its attached Waterhouse wing to remain visible from the wider parkland.

6.4. The new build is proposed to occupy a footprint of *c*. 930 sq. m.

Impact Assessment

6.5. Evidential Value: The Proposed Development will not impact on the physical fabric of the Listed Building, or any other historic undesignated buildings within the Site, and therefore will not adversely affect or alter the evidential value which these assets hold.

6.6. Historical Value: It is considered that the historical value of School House and its attached Waterhouse laboratories, and that of other assessed heritage assets within the school complex, will be unaffected by the Proposed Development. It has been assessed that the contribution of the illustrative value of the buildings to their overall significance is very limited, whilst the associative historical value will be unaffected by any physical development nearby.

6.7. Aesthetic value: It is likely that the aesthetic value of the Listed Building would be affected adversely by the Proposed Development. Whilst the building's immediate environs to the west have already been seriously impacted by the construction of New Hall, the addition of further mass to the northeast, which extends beyond the northern extent of the Listed Building, may serve to exacerbate this impact, albeit to a less than significant degree.

6.8. The wider parkland setting would have been of greater significance when it was constructed than it probably is today. It is considered that, whilst the original Pepper House/Leighton Park was clearly built 'to be seen', it was not positioned to necessarily enjoy wide uninterrupted views of the surrounding countryside, the parkland being clearly defined by substantial boundary planting. Views toward the Listed Building from the parkland to the west and northwest would be adversely affected by the Proposed Development.

6.9. Within the modern school setting, which includes all of the heritage assets under discussion, much of the parkland in the north of the Site has been retained despite the considerable amount of development at the Site since the later 19th century. Whilst the development proposals include the removal of a very limited part of the surviving parkland, the design clearly seeks to respect and, as far as is possible, form part of, the already developed perimeter in this area.

6.10. It is considered that provision of a new foyer will improve the appearance of the front of the existing theatre, and thereby improve the setting of Old School building.

6.11. The Proposed Development also includes provision for the re-landscaping of Old School's forecourt and removal of cars and areas of parking from the front of the Old School which it is assessed will improve considerably the setting of the Listed Building(s).

6.12. Communal value: Within the context of the modern school, it is assessed that the provision of new facilities, regardless of their physical location within the school's boundaries, will result in a beneficial effect on the overall communal value and its contribution to the significance of the heritage assets within the school complex.

6.13. Key and Significant Views: It has been assessed that no Key or Significant views, as set out above, would be adversely affected by the Proposed Development.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

7.1. The effect of the development proposals on the identified historic environment resource will be a material consideration in the determination of the planning application.

7.2. This assessment has examined the Proposed Development at Leighton Park School and assessed its potential effects on a number of designated and undesignated heritage assets, and key and significant views, within the Site boundaries.

Conclusions

7.3. It is considered that the setting of Grade II Listed School House and the attached Waterhouse laboratories has clearly been compromised through the construction of New Hall in the 1970s. This notwithstanding, the impact assessment has been undertaken with regard to the Site as its stands within its modern context.

7.4. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states: "Substantial harm to or loss of a Grade II Listed Building, park or garden should be exceptional".

7.5. Paragraph 133 continues: "Where a Proposed Development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss".

7.6. The NPPF adds, in Paragraph 134: "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, including securing its optimum viable use".

7.7. In this respect it is necessary to make clear where the boundary between substantial harm and less than substantial harm exists. This was explored in paragraph 72 of the decision letter relating to two appeals concerning one project at Chelveston Airfield (one project lying within Bedford Borough and East Northants Districts: APP/K0235/A/11/2160077 and APP/G2815/A/11/2160078, dated 29th June 2012). The Inspector referred to the PPS5 Practice Guide (which is still extant) paragraphs 91-95 and noted that the authors of the Guide "…must have considered substantial harm to be something approaching demolition or destruction; otherwise there would be little sense in dealing with them under the same heading".

7.8. The PPG (see above) in the section entitled *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, provides advice in relation to the implementation of the policies of the NPPF. Under the title *Decision-taking: historic environment*, Paragraph 017 presents the following advice for determining levels of impact and/or harm: "Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm

is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a Listed Building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later inappropriate additions to historic buildings which harm their significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all".

7.9. Such harm must be of a scale to be material, as set out in paragraph 65 of the NPPF within the section on Good Design which states that: "Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal's economic, social and environmental benefits)".

7.10. The impact assessment set out in Section 6 (above) identifies that, whilst there are a number of areas in which adverse effects are likely to occur, none may be deemed as resulting in *substantial harm*, which is interpreted as destruction of part or all of the Listed Building, or the loss of a large proportion of its setting. Neither of these circumstance is predicted as the result of implementation of the development proposal.

7.11. It has been assessed that, with reference to the criteria set out in Tables 1-3 (above), the Proposed Development has the potential to lead to *less than substantial harm*, in terms of the NPPF, and that the public benefits within the context of an educational establishment, demonstrably outweigh any harm.

