

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

Land at Meadow Road, Reading, Berkshire

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Land at Meadow Road, Reading, Berkshire has been reviewed for its below ground archaeological potential.

In terms of relevant, nationally significant designated heritage assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Wrecks or Historic Battlefields lie within the study site or its immediate vicinity.

This assessment has established that there are no Historic Environment Record (HER) entries relating to the site and, because of the topographical (floodplain) location it is concluded that the site has a low potential for evidence of activity pre-dating the 20th century.

Any archaeological remains, if present, are most likely to be of local (i.e. low) significance.

The study site is underlain by over 2m of Made Ground having been raised off the floodplain to accommodate industrial development in the late 1920s/early 1930s.

Prior to land raising, the area was cut by ditches to protect the low-lying pasture from seasonally flooding.

Proposals comprise the development of industrial units with areas of hardstanding for vehicle access and parking.

The construction of the proposed development will cause neither a significant nor widespread impact to levels below the existing Made Ground.

The need or otherwise for any further archaeological work will be the decision of the Archaeological Advisor to Reading Borough Council.

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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This below ground archaeological desk based assessment has been prepared by RPS (a Tetra Tech company) on behalf of CBRE IM c/o V7 Asset Management.
- 1.2 The subject of this assessment comprises the site, also referred to as the study site, of land at Meadow Road, Reading, Berkshire. The study site is centred at NGR SU 70951 74202 within the administrative boundaries of Reading Borough Council (see Figures 1-2).
- 1.3 Figure 2a spatially summarises relevant cultural heritage designations and archaeological findspot references in relation to the study site, primarily using data provided by the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 1.4 In terms of relevant nationally significant designated heritage assets, the study site does not lie within the vicinity of a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck.
- 1.5 As specified by Berkshire Archaeology, CBRE IM c/o V7 Asset Management have commissioned RPS to establish the archaeological potential of the study site, via the preparation of this desk based assessment, and to provide guidance on ways to accommodate any archaeological constraints identified.
- 1.6 In accordance with relevant policy and guidance on archaeology and planning, including 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments' (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the likely archaeological potential and significance of the study site.
- 1.7 This desk based assessment comprises an examination of evidence on the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and other sources, and includes a map regression exercise.
- 1.8 The assessment thus enables relevant parties to assess the archaeological potential of various parts of the study site, together with the likely significance of that potential, and to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and archaeological solutions to the archaeological potential and significance identified.

2 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 National legislation regarding archaeology, including scheduled monuments, is contained in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and 2002, updated April 2014.
- 2.2 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and it was most recently updated December 2024.
- 2.3 The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which was published online 6th March 2014 and is periodically updated (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>).
- 2.4 The NPPF and NPPG are additionally supported by three Good Practice Advice (GPA) documents published by Historic England: GPA 1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans; GPA 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (both published March 2015). The second edition of GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets was published in December 2017.

National Planning Policy

- 2.5 Section 16 of the NPPF, entitled Conserving and enhancing the historic environment provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:
 - Delivery of sustainable development;
 - Understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
 - Conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
 - Recognition that heritage makes to our knowledge and understanding of the past.
- 2.6 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. Paragraph 207 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset and that level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 2.7 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process.

- 2.8 Annex 2 also defines *Archaeological Interest* as a heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- 2.9 A *Designated Heritage Asset* comprises a: World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area.
- 2.10 *Significance* (for heritage policy) 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.
- 2.11 *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.
- 2.12 In short, government policy provides a framework which:
- Protects nationally important designated Heritage Assets;
 - Protects the settings of such designations;
 - In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from desk based assessment and field evaluation where necessary) to enable informed decisions;
 - Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not significant enough to merit *in-situ* preservation.
- 2.13 The NPPG reiterates that the conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle, requiring a flexible and thoughtful approach. Furthermore, it highlights that neglect and decay of heritage assets is best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Importantly, the guidance states that if complete, or partial loss of a heritage asset is justified, the aim should then be to capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance and make the interpretation publicly available. Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. An important consideration should be whether the proposed works adversely affect a key element of the heritage asset's special architectural or historic interest. Additionally, it is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development, that is to be assessed. The level of 'substantial harm' is considered to be a high bar that may not arise in many cases. Essentially, whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the NPPF. Importantly, harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting. Setting is defined as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may be more extensive than the curtilage. A thorough assessment of the impact of proposals upon setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it.

- 2.14 In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.16 The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted on 4th November 2019. It contains the following policies relevant to below ground archaeological considerations regarding development within the study site:

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Historic parks and gardens; and
- Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.

All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.

Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.

Applications which affect Historic Parks and Gardens will safeguard features which form an integral part of the special character or appearance of the park or garden. Development will not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, features or setting of the park or garden, key views out from the park, or prejudice its future restoration.

Applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement.....

EN2: AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Applicants should identify and evaluate sites of archaeological significance by consulting the Historic Environment Record. This will require an assessment of the archaeological impacts of development proposals to be submitted before the planning application is determined. Planning permission will not be granted in cases where the assessment of the archaeological impacts is inadequate. Where remains cannot be preserved 'in situ,' remains should be properly excavated, investigated and recorded. This will require adequate provision for the identification, investigation, recording and publication of the archaeological resource. Where appropriate, Section 106 agreements will be negotiated to protect, enhance and interpret archaeological remains. Development proposals which will have an adverse effect on scheduled monuments and other nationally important archaeological remains and their settings will not be allowed unless there is clear and convincing justification in the form of overriding public benefits.

EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.....

EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT

In areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage

considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);
- b. Sensitivity to historic context;
- c. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);
- d. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.

Relevant Designations

- 2.17 Figure 2a spatially summarises relevant cultural heritage designations and archaeological findspot references in relation to the study site.
- 2.18 In terms of relevant nationally significant designated heritage assets, the study site does not lie within the vicinity of a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck.
- 2.19 In line with relevant planning policy and guidance, this desk-based assessment seeks to clarify the study site's archaeological potential, together with the likely significance of that potential, and the need or otherwise for additional mitigation measures.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Geology

- 3.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS online Geology Viewer) has mapped the solid geology underlying the study site as Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (Chalk), with superficial deposits of Langley Silt (clay and silt) overlying the chalk.
- 3.2 The BGS GeoIndex Onshore contains a borehole log for a location within the study site drilled in 1968 (Ref. SU77SW48). The log recorded the following sequence of deposits:
- c. 2.4m of Made Ground;
 - c. 1.5m of Alluvium - *green sandy clay*;
 - c. 3m of Drift - *gravel and rubble chalk*;
 - c. 5.4m of Upper Chalk - *rubble and chalk*;
 - c. 33m of Upper Chalk - *hard chalk and flints*.

Topography

- 3.3 Within the wider topographic setting the study site is located on the Thames Valley floodplain and is generally level at between 38 and 39m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- 3.4 As indicated by the geological sequence recorded on the study site in 1968 (see paragraph 3.2 above) the natural topography of the study site has been significantly altered. The study site is underlain by over 2m of Made Ground having been raised off the floodplain to accommodate industrial development in the late 1920s/early 1930s.
- 3.5 Prior to land raising, the area was cut by ditches to protect the low-lying pasture from seasonally flooding.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND WITH ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Timescales used in this report

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	900,000 -	12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 -	4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 -	1,800 BC
Bronze Age	1,800 -	600 BC
Iron Age	600 -	AD 43

Historic

Roman	AD 43 -	410
Saxon/Early Medieval	AD 410 -	1066
Medieval	AD 1066 -	1485
Post Medieval	AD 1486 -	1799
Modern	AD 1800 -	Present

Introduction

- 4.1 This chapter reviews the available archaeological evidence for the study site and the archaeological/historical background of the general area, and, in accordance with NPPF, considers the potential for any as yet to be discovered archaeological evidence on the study site.
- 4.2 What follows comprises a review of known archaeological assets within a 750m radius of the study site, also referred to as the study area, held on the Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER), together with a historic map regression exercise charting the development of the study area from the eighteenth century onwards until the present day.
- 4.3 Figure 2a spatially summarises relevant cultural heritage designations and archaeological findspot references in relation to the study site.
- 4.4 In terms of relevant nationally significant designated heritage assets, the study site does not lie within the vicinity of a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck site.
- 4.5 Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) for the study site, provided by the Berkshire HER, confirms the study site to lie within an area designated as 'Industrial and Extractive' (see Figure 2c).

- 4.6 Chapter 5 subsequently considers the site conditions and whether the proposed development will impact the theoretical archaeological potential identified below.

Previous Archaeological Work

- 4.7 The Berkshire HER does not record that any archaeological works have previously been undertaken within the study site or its immediate vicinity.
- 4.8 Part of the historic core of Reading occupies the south-eastern extent of the study area and there are numerous Medieval and Post-Medieval HER Events and Monuments recorded in this area (see Fig. 2a-b). During this period the study site lay beyond the limits of settlement within fields of pasture and therefore HER Events and Monuments evidencing the development of the town are not considered relevant to an assessment of the sites archaeological potential.
- 4.9 The following is a summary of HER Data Events located within c.500m of the study site.
- 4.10 An archaeological trench evaluation at Trafalgar House, c.180m north of the study site, recorded no evidence of activity prior to the 20th century, and the only apparent use of the land prior to the construction of Trafalgar House in 1979 was a possible rubbish tip (ERM617).
- 4.11 An archaeological evaluation was carried out at land off Brigham Road c. 350m east of the study site (ERD21). No archaeological features were present in any of the trenches and no artefacts were recovered from the trenches or the spoil heaps. The presence of alluvium and localised peat deposits were identified and the latter may be evidence of a north-south orientated inlet channel of the River Thames.

