



**Court Farm, Stoke Road
Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset**

Heritage Assessment

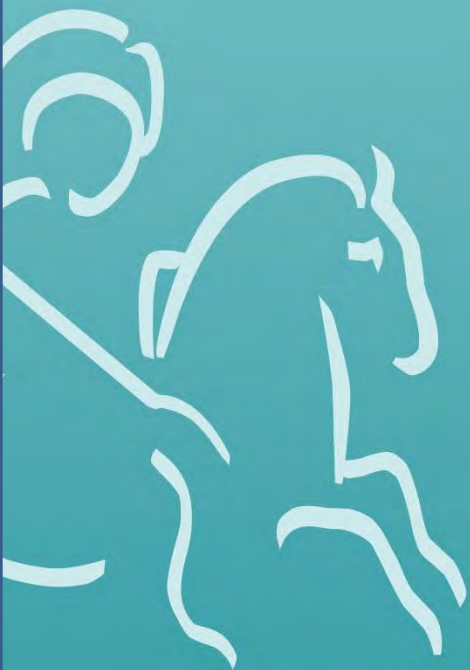


Report prepared for:
Lichfields

On behalf of:
The Church Commissioners for
England

CA Project: AN0522

CA Report: AN0522_1



Court Farm, Stoke Road Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset

Heritage Assessment

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prepared by	Sacha Hunter, Historic Buildings Consultant and Jon Sanigar, Heritage Consultant
date	May 2022
checked by	Rebecca Wills, Senior Heritage Consultant
date	May 2022
approved by	Laura Levitt, Principal Heritage Consultant
signed	
date	May 2022
issue	1

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Cirencester Building 11 Cotswold Business Park Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6BQ t. 01285 771022 f. 01285 771033	Milton Keynes Unit 8 – The IO Centre Fingle Drive Stonebridge Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK13 0AT t. 01908 564660	Andover Stanley House Walworth Road Andover Hampshire SP10 5LH t. 01264 347630	Suffolk Unit 5, Plot 11 Maitland Road Lion Barn Industrial Estate Needham Market Suffolk IP6 8NZ t. 01449 900120
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e. enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

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SUMMARY

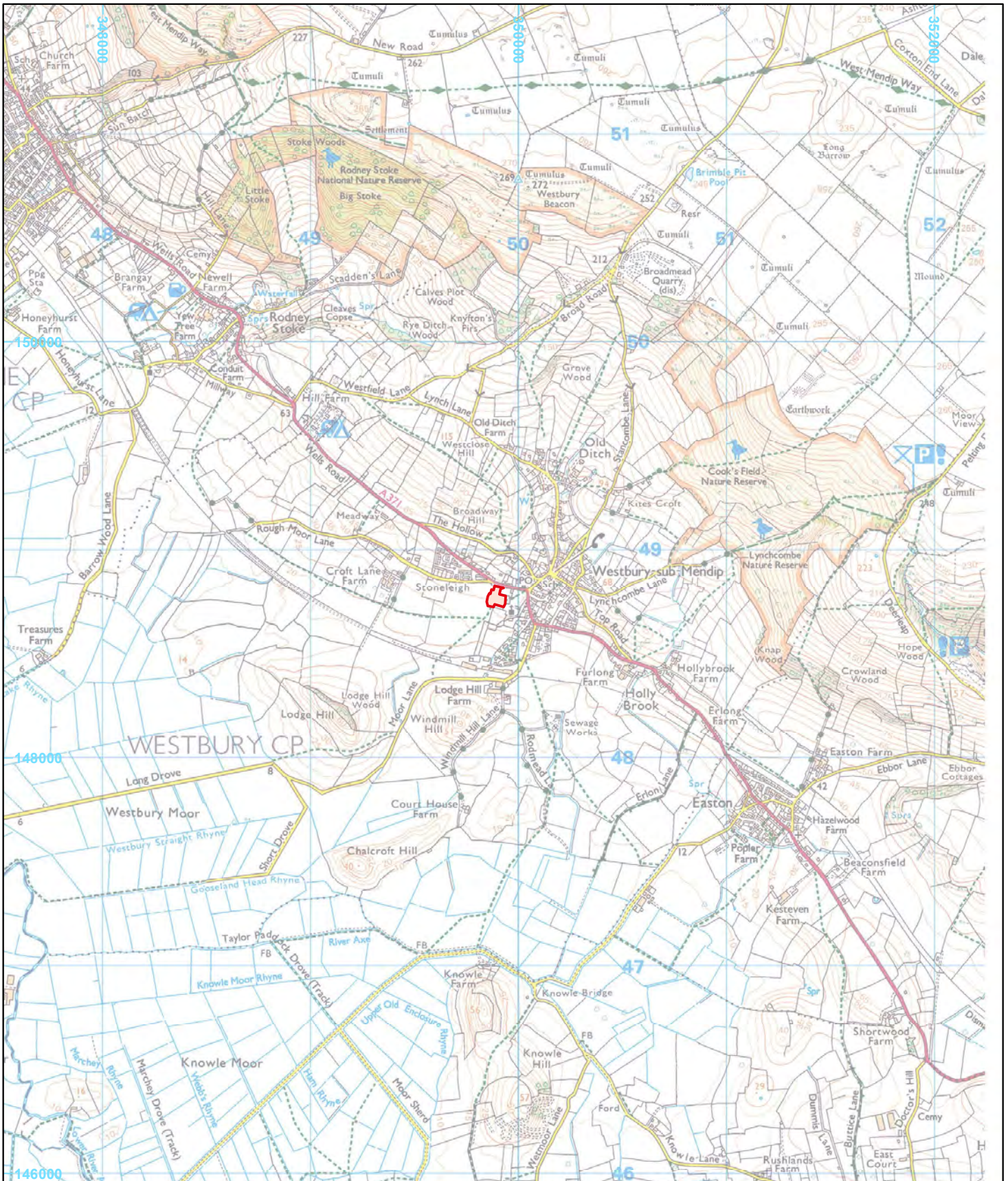
Project Name: Court Farm
Location: Stoke Road, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset
NGR: 349743 148774