8. SOURCES AND REFERENCES

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Berkshire Record Office
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Heritage Gateway
National Heritage List for England
Pastscape

Cartographic sources

1756	Plan of Lordship and Liberty of Earley
1820	Plan of the tithings of Sonning Town, Woodley & Sandford and Early
1877	1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map
1899	1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map
1912	1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map
1932	1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map
1959	1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map
1960	Leighton Park School: Buildings and buildings plans
1990	Leighton Park School: Buildings and buildings plans
2015	1:10,000 Ordnance Survey map (digital edition)

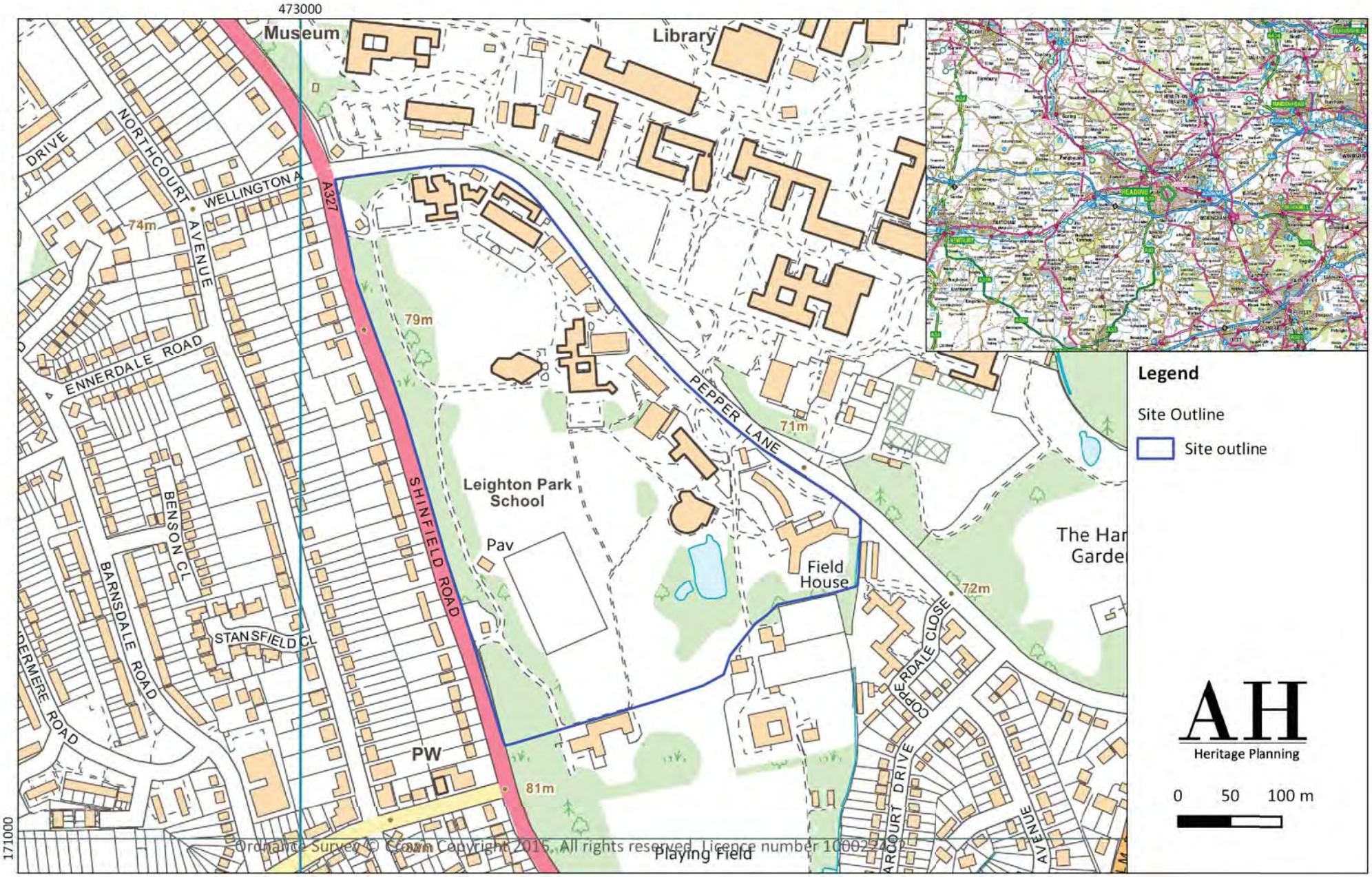

Fig. 1 Location of Leighton Park School, showing area of assessment

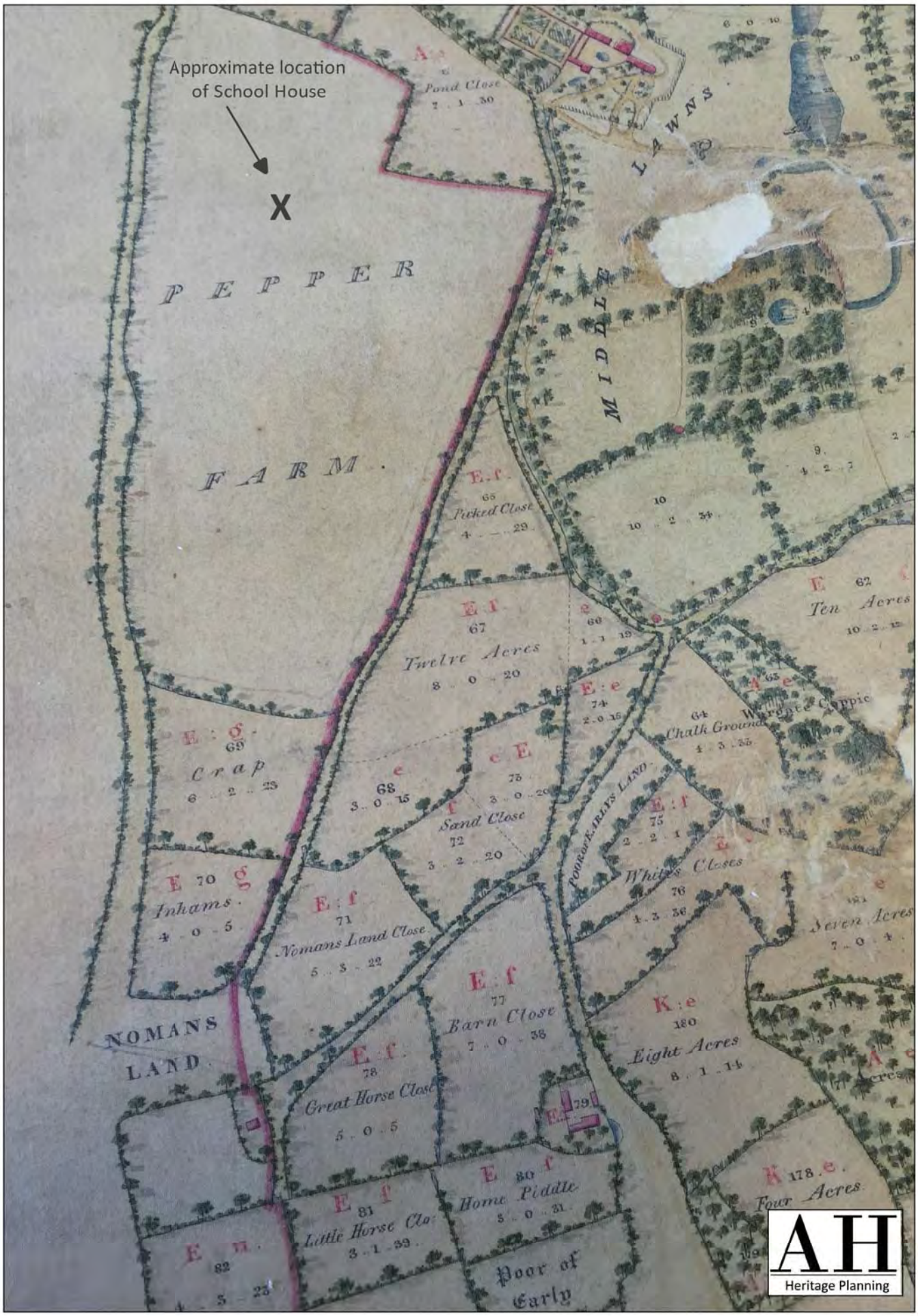

Fig. 2 Historic mapping: 1756 plan of Lordship and Liberty of Earley

Fig. 3 Historic mapping: 1820 plan of the tithings of Sonning Town, Woodley & Sandford and Earley