Palaeolithic

- 4.12 The HER records only two data entries dating to the Palaeolithic period within the study area. These include an ovate handaxe was found in 1903 at Vachel Road, c. 700m south-east of the study site (MRD9047) and a finely struck Levalloisian flake was found in Caversham Road c. 650m south of the study site (MRD9048). These artefacts probably derived from the Taplow gravels which outcrop to the south and south-east of the study site.
- 4.13 The alluvial deposits associated with the River Thames which underlie the site have been dated to the Holocene period. Therefore, the near surface horizons of the site are considered to have no potential for artefactual or other evidence of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic date.
- 4.14 During the Upper Palaeolithic period, the floodplain was an ideal resource for hunter-gatherer communities. However, these activities leave little trace in the archaeological record and are often reduced to the chance discovery of one or to lithic implements. If present, any artefactual evidence would be buried at depth within and beneath alluvium.
- 4.15 Overall, a low potential is identified for the Palaeolithic period.

Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age

- 4.16 The HER records only two entries relating to the discovery of Mesolithic artefacts within the study area. Seven Mesolithic transept axeheads, four picks and a mace were recovered from the Thames at Caversham. Wymer provides a general grid reference for these finds as NGR SU 720740 c. 650m east of the study site (MRD11150). In addition, a Mesolithic transept axe, a pick and a blade were recovered from the "Thames" at Reading c.750m east of the study site (MRD11164).
- 4.17 There are no Mesolithic sites or finds recorded on the HER near the study site. Therefore there is little evidence to suggest that this section of the Thames Valley was occupied and, as a result, a low potential for evidence of this period is identified for the study site.
- 4.18 From around 4000 BC the mobile hunter-gathering economy of the Mesolithic gradually gave way to a more settled agriculture-based subsistence.
- 4.19 The HER records several sites within the study area where Neolithic and Bronze Age artefacts have been recovered from later contexts. The majority of these sites are located within the area of Caversham over 600m to the north and within the area of Reading town centre over 500m to the south-east.
- 4.20 Within the area of Caversham the HER records the recovery of five residual prehistoric struck flints during fieldwork at The Rectory, 20 Church Road (MRM16303). Bronze Age pottery was recovered from later features during an archaeological evaluation at Church Road (MRM16639) and residual Bronze Age pottery sherds were recovered during excavations on land adjacent to Caversham Rectory (MRM16640).
- 4.21 Within the area of Reading town centre, four worked flints were recovered during archaeological investigations at Plots E and F at Station Hill South (MRM18491) and a flaked axe was found in alluvium west of the Great Western Railway engine sheds (MRD11204).
- 4.22 To the west of the study site, evaluation trenching in advance of the construction of two trackways at Little John's Farm on the site of Reading Festival recovered seven fragments of worked flint and nine sherds of Late Bronze Age pottery (MRM16601). No features were identified.
- 4.23 Many of the HER records for this period relate to artefacts dredged from the River Thames at Caversham and Reading at various times. The exact provenance of these artefacts are unknown.
- 4.24 Given the absence of any Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age sites or finds within the immediate vicinity of the study site a low archaeological potential is identified for this period.

Iron Age to Roman

- 4.25 Within Reading Borough there is little evidence for Iron Age settlement. There are no HER entries dating to the Iron Age period within the study area.
- 4.26 The significance of Reading in the Roman period is dwarfed by the Roman town of Calleva at Silchester, c.14km to the southwest. Indeed, Calleva was the focus of the Roman road system in the area, but

many goods must have been transported by river and it is possible that Reading could have been a port serving town.

- 4.27 There are three HER monument entries dating to the Roman period within the study area. A 3rd century coin of Magnentius was found in Greyfriars Road (MRD11262), five coins were found during reconstruction of Caversham Bridge in 1926 (MRD11299) and a Romano-British axe head was found in the River Thames at Caversham Bridge (MRD11302).
- 4.28 In view of the limited number of Iron Age and Roman sites and finds locally, a low potential is identified for settlement or other evidence of this period within the study site.

Anglo-Saxon/Early Medieval & Medieval

- 4.29 In 871 the Anglo Saxon Chronicles record that the Danes entered Wessex at Reading. Sometime after this invasion, a rampart was built on the western edge of the settlement to defend, the side not protected by rivers. The line of the defences is thought to correspond with the north-south alignment of The Forbury (c.800m east/south-east of the study site) suggesting that the study site lay outside the limits of Danish settlement (HER RD15633 at SU 71690 73720).
- 4.30 The burial of a man and a horse, together with a sword, was discovered in 1831 '100 yards east from the end of the engine sheds at Reading Station'. The exact location of the burial is uncertain and is based on Lovejoy's Map of Reading dating to 1840. The HER places the site c.650m south-east of the study site. Analysis of the sword pommel suggest that it is an advanced Scandinavian 'Gripping Beast' style of the 8th century. Its worn condition and advanced style accord with a date of interment soon after 800 AD (MRD3891).
- 4.31 A single sherd of residual Saxon pottery was recovered from a Post-Medieval pit during an archaeological excavation (MRM16017).
- 4.32 The Domesday survey of 1086 records two manors at Reading, one belonging to Battle Abbey and the other to the King. During this period the study site lay within the estate of Battle Abbey, which included a church, 29 dwellings and 12 acres of meadows.
- 4.33 The estate attached to Battle Abbey was recovered by Henry I in the early 12th century and in 1121 the King founded Reading Abbey on the newly acquired land. During the 12th century, Medieval settlement, which centred around St Mary's, grew along Broad Street and Friar Street over 700m south-east of the study site. Archaeological investigations at sites along Friar Street have recorded the remains of Medieval buildings and evidence of domestic activity (99-105 Friar Street: MRD15535-MRD15547, 25-26 Friar Street: MRM16016: and 1 Friar Street: MRD15735).
- 4.34 Caversham also appears in Domesday (1086) as *Caueresham*. It was held by Walter Giffard (or Gifford, a major landholder) and was assessed at 20 hides. It had land for 21 ploughs, a mill and 13 acres of meadow, along with woodland just over a league square. Twenty-eight villans and 13 bordars are mentioned, with two slaves. At this time it was in the county of Oxfordshire (MRD3904).

- 4.35 A Franciscan friary was founded near Caversham Bridge in 1233. The Friars are recorded to have built a timber church, chapter house, dormitory and refectory. But because of regular flooding the site was moved to Reading in c.1282-85 (MRD3938).
- 4.36 During the Anglo-Saxon, Early Medieval and Medieval periods the study site lay beyond the limits of settlement at Reading and Caversham probably within pasture. The archaeological potential for these periods is considered to be low. Evidence of land division considered most likely to be represented within the archaeological record.

Post Medieval & Modern (including map regression exercise)

- 4.37 Many of the Berkshire HER records within the study area search radius refer to Post-Medieval and Modern findspots. These findspots are not discussed in detail here as they are not deemed to be directly relevant to the development and history of the study site itself.
- 4.38 Early mapping shows the study site to lie within fields on land between the River Thames and Reading (Figure 3: 1761 John Rocque Map of Berkshire and Figure 4: 1809 Ordnance Survey Drawing).
- 4.39 The St Mary Reading Tithe Map (Figure 5: 1833) together with the associated apportionment shows the study site occupying parts of two plots recorded as follows:

Land Parcel	Landowner	Occupant	Description	Land Use/ Cultivation
8	John Wildale Knollys	Jeremiah Whitehouse	Hitcher Meadow	Meadow
9	John Wildale Knollys	William Bryant	Long Meadow	Meadow

- 4.40 The First Edition Ordnance Survey (Figure 6: 1879 OS) shows the study site to remain in meadow. A manmade ditch forms the western boundary of the study site and a second ditch crosses the south-eastern corner of the site.
- 4.41 There is no change to the layout of the study site between 1879 and 1899 (see Figures 6-9: 1879, 1881 and 1899 OS). The 1899 Ordnance Survey shows streets of terraced housing along with a Presbyterian Church laid out a short distance to the east of the study site.
- 4.42 The 1931-1932 Ordnance Survey (Figure 10) shows a single building occupying part of the study site. Gradient markers along the western boundary of the study site suggests the ground had been raised to accommodate the new development.
- 4.43 The 1957-61 Ordnance Survey (Figure 11) shows a larger *Works* building within the eastern part of the study site. Smaller buildings are shown within the central and western parts of the study site.
- 4.44 The 1959-88 Ordnance Survey (Figure 12) shows some of the smaller buildings had been replaced by a large *Warehouse*. This map also shows *Ross Road* continuing west through the north-eastern part of the site along with a new *Depot* building.

- 4.45 The 1993 Ordnance Survey (Figure 13) shows little change to the layout of the study site with the exception of the removal of a building within the far western part of the study site.
- 4.46 The 2003 Aerial Photograph (Figure 14: Google Earth Image) shows little change to the layout of the study site.
- 4.47 More recently, the large former *Works* buildings within the south-eastern part of the study site had been demolished and replaced with a car park and a new warehouse had been built within the western part of the study site (see Figure 15: 2025 Google Earth Image).
- 4.48 The archaeological potential for the Post-Medieval and Modern periods within the study site can be identified as low.

Assessment of Significance (Designated Assets)

- 4.49 Existing national policy guidance for archaeology (the NPPF as referenced in section 2) enshrines the concept of the 'significance' of heritage assets. Significance as defined in the NPPF centres on the value of an archaeological or historic asset for its 'heritage interest' to this or future generations.
- 4.50 In terms of relevant nationally significant designated heritage assets, the study site does not lie within the vicinity of a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck.
- 4.51 In view of the above it is concluded that the redevelopment proposals will have no direct archaeological impact upon relevant designated heritage assets.