In April 2022, Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned by The Church Commissioners for England to undertake a Heritage Assessment in respect of a site off Stoke Road, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset. The site is a 19th century farmstead associated with Court House Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building located immediately to the east. Both traditional and modern agricultural buildings are present within the site. This assessment will inform options and emerging design plans for the site, and in due course be submitted as part of an planning application for residential development within the site.

This assessment has identified low potential for the presence of archaeological remains of prehistoric date within the site, with remains of this period recorded extensively on the higher ground of the Mendip Hills to the north. The available evidence indicates a level of Romano-British activity within the local landscape, and there is accordingly some potential for remains of this period to present within the site. The site is situated at the western fringes of the village of Westbury-sub-Mendip, within the immediate vicinity of the presumed location of the medieval manor house held by the Bishop of Wells. Excavations by the Westbury Society Archaeology Group identified that the previous medieval manor is located to the south of and underneath the current Court House Farmhouse, however the potential for associated remains with this manor within the site should not be discounted. Any such remains, if present, are unlikely to represent highly significant heritage assets.

The assessment has included an Historic England Level 1-2 building survey which has examined the traditional farmstead buildings of the site (which are curtilage listed) and presented a summary of their significance. This has informed a chapter on capacity for change (which can be removed for planning) which has outlined the constraints and opportunities inherent in a residential scheme and made recommendations for conservation and adaptive re-use of the traditional elements and sensitive new build elements over the site of the modern barns.

A settings assessment and Conservation Area assessment has examined the contribution of the site to significance of the surrounding heritage environment and concluded that a sensitive conversion and new build scheme presents opportunities to preserve and even enhance heritage significance and that any harmful effects would be unlikely.



 Site



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 Suffolk 01449 900120

W www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
 Court Farm, Stoke Road
 Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE
 Site Location



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DRAWN BY JXS	PROJECT NO. AN0522	FIGURE NO. 1
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In April 2022, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) was commissioned by Lichfields, acting on behalf of The Church Commissioners for England to undertake a Heritage Assessment in respect of land off Stoke Road, Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). Presently in use as a farmyard with associated barns and encompassing an area c. 0.6ha, the Site is located to the south of Stoke Road/A371 on the western edge of the village of Westbury-sub-Mendip (NGR: 349743 148774; Fig. 1). Court House Farmhouse is located to the immediate east of the Site, along with the Church of St Lawrence to the south-east, whilst to the west and south are open arable fields.

1.2. The assessment of the historic environment of the Site is required to inform and underpin emerging design plans for the redevelopment and conversion of the farm buildings for residential use, along with associated landscaping and access routes. At this stage, this report provides the baseline assessment of the Site and its buildings in order to provide advice on the significance of heritage assets and the constraints and opportunities of the Site in relation to heritage considerations. In due course, after finalisation of scheme design plans, an Assessment of Effects chapter can be added to the report to render it suitable for submission with a planning application as per the requirements of paragraphs 194 and 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021.

Objectives and professional standards

1.3. The composition and development of the historic environment within the Site and wider landscape are discussed in this report. A determination of the significance of any heritage assets located within the Site, and any heritage assets beyond the Site boundary that may potentially be affected by the development proposals, is presented. Any potential development effects upon the significance of these heritage assets (both adverse and/or beneficial) are then described.

1.4. Cotswold Archaeology (CA) is a Registered Organisation (RO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). This report has been prepared in accordance with appropriate standards and guidance, including the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment' published by CIfA in 2014 and updated in 2017 and 2020. This states that, insofar as they relate to the determination of planning applications, heritage desk-based assessments should:

...enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made [as to] whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention [any identified heritage] impact' (ClfA 2020, 4).

- 1.5. The 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' (Historic England 2015), further clarifies that a desk-based assessment should:

...determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation' (Historic England 2015, 3).

Statute, policy and guidance context

- 1.6. The Site is located in the local authority of Mendip District Council. The Mendip District Local Plan Part 1 was adopted in December 2014 and sets out strategic and local planning policies for the district up to 2029. Policy DP3 of the Local Plan Part 1 (Heritage Conservation) is a key material consideration.
- 1.7. This assessment has been undertaken within the key statute, policy and guidance context presented within Table 1.1. The applicable provisions contained within these statute, policy and guidance documents are referred to, and discussed, as relevant, throughout the text. Fuller detail is provided in Appendix 1.