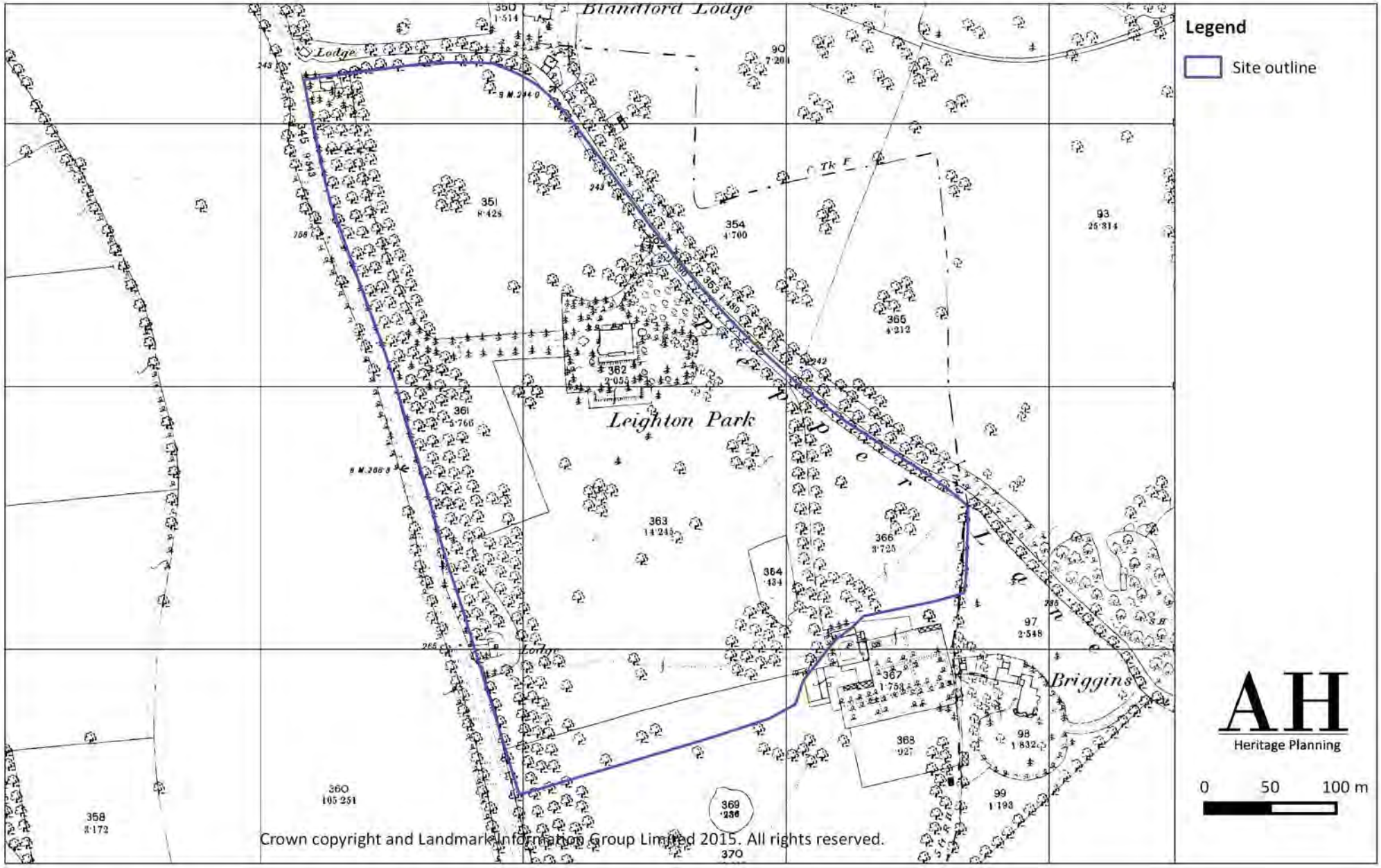

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Fig. 4 Historic mapping: 1877 Ordnance Survey map

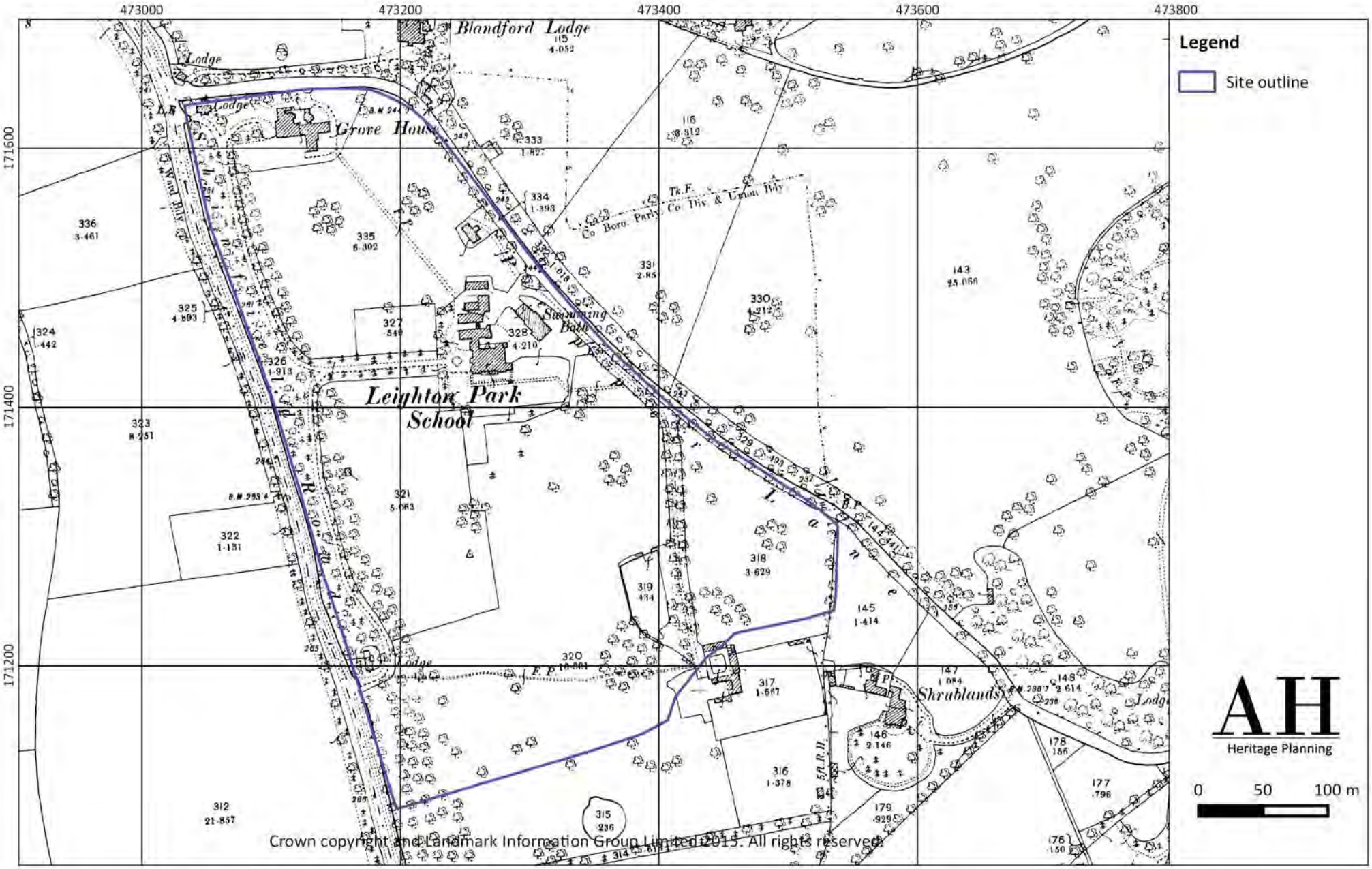

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Fig. 5 Historic mapping: 1899 Ordnance Survey map