Assessment of Significance (Non-Designated Assets)

- 4.52 This assessment has established that there are no HER entries relating to the site and, because of the topographical (floodplain) location it is concluded that the site has a low potential for settlement evidence of activity pre-dating the 20th century.
- 4.53 As identified by desk based work, archaeological potential by period and the likely significance of any archaeological remains which may be present is summarised in table form below:

Period:	Identified Archaeological Potential	Identified Archaeological Significance
Palaeolithic	Low	Low (Local)
Mesolithic	Low	Low (Local)
Neolithic	Low	Low (Local)
Bronze Age	Low	Low (Local)
Iron Age	Low	Low (Local)
Roman	Low	Low (Local)
Anglo-Saxon	Low	Low (Local)

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Medieval	Low	Low (Local)
Post-Medieval	Low	Low (Local)
Modern	Low	Low (local)

4.54 Any archaeological remains, should they occur at the study site, would in the context of the Secretary of State’s non-statutory criteria for Scheduled Monuments (DCMS 2013) most likely be of local significance.

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

Site Conditions

- 5.1 The study site is currently occupied by warehouses and areas of hard standing (see Figure 15: 2025 Google Earth Image).
- 5.2 Due to the raising of ground levels in the early 20th century by over 2m, the excavations for foundations and services for buildings constructed on the site previously have not impacted archaeological horizons.

Proposed Development

- 5.3 The proposed development comprises the construction of industrial units and areas of hardstanding for vehicle access and parking (see Figure 16).

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Designated Archaeological Assets

- 5.4 In terms of relevant nationally significant designated heritage assets, as defined above and as shown on Figure 2a, no nationally designated World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Battlefield or Historic Wreck sites lie within the vicinity of the study site.
- 5.5 In view of the above it is concluded that the redevelopment proposals will have no direct archaeological impact upon relevant designated heritage assets.

Review of Potential Development Impacts on Non-Designated Assets

- 5.6 This assessment has established that there are no Historic Environment Record entries relating to the site and, because of the topographical (floodplain) location it is concluded that the site has a low potential for evidence of activity pre-dating the 20th century.
- 5.7 Any archaeological remains, if present, are most likely to be of local (i.e. low) significance.
- 5.8 The study site is underlain by over 2m of Made Ground having been raised off the floodplain to accommodate industrial development in the late 1920s/early 1930s.
- 5.9 Prior to land raising, the area was cut by ditches to protect the low-lying pasture from seasonally flooding.
- 5.10 The construction of the proposed development will cause neither a significant nor widespread impact to levels below the existing Made Ground.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Land at Meadow Road, Reading, Berkshire has been reviewed for its below ground archaeological potential.
- 6.2 In terms of relevant, nationally significant designated heritage assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Wrecks or Historic Battlefields lie within the study site or its immediate vicinity.
- 6.3 This assessment has established that there are no Historic Environment Record (HER) entries relating to the site and, because of the topographical (floodplain) location it is concluded that the site has a low potential for evidence of activity pre-dating the 20th century.
- 6.4 Any archaeological remains, if present, are most likely to be of local (i.e. low) significance.
- 6.5 The study site is underlain by over 2m of Made Ground having been raised off the floodplain to accommodate industrial development in the late 1920s/early 1930s.
- 6.6 Prior to land raising, the area was cut by ditches to protect the low-lying pasture from seasonally flooding.
- 6.7 Proposals comprise the development of industrial units with areas of hardstanding for vehicle access and parking.
- 6.8 The construction of the proposed development will cause neither a significant nor widespread impact to levels below the existing Made Ground.
- 6.9 The need or otherwise for any further archaeological work will be the decision of the Archaeological Advisor to Reading Borough Council.

SOURCES CONSULTED

General

Berkshire Historic Environment Record

Royal Berkshire Archives

Internet

Archaeological Data Service: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk>

Aerial photography: <http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/>

British Geological Survey: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

British History: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

Domesday Book: <https://opendomesday.org.uk>

Historic England (National Heritage List): <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

Past Scape: <http://www.pastscape.org.uk>

Portable Antiquities Database: <https://finds.org.uk/database/>

NPPG: <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk>

World War Two bomb damage: <http://www.bombsight.org/bombs/>

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Bridgland Quaternary River terrace deposits as a framework for the Lower Palaeolithic record in Gamble & Lawson (eds.) *The English Palaeolithic Reviewed* 1996

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Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard & Guidance for historic environment desk based assessment* 2014, revised 2020 unpublished document

Cotswold Archaeology *Leighton Park School Reading Berkshire Archaeological Evaluation* April 2016

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Department of Communities and Local Government/Department of Culture Media and Sport/English Heritage *PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* 2010

Gibbard *The Pleistocene History of the Lower Thames Valley* 1994

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Historic England *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 1 The Historic Environment in Local Plans* July 2015 unpublished document

Historic England *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* July 2015 unpublished document

Historic England *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets* December 2017 unpublished document

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Margary *Roman Roads in Britain* 1955

Tyack, Bradley & Pevsner *Buildings of England* Berkshire 2010

Victoria County History *A History of the County of Berkshire* Volume 3 1923

Wymer *The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain* 2 volumes 1999