Statute	Description
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)	Act of Parliament providing for the maintenance of a schedule of archaeological remains of the highest significance, affording them statutory protection.
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)	Act of Parliament placing a duty upon the Local Planning Authority (or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State) to afford due consideration to the preservation of Listed Buildings and their settings (under Section 66(1)), and Conservation Areas (under Section 72(2)), in determining planning applications.
National Heritage Act 1983 (amended 2002)	One of four Acts of Parliament providing for the protection and management of the historic environment, including the establishment of the Historic Monuments & Buildings Commission, now Historic England.
Conservation Principles (Historic England 2008)	Guidance for assessing heritage significance, with reference to contributing heritage values, in particular: <i>evidential</i> (archaeological), <i>historical</i> (illustrative and associative), <i>aesthetic</i> , and <i>communal</i> .
National Planning Policy Framework (2021)	Provides the English government's national planning policies and describes how these are expected to be applied within the planning system. Heritage is subject of Chapter 16 (page 55).
National Planning Practice Guidance (updated July 2019)	Guidance supporting the National Planning Policy Framework.
Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015)	Provides useful information on assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness.
Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets, Second Edition (Historic England, 2017)	Provides guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes.
Mendip District Local Plan (2006-2029)	Comprises the local development plan (local plan), as required to be compiled, published and maintained by the local authority, consistent with the requirements of the NPPF (2021). Intended to be the primary planning policy document against which planning proposals within that local authority jurisdiction are assessed. Where the development plan is found to be inadequate, primacy reverts to the NPPF (2021).
Hedgerows Regulations (1997)	Provides protection for 'important' hedgerows within the countryside, controlling their alteration and removal by means of a system of statutory notification.

Table 1.1

Key statute, policy and guidance

2. METHODOLOGY

Data collection, analysis and presentation

- 2.1. This assessment has been informed by a proportionate level of information sufficient to understand the archaeological potential of the Site, the significance of identified heritage assets, and any potential development effects. This approach is in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF (2021) and the guidance issued by ClfA (2020). The data has been collected from a wide variety of sources, summarised in Table 2.1.

Source	Data
National Heritage List for England (NHLE)	Current information relating to designated heritage assets, and heritage assets considered to be 'at risk'.
Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER)	Heritage sites and events records, Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) data, and other spatial data supplied in digital format (shapefiles) and hardcopy.
Somerset Heritage Centre	Historic mapping, historic documentation, and relevant published and grey literature.
Historic England's Aerial Photo Explorer, Google Earth, Britain from Above, Cambridge University aerial photography	Vertical and oblique aerial photography ranging in date from the 1940s to present.
Grey Literature	Additional publications, grey literature and other materials specific to the locality.
Genealogist, Envirocheck, National Library of Scotland & other cartographic websites	Historic (Ordnance Survey and Tithe) mapping in digital format.
British Geological Survey (BGS) website	UK geological mapping (bedrock & superficial deposits) & borehole data.

Table 2.1 Key data sources

- 2.2. Prior to obtaining data from these sources, an initial analysis was undertaken in order to identify a relevant and proportionate study area. This analysis utilised industry-standard GIS software, and primarily entailed a review of recorded heritage assets in the immediate and wider landscape, using available datasets.
- 2.3. On this basis a 1km study area, measured from the boundaries of the Site, was considered sufficient to capture the relevant HER data, and provide the necessary context for understanding archaeological potential and heritage significance in

respect of the Site. All of the spatial data held by the HER – the primary historic data repository – for the land within the study area, was requested. The records were analysed and further refined in order to narrow the research focus onto those of relevance to the present assessment. Not all HER records are therefore referred to, discussed or illustrated further within the body of this report, only those that are relevant. These are listed in a cross-referenced gazetteer provided at the end of this report (Appendix 2) and are illustrated on the Figs accompanying this report.

- 2.4. A site visit was also undertaken as part of this assessment. The primary objectives of the site visit were to assess the Site's historic landscape context, including its association with any known or potential heritage assets, and to identify any evidence for previous truncation of the on-site stratigraphy. The site visit also allowed for the identification of any previously unknown heritage assets within the Site, and assessment of their nature, condition, significance and potential susceptibility to impact. The wider landscape was examined, as relevant, from accessible public rights of way.

Historic Building Assessment

- 2.5. As part of the aforementioned site visit, a survey of the farm buildings was undertaken. This was conducted at an Historic England Level 1/2 basic descriptive survey according to their guidance Understanding Historic Buildings, a Guide to Good Recording Practice 2016. The purpose of the building survey is to assess the fabric and structures of the farm buildings to inform an understanding of their significance. This in turn feeds directly into provision of an appraisal of constraints and opportunities inherent in the development and conversion of the buildings.

Assessment of heritage significance

- 2.6. The significance of known and potential heritage assets within the Site, and any beyond the Site which may be affected by the proposed development, has been assessed and described, in accordance with paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2021), the guidance issued by ClfA (2020), Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 (HE 2015) and Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Historic England 2019). Determination of significance has been undertaken according to the industry-standard guidance on assessing heritage value provided within Conservation Principles (English Heritage 2008). This approach considers heritage significance to derive from a combination of discrete heritage values, principal amongst which are: i) evidential (archaeological)

value, ii) historic (illustrative and associative) value, iii) aesthetic value, iv) communal value, amongst others. Further detail of this approach, including the detailed definition of those aforementioned values, as set out, and advocated, by Historic England, is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

Assessment of potential development effects (benefit and harm)