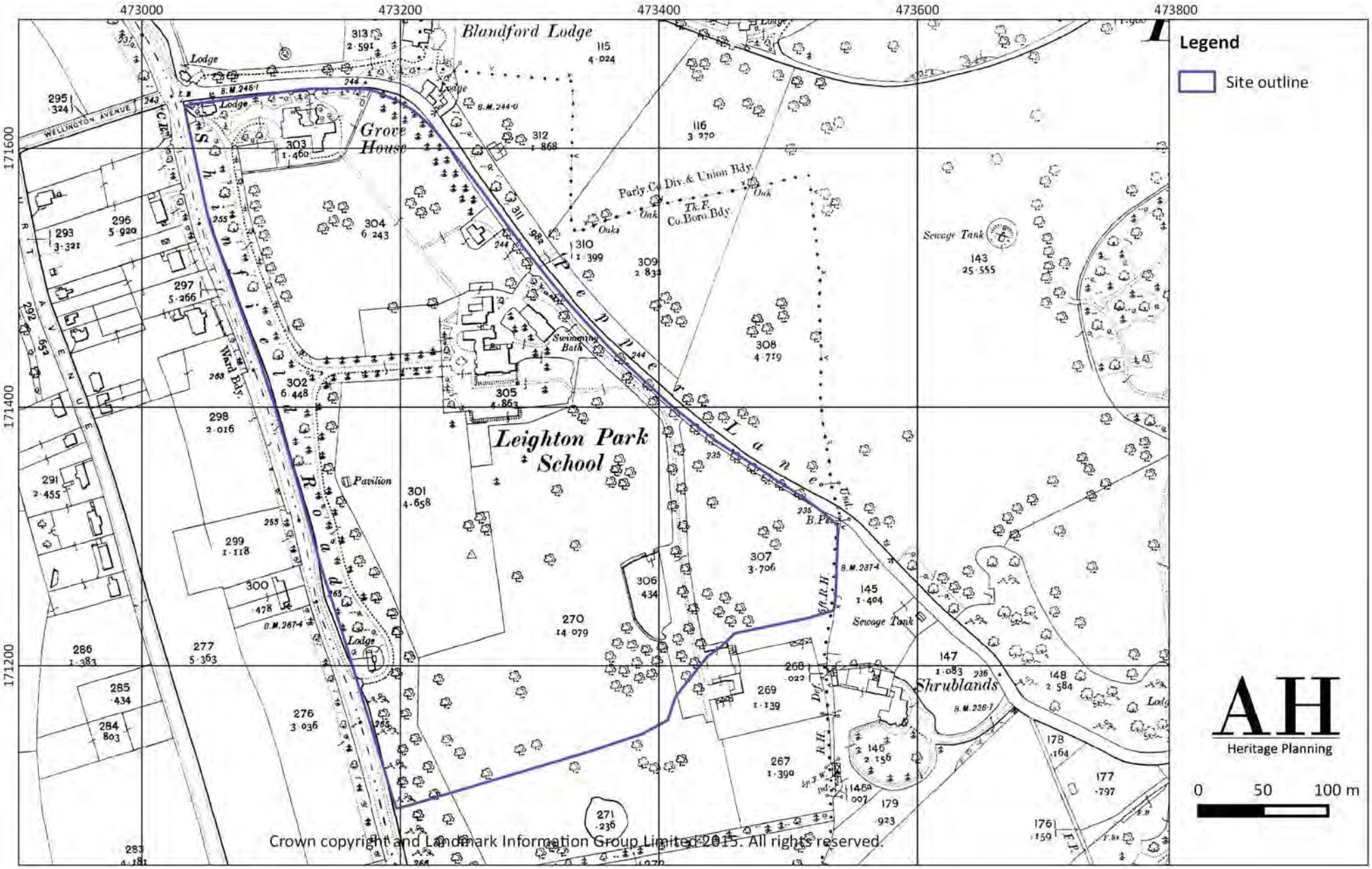

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Fig. 6 Historic mapping: 1912 Ordnance Survey map