Cartographic

1761 Roque Map

1809 Ordnance Survey Drawing

1833 St Mary Reading Tithe Map

1879 Ordnance Survey

1881 Ordnance Survey

1899 Ordnance Survey

1912-1913 Ordnance Survey

1931-1932 Ordnance Survey

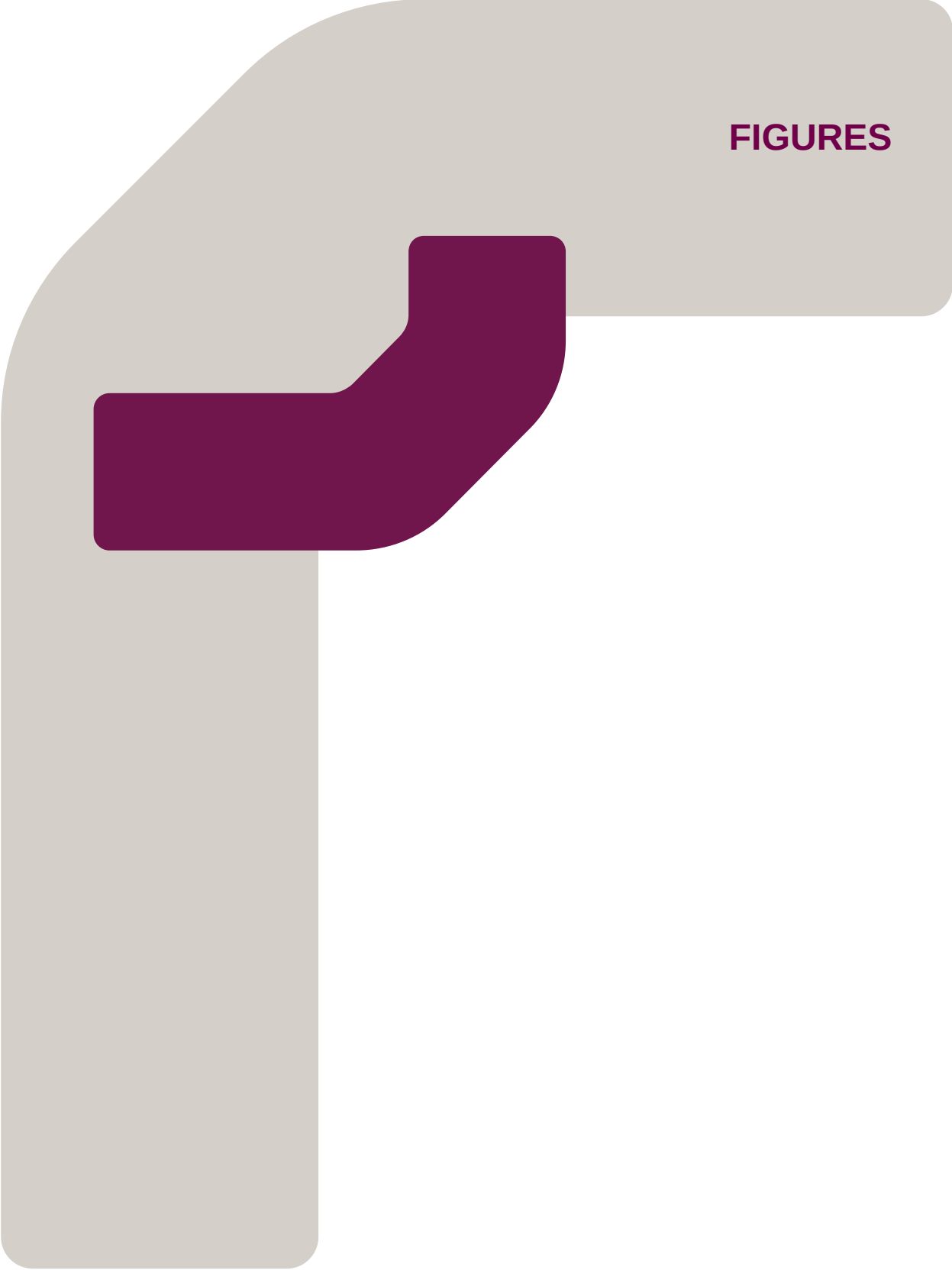
1957-1961 Ordnance Survey

1959-1988 Ordnance Survey

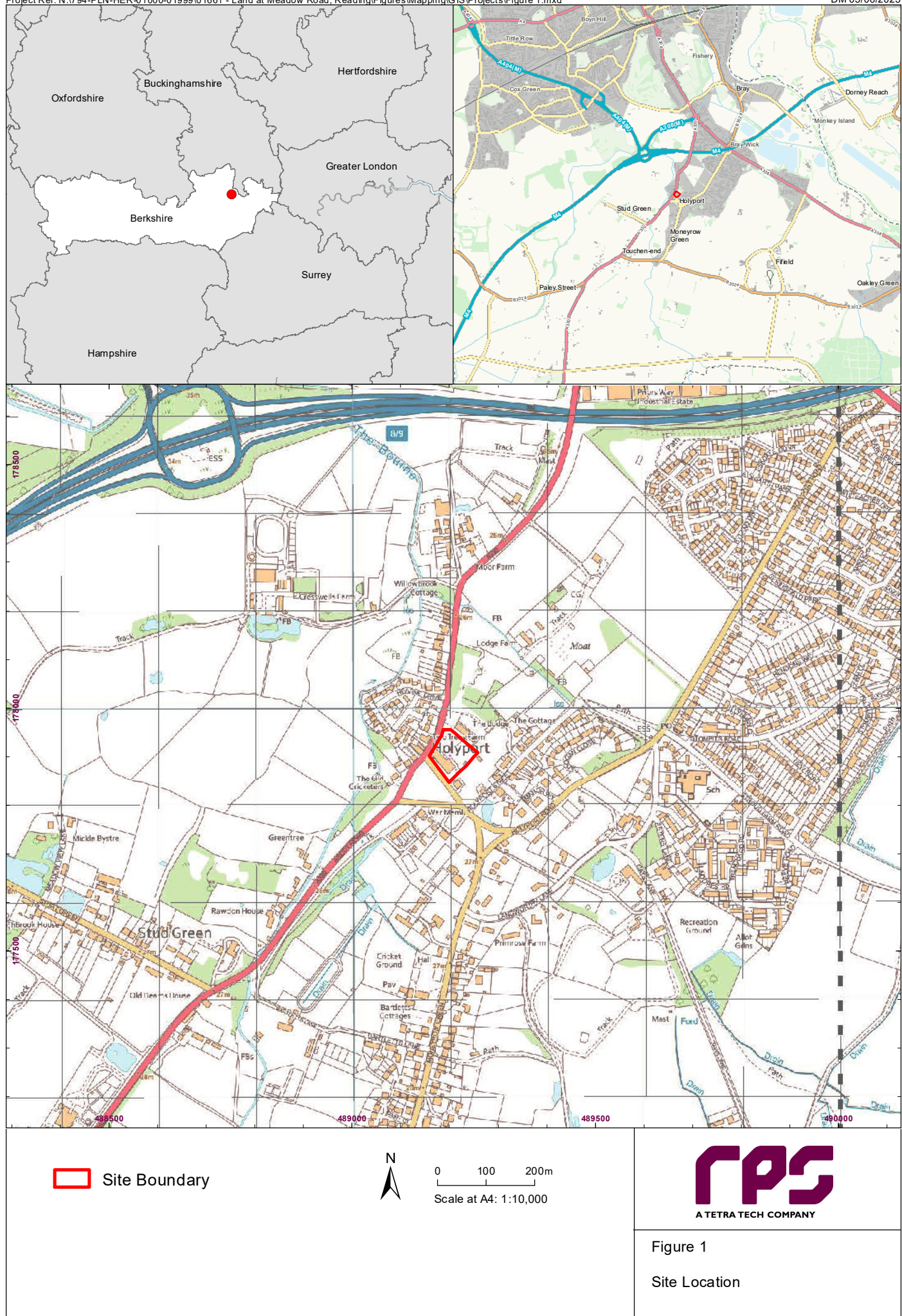
1993 Ordnance Survey

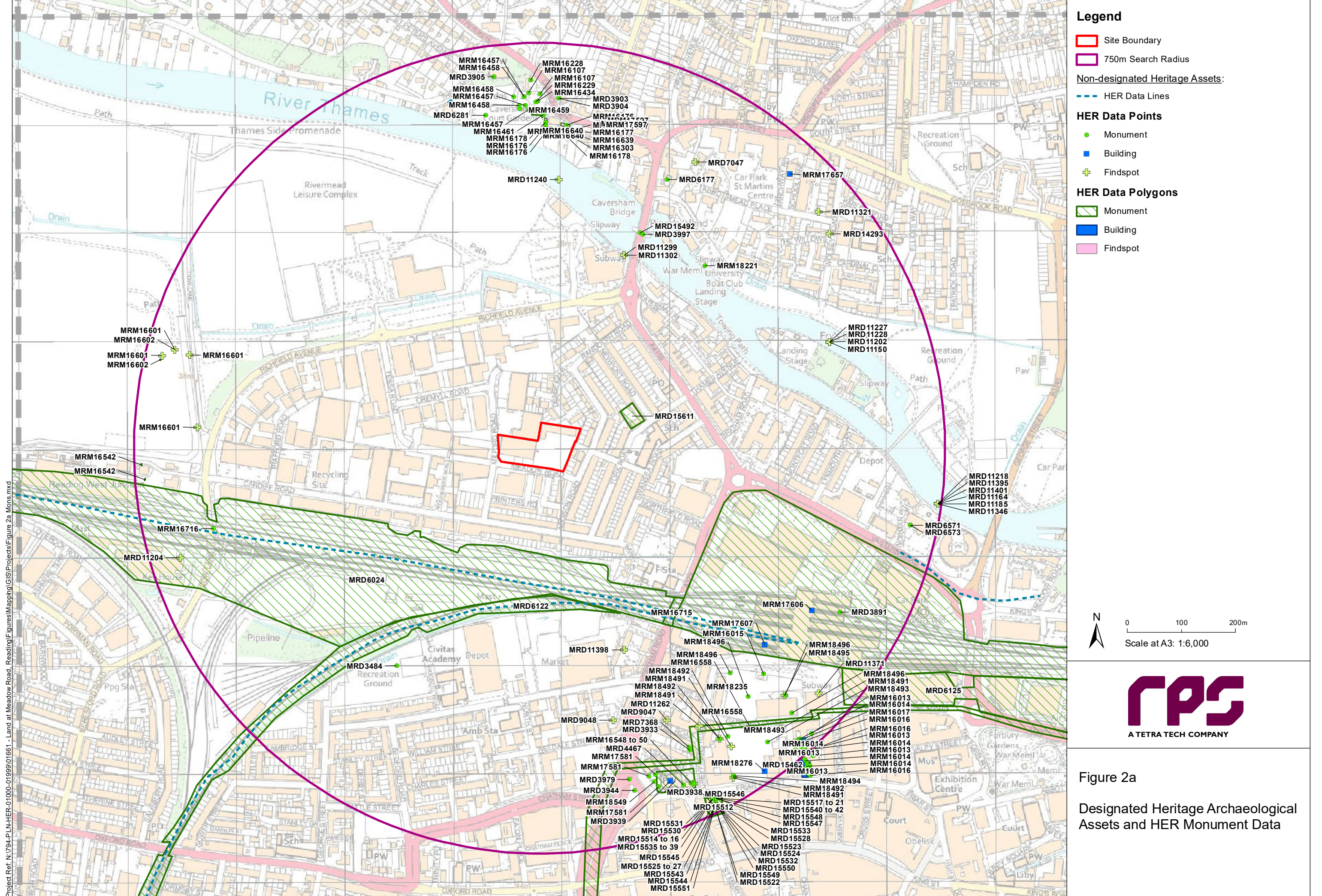
2023 Aerial Photograph (Google Earth Image)