- 2.7. The present report sets out, in detail, the ways in which identified susceptible heritage assets might be affected by the proposals, as well as the anticipated extent of any such effects. Both physical effects, i.e. resulting from the direct truncation of archaeological remains, and non-physical effects, i.e. resulting from changes to the setting of heritage assets, have been assessed. With regard to non-physical effects or ‘settings assessment’, the five-step assessment methodology advocated by Historic England, and set out in the Second Edition of GPA3 (Historic England, 2017), has been adhered to (presented in greater detail in Appendix 1).
- 2.8. Identified effects upon heritage assets have been defined within broad ‘level of effect’ categories (Table 2.2 below). These are consistent with key national heritage policy and guidance terminology, particularly that of the NPPF (2021). This has been done in order to improve the intelligibility of the assessment results for purposes of quick reference and ready comprehension. These broad determinations of level of effect should be viewed within the context of the qualifying discussions of significance and impact presented in this report.
- 2.9. It should be noted that the overall effect of development proposals upon designated heritage assets are judged, bearing in mind both any specific harms or benefits (an approach consistent with the Court of Appeal judgement *Palmer v. Herefordshire Council & ANR* Neutral Citation Number [2016] EWCA Civ 1061).
- 2.10. In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the key applicable policy is paragraph 203 of the NPPF (2021), which states that:

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

2.11. Thus, with regard to non-designated heritage assets, this report seeks to identify the significance of the heritage asset(s) which may be affected, and the scale of any harm or loss to that significance.

Level of effect	Description	Applicable statute & policy
Heritage benefit	The proposals would better enhance or reveal the heritage significance of the heritage asset.	Enhancing or better revealing the significance of a heritage asset is a desirable development outcome in respect of heritage. It is consistent with key policy and guidance, including the NPPF paragraphs 190 and 206.
No harm	The proposals would preserve the significance of the heritage asset.	<p>Preserving a Listed building and its setting is consistent with s66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990).</p> <p>Preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area is consistent with s72 of the Act.</p> <p>Sustaining the significance of a heritage asset is consistent with paragraph 190 of the NPPF, and should be at the core of any material local planning policies in respect of heritage.</p>
Less than substantial harm (lower end)	The proposals would be anticipated to result in a restricted level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset, such that the asset's contributing heritage values would be largely preserved.	<p>In determining an application, this level of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, as per paragraph 202 of the NPPF.</p> <p>Proposals involving change to a Listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, or change to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, must also be considered within the context of Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the 1990 Act. <i>The provisions of the Act do not apply to the setting of Conservation Areas.</i></p>
Less than substantial harm (upper end)	The proposals would lead to a notable level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset. A reduced, but appreciable, degree of its heritage significance would remain.	<p>Proposals with the potential to physically affect a Scheduled Monument (including the ground beneath that monument) will be subject to the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979); <i>these provisions do not apply to proposals involving changes to the setting of Scheduled Monuments.</i></p> <p>With regard to non-designated heritage assets, the scale of harm or loss should be weighed against the significance of the asset, in accordance with paragraph 203 of the NPPF.</p>

Level of effect	Description	Applicable statute & policy
Substantial harm	The proposals would very much reduce the heritage asset's significance or vitiate that significance altogether.	Paragraphs 199 - 202 of the NPPF would apply. Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the Planning Act (1990), and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), may also apply. In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the scale of harm or loss should be weighed against the significance of the asset, in accordance with paragraph 203 of the NPPF.

Table 2.2 Summary of level of effect categories (benefit and harm) referred to in this report in relation to heritage assets, and the applicable statute and policy.

2.12. The July 2019 revision of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) defines non-designated heritage assets as those identified as such in publicly accessible lists or documents provided by the plan-making body. Where these sources do not specifically define assets as *non-designated heritage assets*, they will be referred to as *heritage assets* for the purpose of this report. The assessment of *non-designated heritage assets* and *heritage assets* will be equivalent in this report, in line with industry standards and guidance on assessing significance and impact. They may not, however, carry equivalent weight in planning as set out within the provisions of the NPPF.

Limitations of the assessment

2.13. This assessment is principally a desk-based study, and has utilised secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined for the purpose of this assessment. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from secondary sources, is reasonably accurate. The records held by HER are not a record of all surviving heritage assets, but a record of the discovery of a wide range of archaeological and historical components of the historic environment. The information held within these repositories is not complete, and does not preclude the subsequent discovery of further elements of the historic environment that are, at present, unknown.

2.14. Additionally, no reports or excavation records were available for the investigations of Court Farmhouse from the Westbury Society Archaeology Group, however some information was provided by a published summary within the Somerset Archaeology