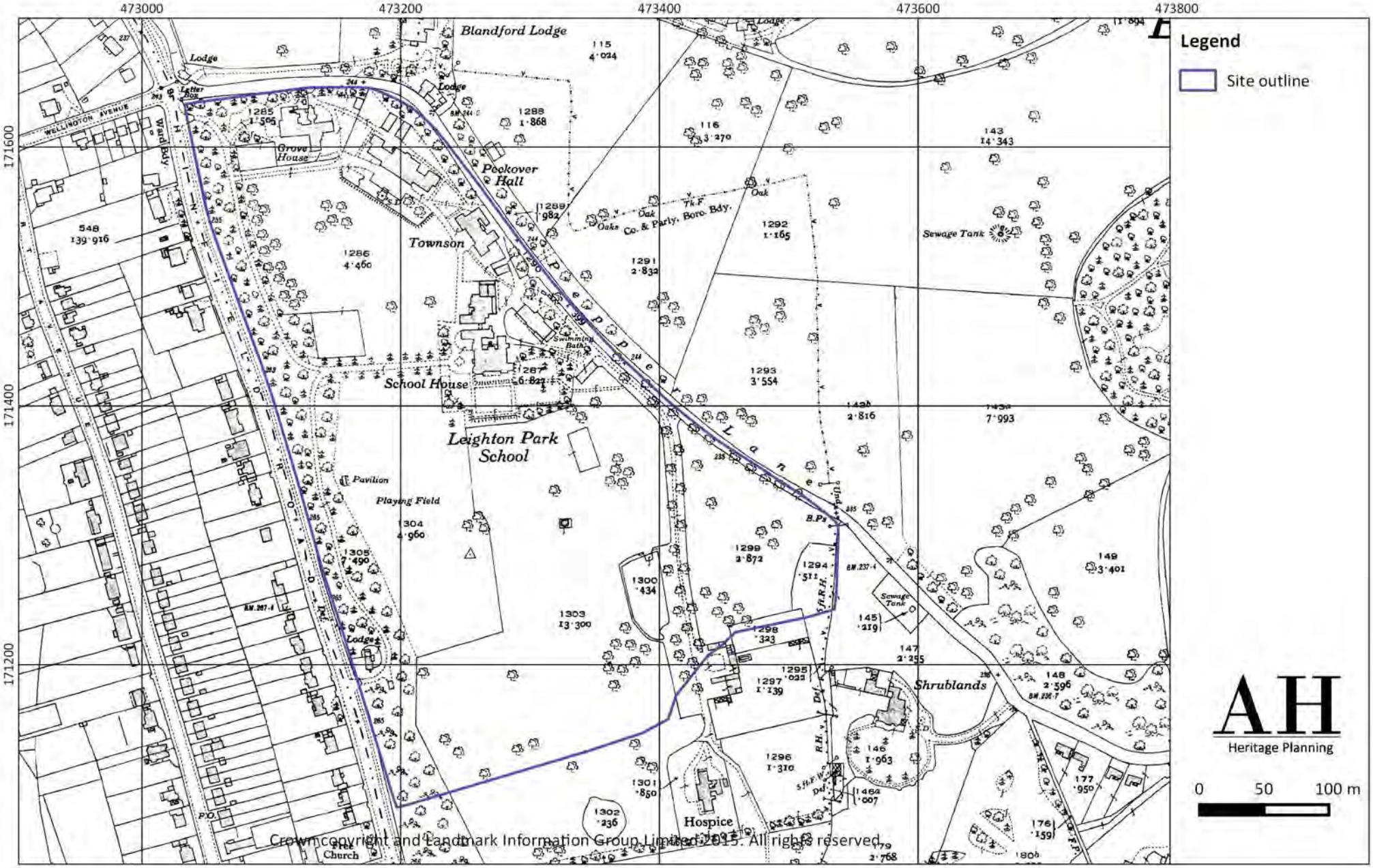

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Fig. 7 Historic mapping: 1932 Ordnance Survey map