2025 Aerial Photograph (Google Earth Image)

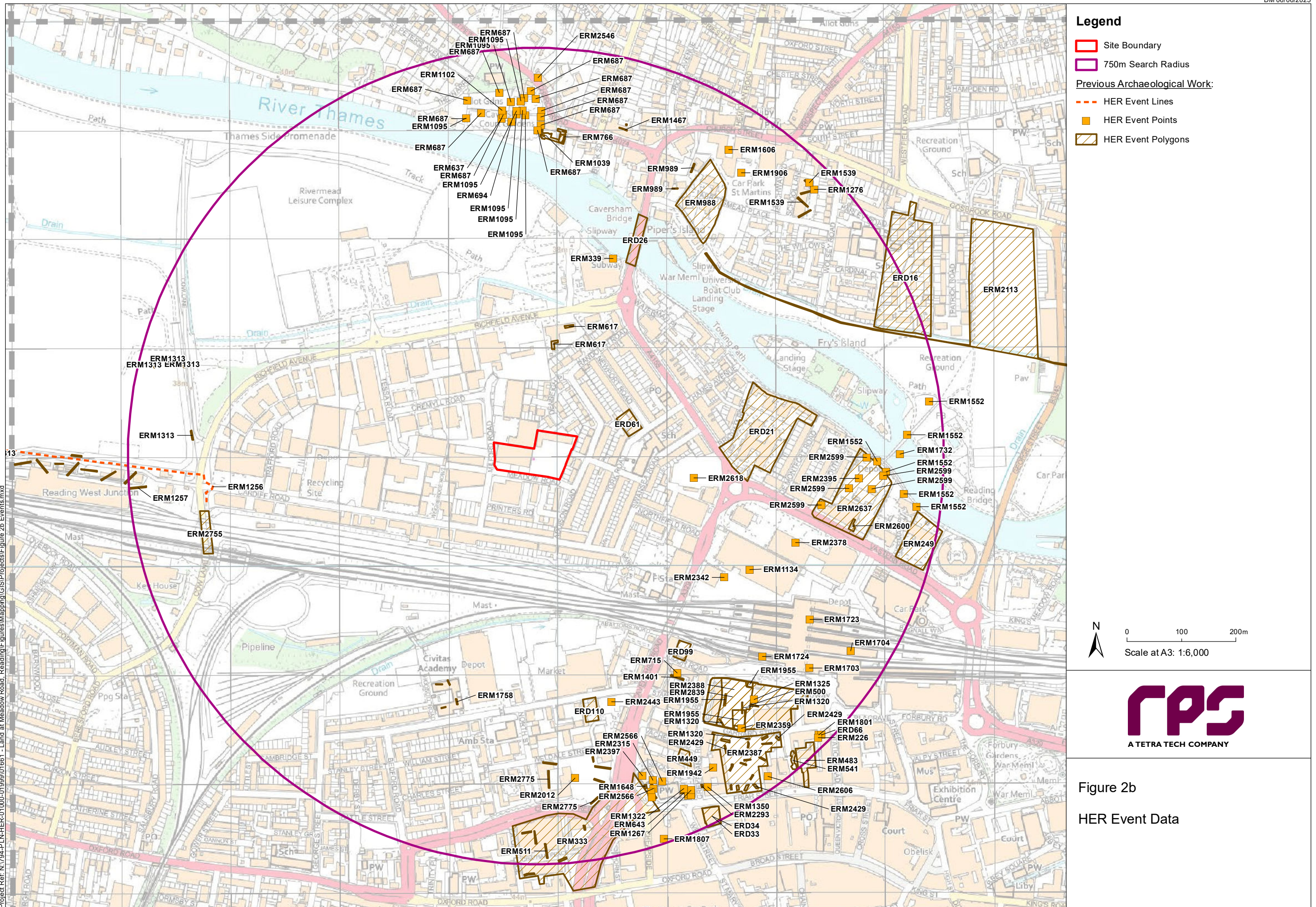


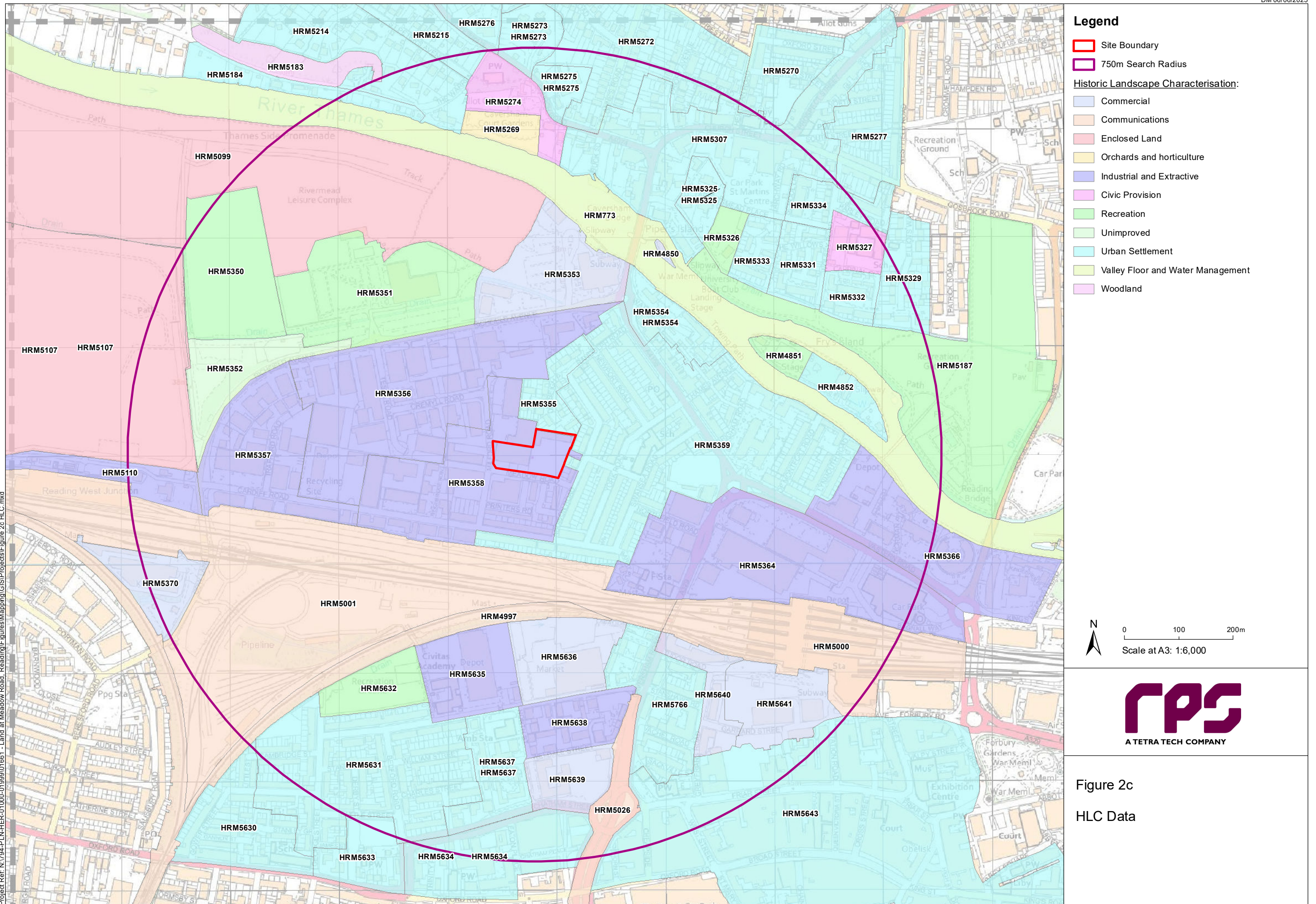
FIGURES





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○ Site Location



Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 3
1761 Roque Map



○ Site Location

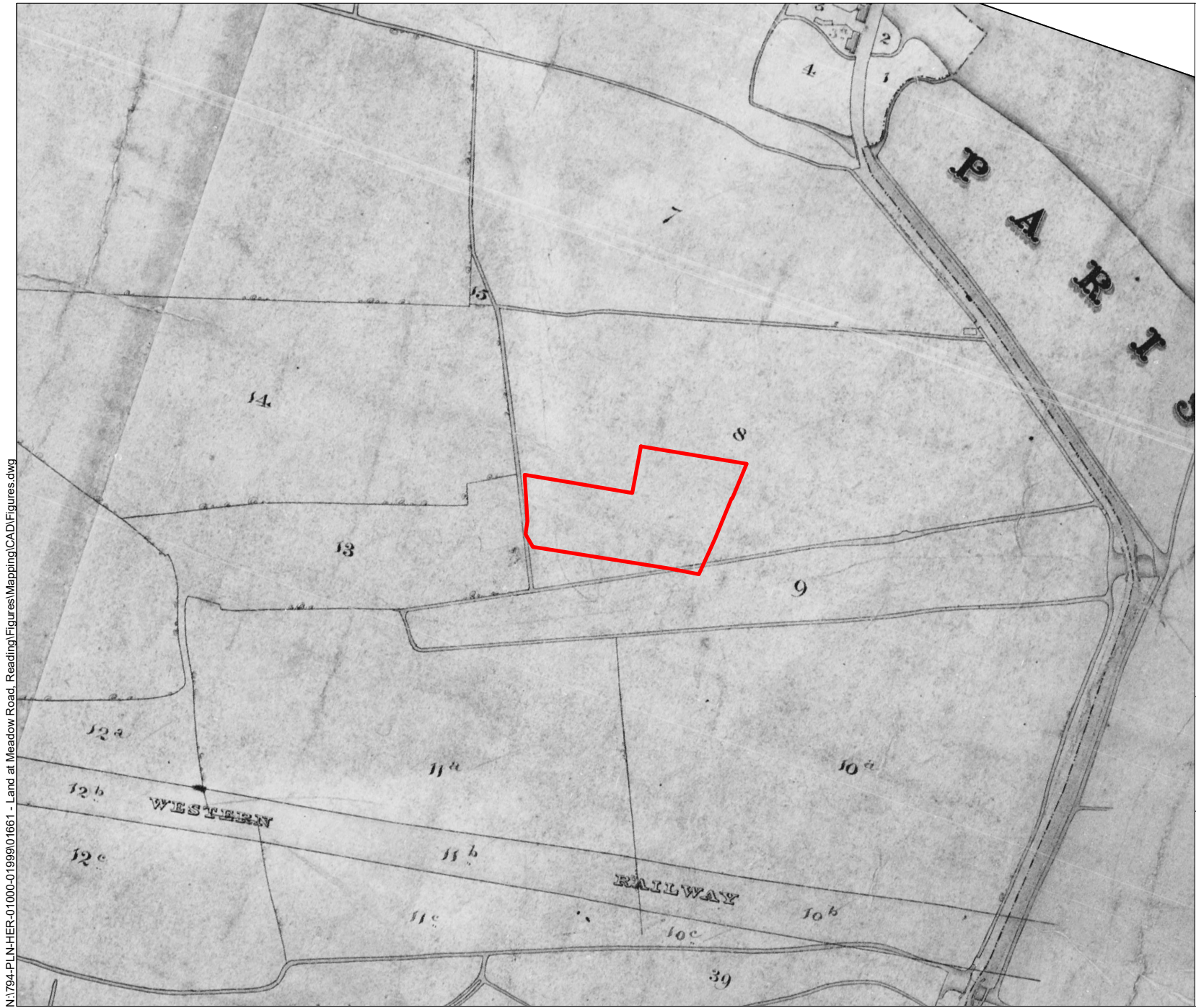


Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 4
1809 Ordnance Survey Drawing