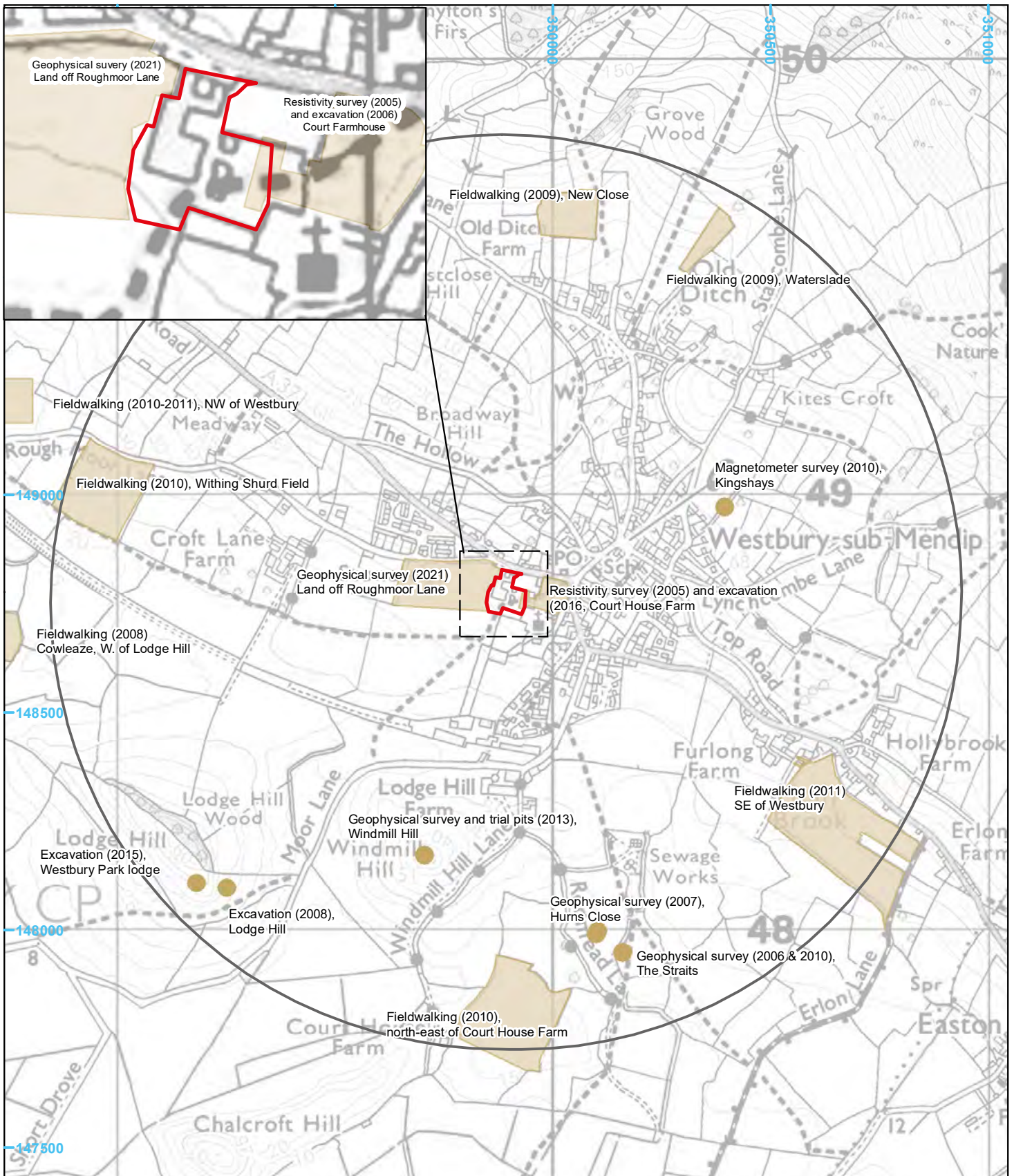
and Natural History journal and email correspondence with members of the Westbury Society Archaeology Group.

- 2.15. A review of historic aerial photographs of the Site and study area was excluded from the scope of this assessment, given that the area was studied as part of the National Mapping Programme undertaken by Historic England.
- 2.16. Somerset Heritage Centre and Historic England Archives were not reviewed for this assessment. Historic mapping obtained via online sources and recently published desk-based assessments was considered sufficient to inform the historic development of the Site in this instance.
- 2.17. A walkover survey was conducted within the Site, which was undertaken in dry and clear weather conditions. Access was afforded within the Site, although such observations are limited since archaeological remains can survive below-ground with no visible surface indications of their presence. It is possible that unknown archaeological remains may be present within the Site, and the presence of modern infrastructure may possibly have inhibited identification of any possible upstanding remains. There is an element of uncertainty over the nature, condition, frequency and extent of the potential buried archaeological resource; which may be clarified through intrusive investigation. There was also sufficient access to heritage assets to assess likely impacts upon the significance of the assets due to changes to their setting.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Landscape context

- 3.1. The Site is situated close to the centre of Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset, within a parcel of land that is occupied by Court Farm and its associated outbuildings. The Site is surrounded to the north and east by 20th century development and medieval/post-medieval dwellings. To the immediate east of the Site is the Grade II Listed Court House Farmhouse, to the south-east is the Grade II* Church of St Lawrence and its churchyard. To the immediate west and south-east are open arable fields. The majority of the Site is situated within the Westbury-sub-Mendip Conservation Area and Area of High Archaeological Potential.
- 3.2. The external boundaries of the Site are marked by low lying fencing and stone walls along the northern and eastern sides separating the Site from Court House Farmhouse, with hedgerows along the northern boundary. The boundaries to the south and east of the Site are open to the arable fields with the unmaintained grass indicating the limits of the Site where it meets the fields.
- 3.3. The Site is located within the Mendip Hills National Character Area. The Mendip Hills rises abruptly from the flat landscape of the Somerset Levels and Moors to the south. This Carboniferous Limestone ridge, with its more weather-resistant sandstone peaks, illustrates the classic features of a karst landscape, the result of the response of the soluble limestone to water and weathering, creating surface features, complex underground cave and river systems, gorges, dry valleys, surface depressions, swallets, sink holes and fast-flowing springs. Such natural features have interacted with human influences to result in complex ritual, industrial and agricultural landscapes extending from the prehistoric period to modern times (Natural England 2013).
- 3.4. The Site is a relatively flat parcel of land lying c. 37m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology across the Site is mapped as Mercia Mudstone Group - Conglomerate. Sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 201 to 252 million years ago in the Triassic Period (BGS 2022). Superficial geological deposits recorded within the Site comprise of Head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel. Superficial deposits formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (BGS 2022).