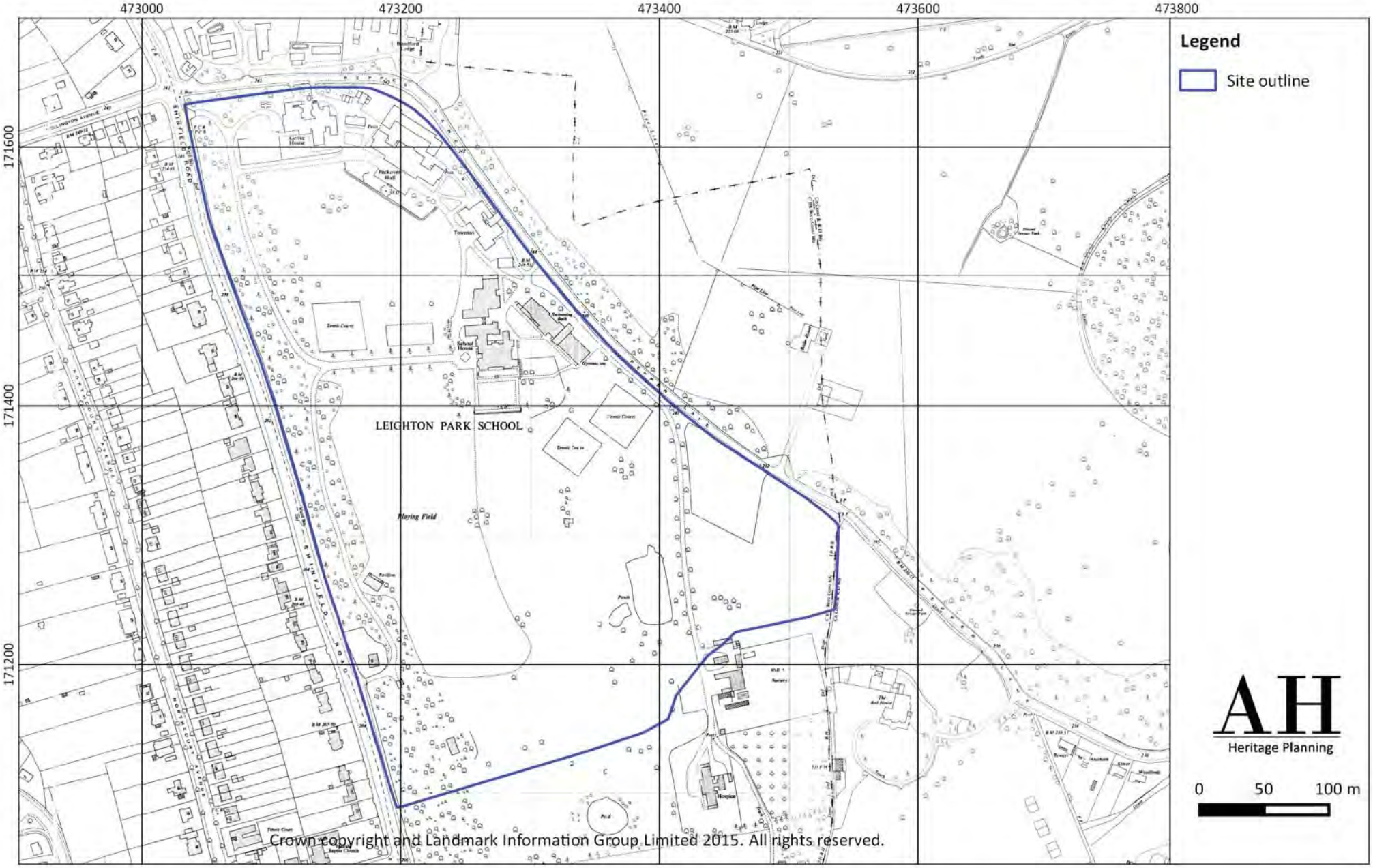

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Fig. 8 Historic mapping: 1959 Ordnance Survey map

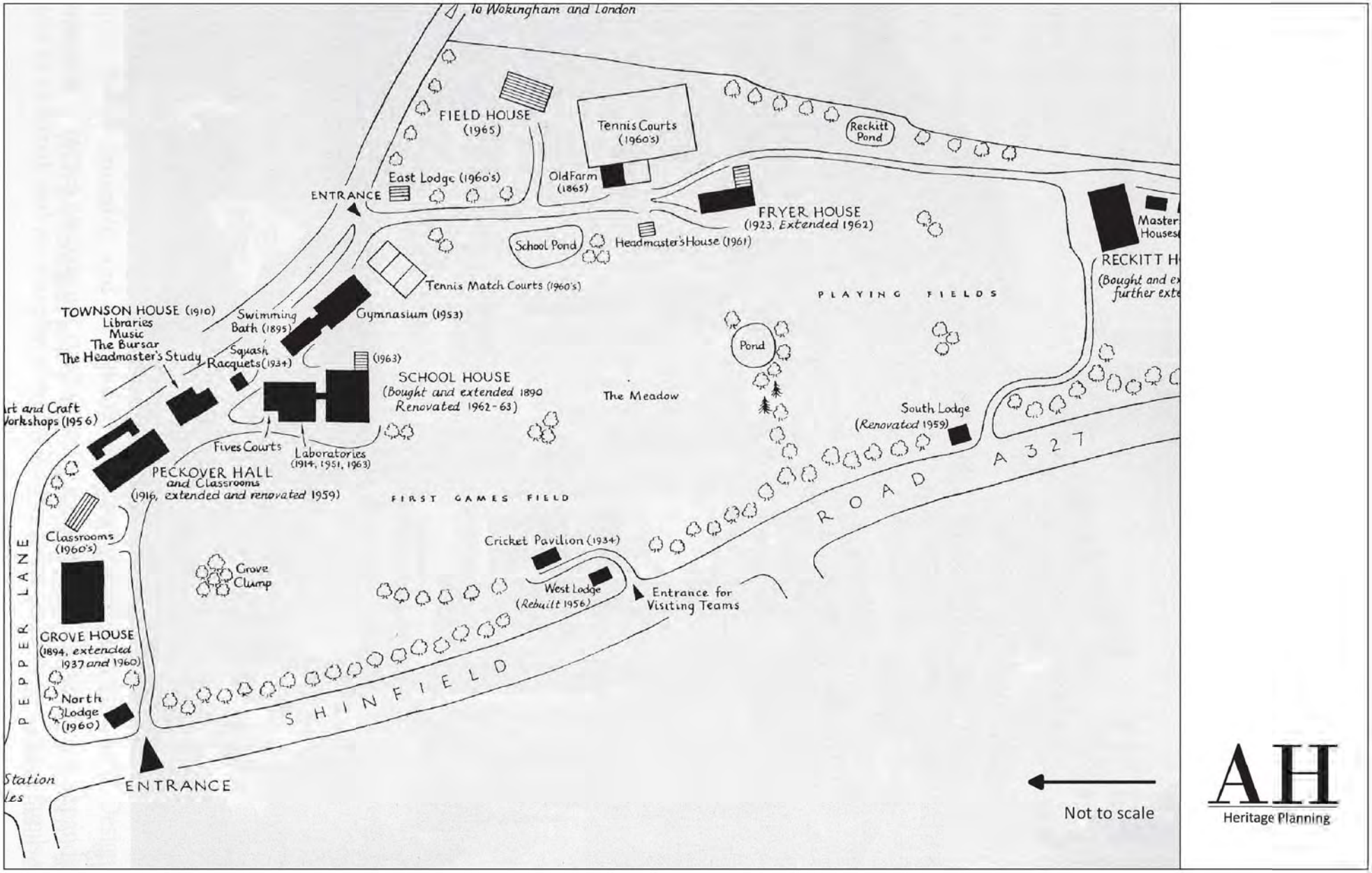

Fig. 9 Historic mapping: Buildings and buildings plans 1960 (courtesey of Leighton Park School)