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 Site Boundary

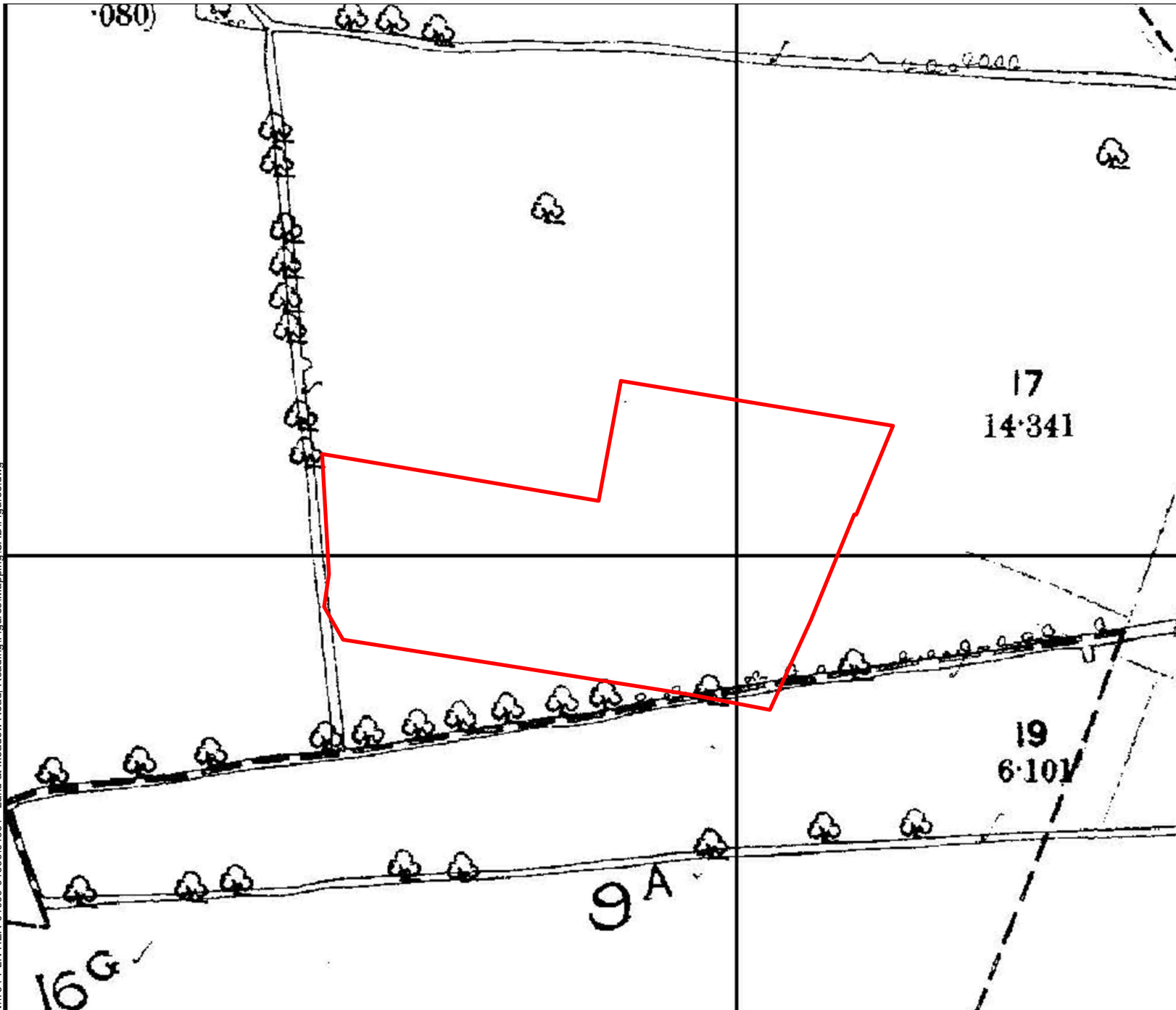


Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 5
1833 St Mary Reading Tithe Map

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 Site Boundary

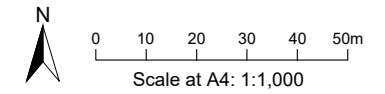
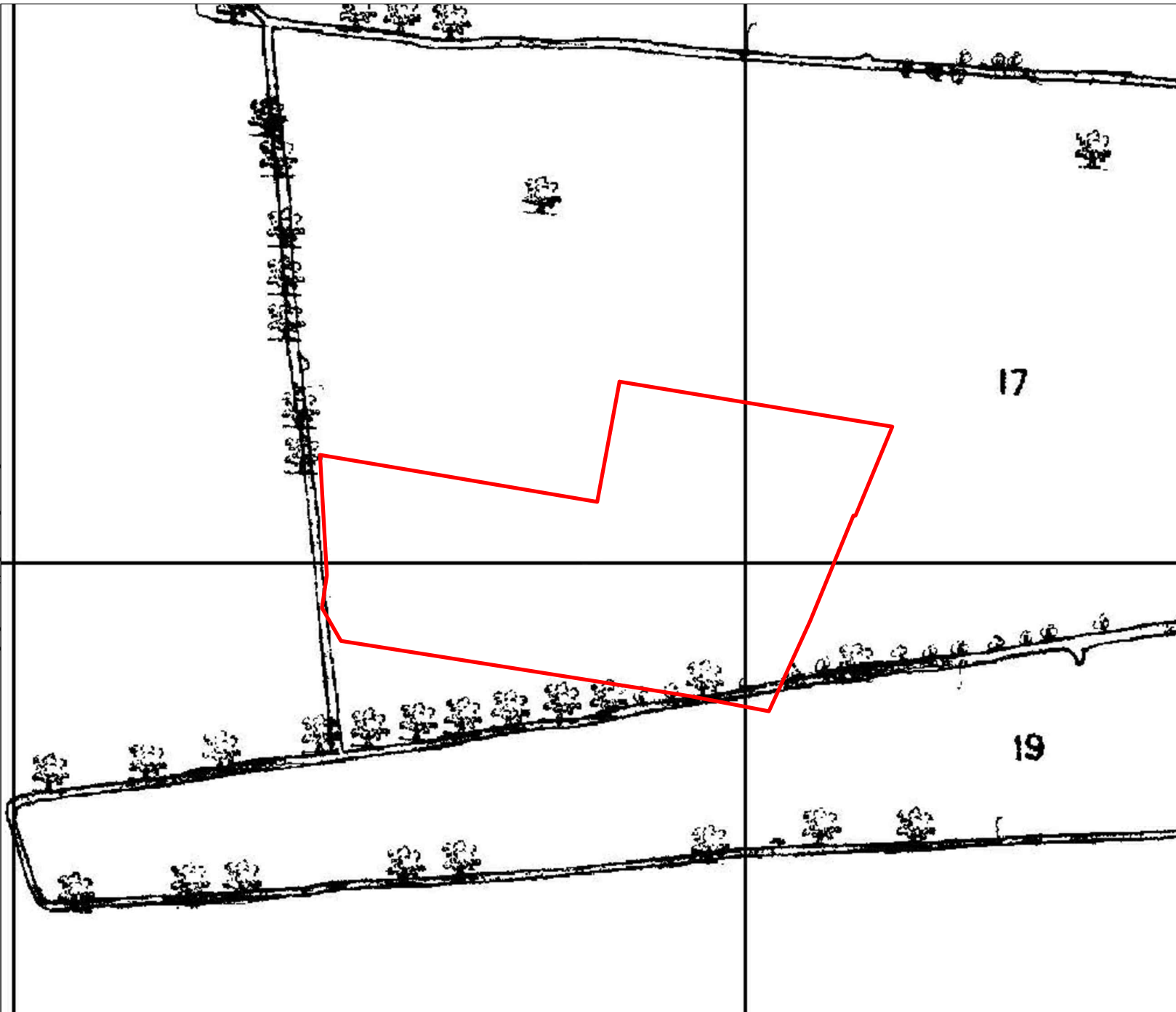