- Site
- Study Area
- Previous investigation
- Previous investigation



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Milton Keynes 01908 564860
 Suffolk 01449 900120

W www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 E enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Court Farm, Stoke Road
 Westbury-sub-Mendrip, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

**Previous Archaeological
 Investigations**

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Designated heritage assets

- 3.5. No designated heritage assets are located within the Site. Designated heritage assets within the study area include one Scheduled Monument, comprising the Village Cross (Fig. 8: **B**; NHLE: 1016292) located c. 110m to the east of the Site, which is also designated as a Grade II Listed Building. There are a further 18 Listed Buildings within the study area, of which one, the aforementioned Church of St Lawrence (**C**; located c. 40m to the east of the Site), is Grade II* Listed, while the remainder are all Grade II Listed, including Court House Farmhouse immediately to the east.
- 3.6. The majority of the Site is located within the Westbury-sub-Mendip Conservation Area (**E**). The Conservation Area encompasses the historic core of the village, along with the abovementioned Listed Buildings. No appraisal document has been prepared for the Conservation Area.
- 3.7. There are no World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, or Registered Battlefields within the study area.
- 3.8. Designated heritage assets are discussed further within the settings assessment in Section 5.

Areas of High Archaeological Potential

- 3.9. The majority of the Site is located within an Area of High Archaeological Potential (AHAP), focused on the historic settlement and largely mirroring the area encompassed by the Conservation Area, identified by Somerset County Council (Fig. 4). A further AHAP is located at the eastern edge of the study area at a distance of c. 800m and relates to a number of prehistoric monuments and occupation sites, as well as a deserted medieval settlement, within the wider landscape at Ebbor Wood.

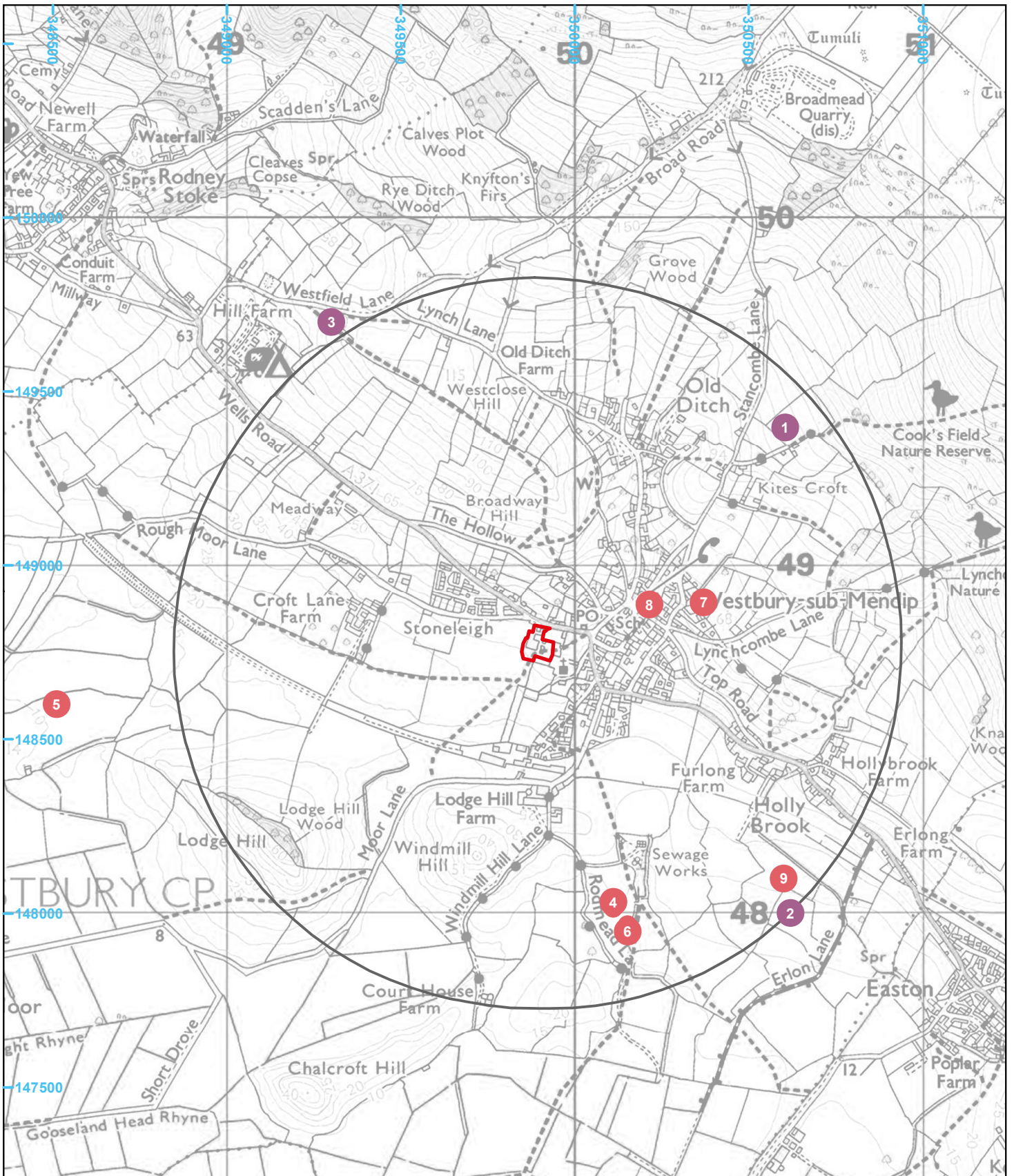
Previous Archaeological Investigations

- 3.10. As part of the current planning application for the development of land to the immediate west of the Site, a geophysical survey was undertaken in November 2021 in order to further clarify its archaeological potential (Magnitude Surveys 2021). The survey did not identify any features which were considered to be indicative of significant archaeological activity, with the majority of identified anomalies likely representing agricultural features such as former field boundaries and modern plough lines.