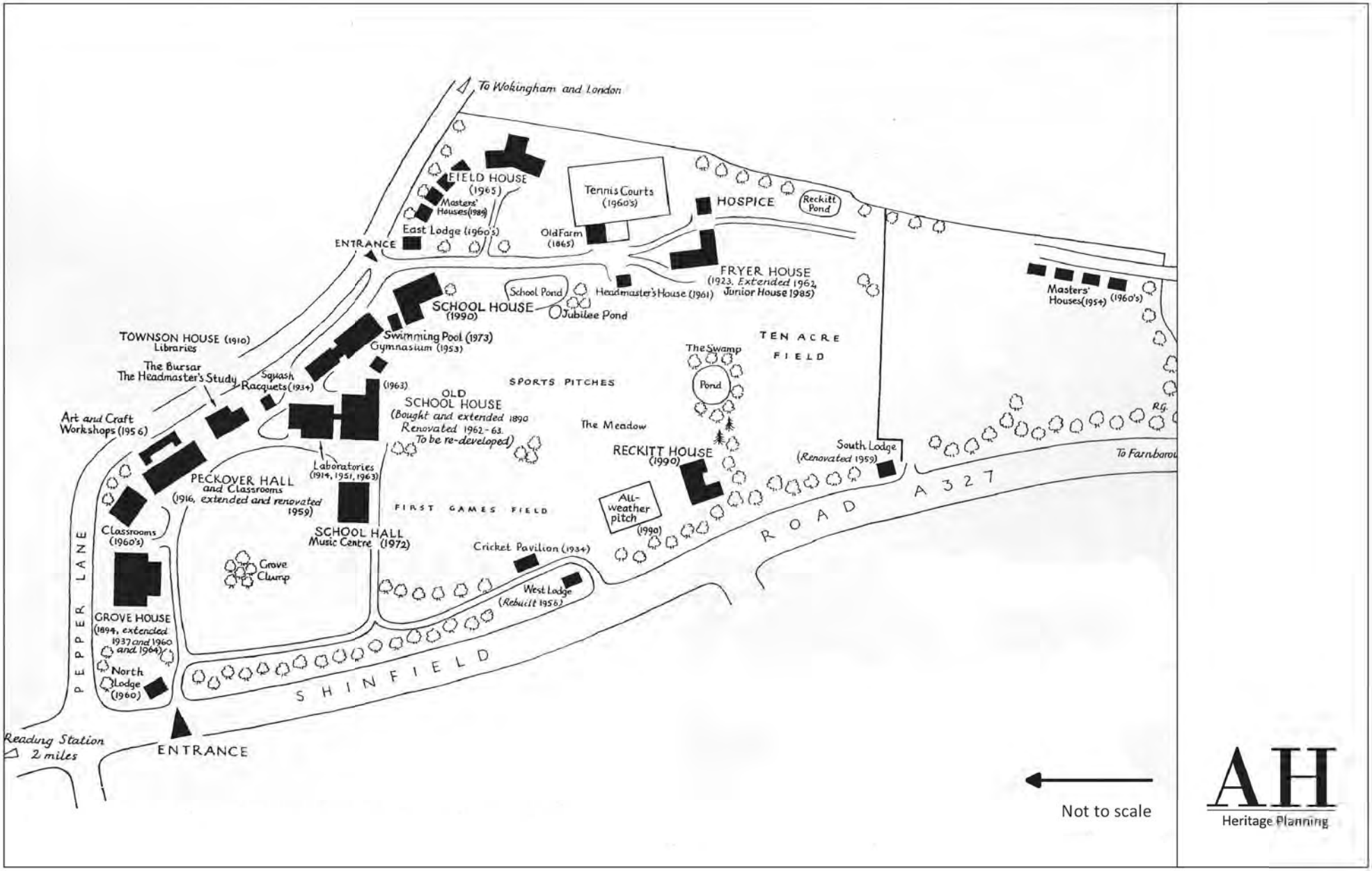

Fig. 10 Historic mapping: Buildings and buildings plans 1990 (courtesey of Leighton Park School)

Fig. 11 Site boundary and 500m study area, showing signifcant heritage assets

Fig. 12 Significance plan

Plate 1 School House and attached Waterhouse laboratories, looking southeast

Plate 2 School House and attached Waterhouse laboratories, looking east

Plate 3 School Theatre (New Hall), looking west

Plate 4 Leighton Park, south elevation, late 19th century (courtesy NVB Architects)

Plate 5 Surviving parkland and Grove House, looking northwest

Plate 6 Townson House, looking northeast

Plate 7 Peckover Hall, looking northeast

Plate 8 Key View 1, looking east toward School House

Plate 9 Key View 2, looking east toward School House and attached Waterhouse laboratory wing

Plate 10 View east from car park to south of main entrance to School House

Appendix 1: Proposed Development plans and elevations