Figure 6

1879 Ordnance Survey



 Site Boundary

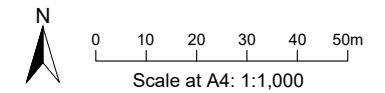
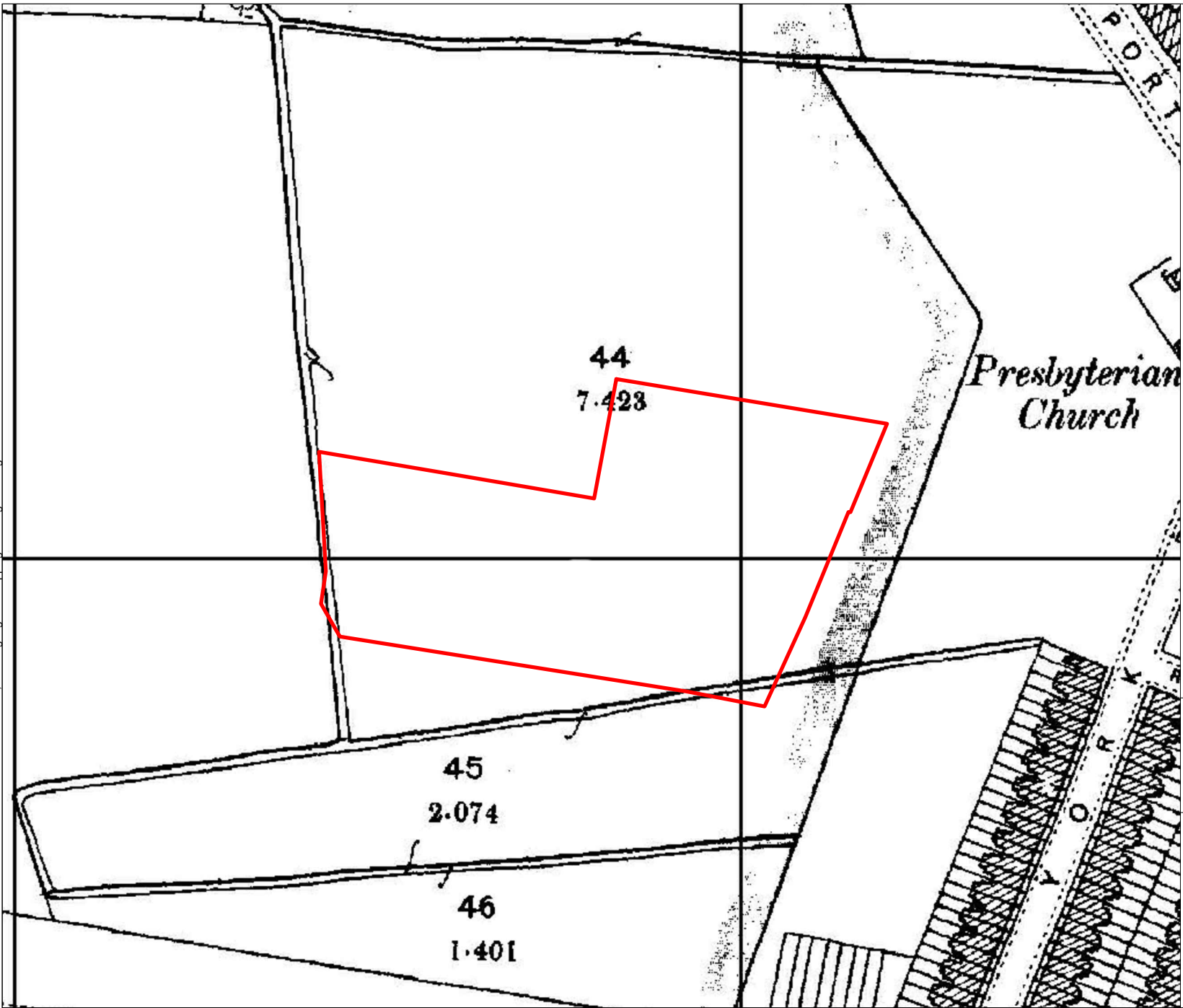


Figure 7

1881 Ordnance Survey

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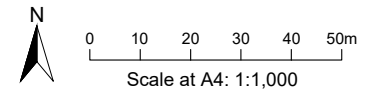
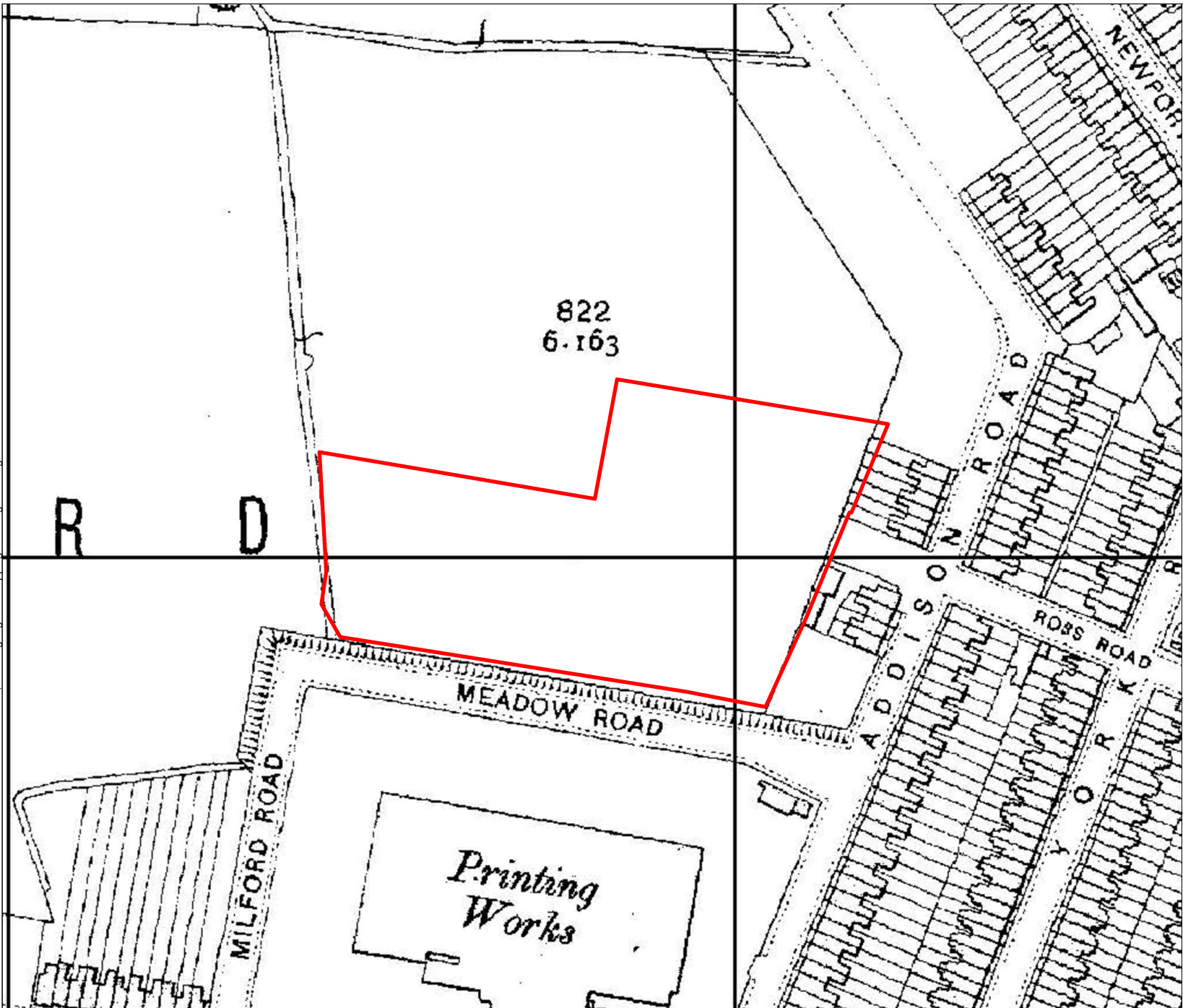


Figure 8

1899 Ordnance Survey

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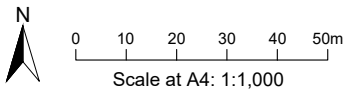
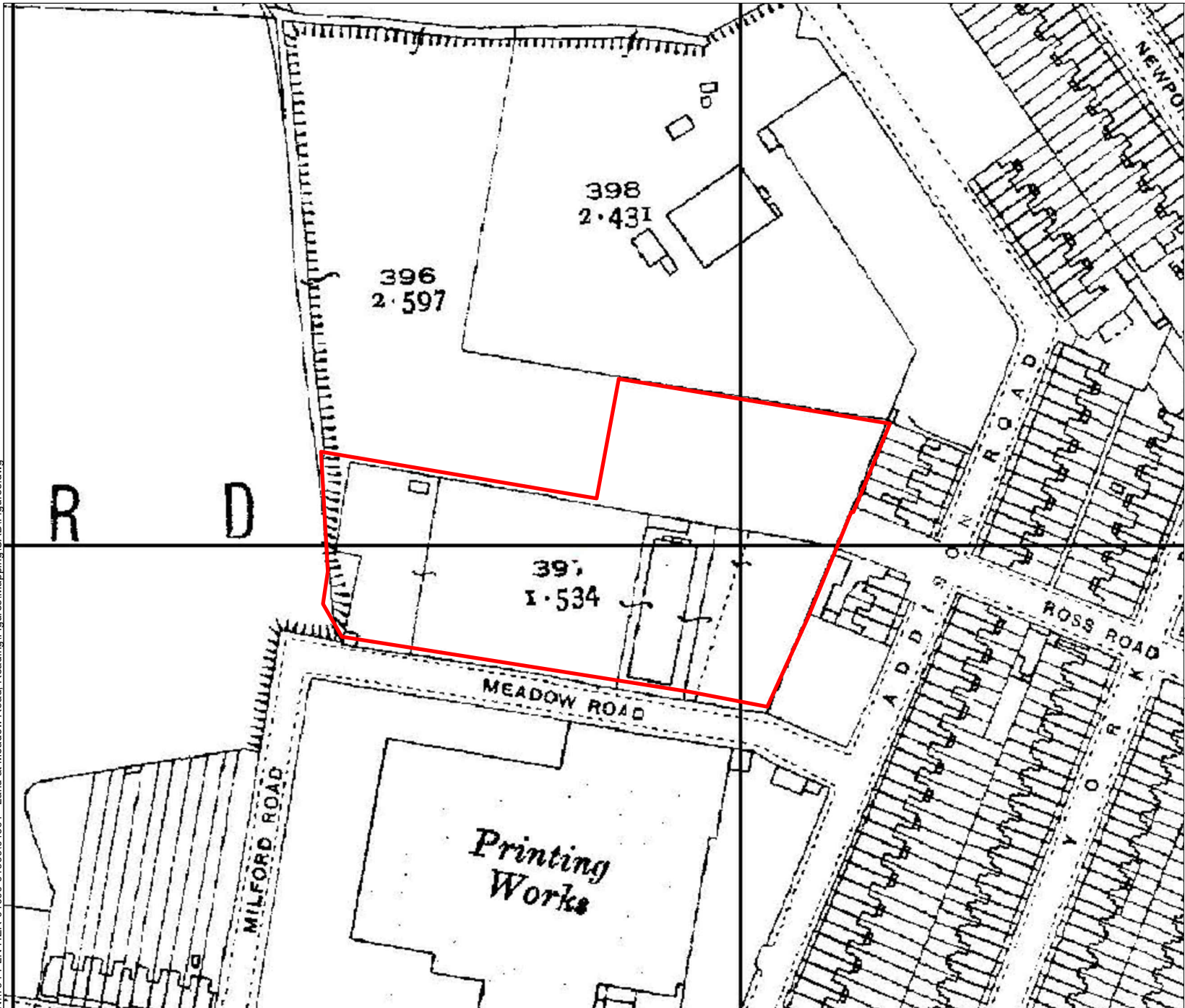