-
- 3.11. Within the eastern area of the Site, and immediately to the east a geophysical survey undertaken in 2005 (Lane 2005) and a series of trenches were excavated by the Westbury Society Archaeology Group within the grounds of Court House Farmhouse in 2016 (Fig. 2; Fig. 4: **12**). The excavation revealed some of the foundations of a rectilinear building oriented almost north/south. The excavation report is hitherto unpublished but is discussed in *Somerset Archaeology 2017* (Missingham 2017). Details on the results of the excavation are discussed below.
- 3.12. A number of investigations have been carried out within the surrounding study area, including fieldwalking, geophysical survey and small-scale excavations, many of which were conducted as research projects by the Westbury Society. Previous investigations are listed in Appendix 2 and illustrated on Fig. 2. The results are discussed below, as relevant.

Prehistoric

- 3.13. Prehistoric remains are recorded extensively across the Mendip region, with evidence of human activity dating from the Lower Palaeolithic onwards. Cave sites are known to be a particular focus of prehistoric activity, while in the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods the Mendip Hills saw a proliferation in the construction of funerary and other ceremonial monuments, such as henges (Chris Blandford Associates 1997).
- 3.14. Despite the density of prehistoric sites within the surrounding landscape to the north and east, little definitive evidence of activity in this period is recorded within the study area. Earthworks possibly representing a prehistoric enclosure have been identified c. 890m to the north-east of the Site (Fig. 3: **1**), while geophysical survey carried out c. 1km to the south-east revealed a series of small enclosures which were thought to be indicative of prehistoric settlement (Fig. 3: **2**).
- 3.15. Three mounds of unknown origin, recorded c. 960m to the north-west of the Site (Fig. 4: **20**), have been suggested to represent Bronze Age round barrows but, due to their morphology and location within an area of field systems and strip lynchets, may be more likely to derive from medieval or post-medieval agricultural practices.
- 3.16. The only remaining record of prehistoric date relates to a stray find of an Iron Age coin, recovered c. 1km to the north-west of the Site (Fig. 3: **3**).



- Site
- Study Area
- Prehistoric
- Roman



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Milton Keynes 01908 564860
 Suffolk 01449 900120

W www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 E enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Court Farm, Stoke Road
 Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

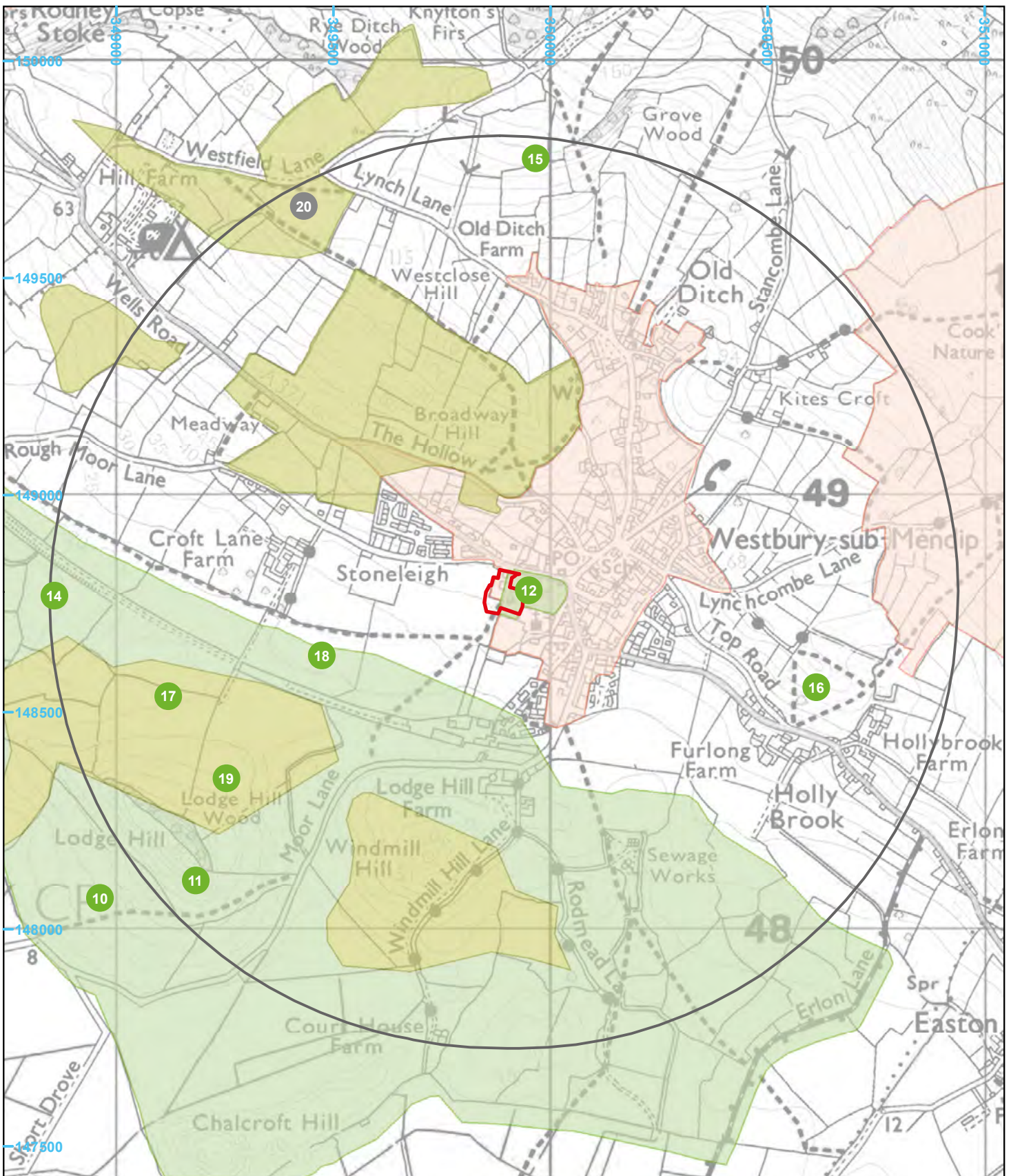
**Prehistoric and Roman
 Archaeological Assets**