Figure 9
1912-13 Ordnance Survey

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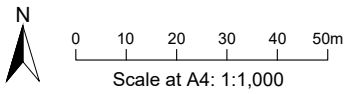
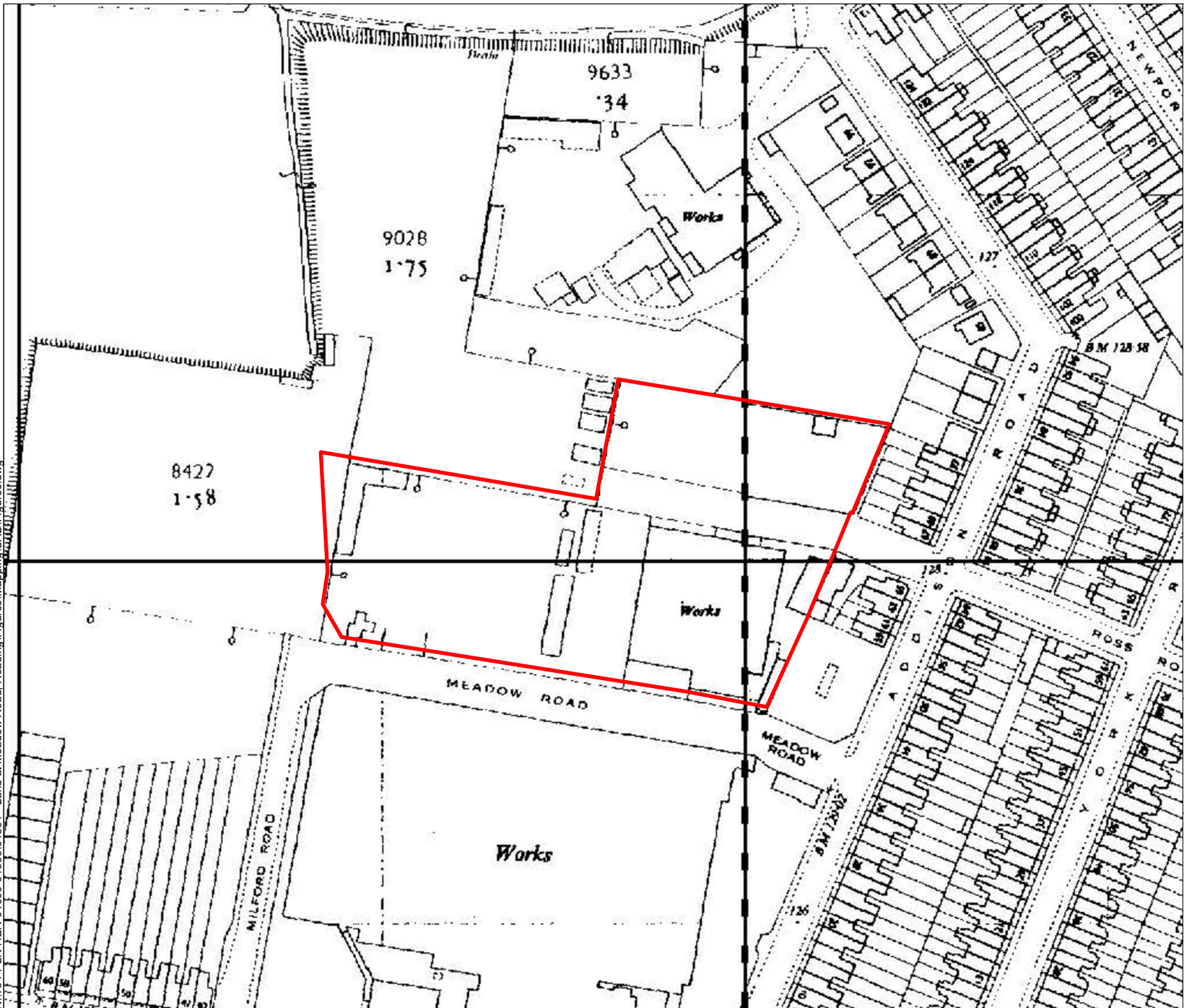


Figure 10
1931-32 Ordnance Survey

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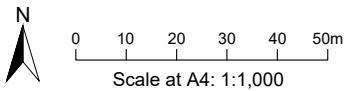


Figure 11
1957-61 Ordnance Survey



 Site Boundary

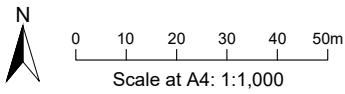
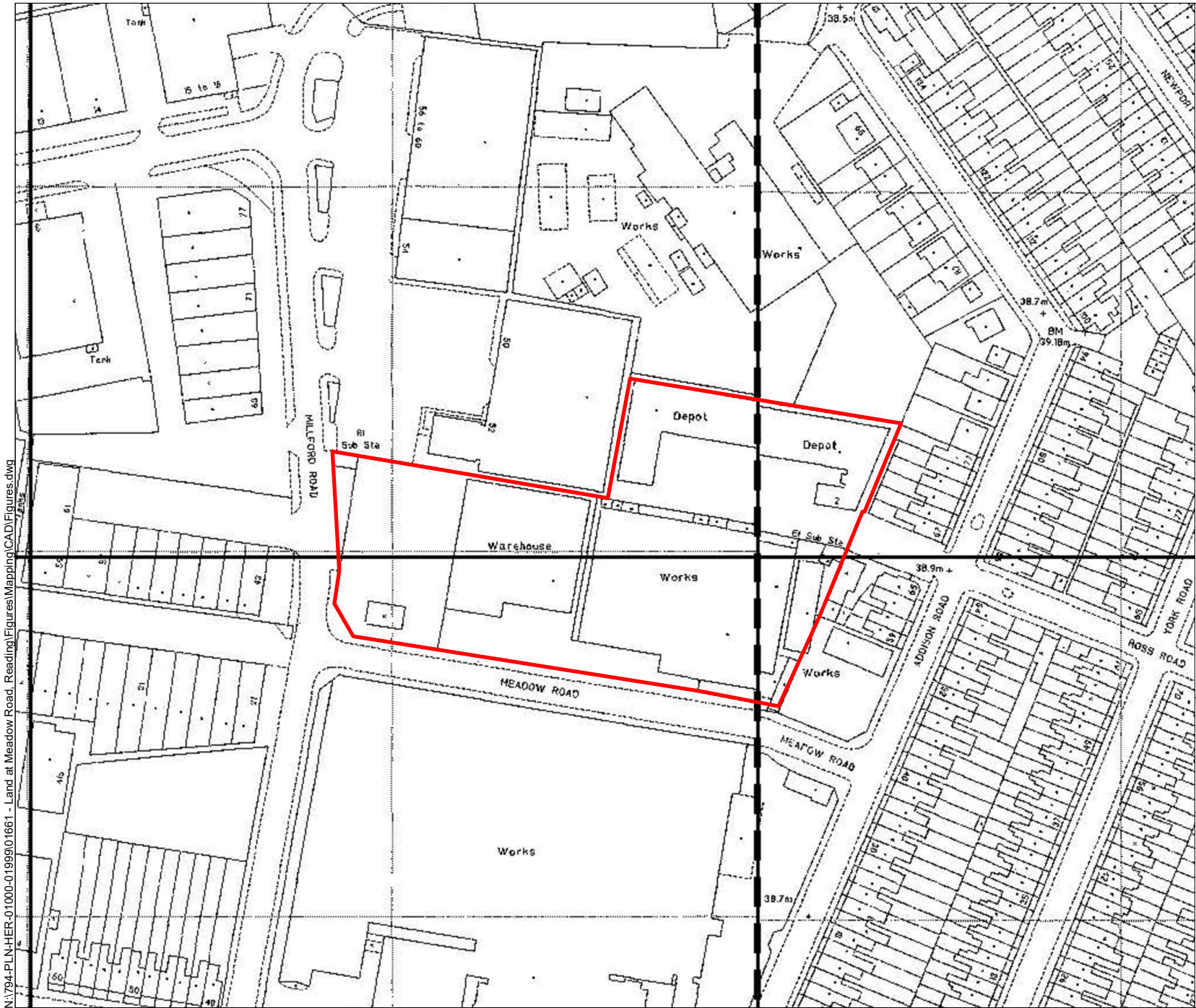


Figure 12
1959-88 Ordnance Survey

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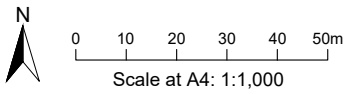


Figure 13
1993 Ordnance Survey

N:\794-PLN-HER-01000-01999\01661 - Land at Meadow Road, Reading\Figures\Mapping\CAD\Figures.dwg



 Site Boundary

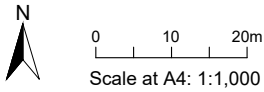


Figure 14
2003 Aerial Photograph (Google
Earth Image)



 Site Boundary

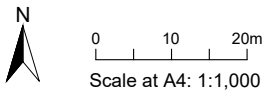
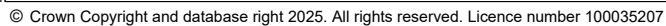


Figure 15
2025 Aerial Photograph (Google Earth Image)





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