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APPROVED BY	RW	SCALE@A4	1:15,000	3



Romano-British

- 3.17. During the Romano-British period the Mendip Hills to the north and east of the study area became a focus for industrial activity and mineral exploitation, with extraction of lead and silver beginning shortly after the Conquest (Leach 2001; Chris Blandford Associates 1997). Correspondingly, there appears to have been an expansion of settlement and agricultural activity on the southern slopes and foothills of the Mendips, which broadly reflects a continuation of the settlement patterns established in the Iron Age.
- 3.18. To the immediate east of the Site, excavations at Court House Farm undertaken by the Westbury Society Archaeology Group recovered a not insignificant quantity of residual Roman pottery was found in the upper contexts (Missingham 2018).
- 3.19. Within the study area, the possible presence of a Romano-British settlement was indicated by the recovery of a sizable assemblage of Roman pottery, tile and metalwork during fieldwalking and subsequent excavation of a pond, c. 730m to the south-east of the Site (Fig. 3: 4). A later geophysical survey to the west of the pond recorded anomalies which were interpreted as the remains of a rectangular building, potentially representing a bath house. A recent small-scale excavation in this area revealed that the anomalies were in fact geological in origin but did uncover an inhumation burial which was through radiocarbon analysis to 400-535 AD (Fig. 3: 6).
- 3.20. Fieldwalking c. 1.3km to the west of the Site identified a concentration of Romano-British pottery and other artefacts, including whetstones, which were suggested to potentially represent the site of a rural workshop (Fig. 3: 5; Lane 2008). A subsequent geophysical survey identified a number of features, including a rectilinear enclosure and other ditches, which were thought to indicate the core of the settlement.
- 3.21. Elsewhere within the study area, findspots of Romano-British material are recorded including pottery and brooch (Fig. 3: 7), coins (8), and a lead pig (9) are recorded c. 450m to the east, c. 290m to the east, and c. 920m to the south-east of the Site, respectively.



- Site
- Study Area
- Medieval
- Unknown
- Medieval field system
- Medieval
- Area of High Archaeological Potential



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Milton Keynes 01908 564860
 Suffolk 01449 900120

W www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 E enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

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FIGURE TITLE
**Medieval and Unknown
 Archaeological Assets**

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Early medieval and medieval

- 3.23. Westbury-sub-Mendip was recorded in the 1086 Domesday Survey as *Westberie*, a relatively small settlement which was held by the Bishop of Wells. The ‘bury’ element is thought to derive from the Old English ‘burh’, meaning fortification (Ekwall 1966), although there is some uncertainty as to what this might refer to.
- 3.24. The Bishop of Wells is recorded to have held a manor house at Westbury-sub-Mendip, which is thought to have been located on or near the site of the present Court House Farmhouse, of which the eastern half of the Site is located within its grounds (Fig. 4: **12**; Fig. 8: **A**). A geophysical survey of the grounds of Court House Farm in 2005 identified a curving ditch, along with a number of buildings and a possible dovecote; this particular feature may relate to a dovecote which is recorded to have been acquired by the vicarage in the late 13th century, when it was granted a curtilage ‘opposite the bishop’s court house’. The exact location of the curving ditch is uncertain, as the excavation report was not available. Given its proximity to the Bishop’s principal residence at Wells, it is likely that the manor house at Westbury was a building of minor importance, used for the meeting of the manorial court rather than accommodation purposes.
- 3.25. Subsequent excavations at this site in 2016/2017 by the Westbury Society Archaeology Group have revealed parts of the foundations of a rectilinear building, thought to be the hall house. The excavations recorded that the medieval courthouse is located underneath and the south of the current building (Missingham pers comm). No report or excavation records were available for review as part of this assessment, however a publication on the excavations describe the remains as:

The foundations, from possibly as early as the 11th century, measure approximately c. 10m across the shorter southern end, while the northern end remains obscured, on one side by an orchard and by newer buildings on the other. The three outer walls average c. 1m thick where they haven’t been robbed out. Most of the stone used in the construction is a local dolomitic conglomerate, with occasional finer dressed pieces of Doultling origin. The finer masonry recorded appears to be on the western wall and may be considered as the front wall of the structure. A common amount of as yet undated, possibly late Saxon, courseware argues for an earlier phase of occupation (Missingham 2017).

- 3.26. The Site appears to have been situated just beyond the known extents of the medieval settlement and manorial complex, and was most likely used for agricultural

purposes in this period. Although, it is possible that that there would have been associated buildings and other features associated with manor within the Site. Earthworks associated with medieval cultivation, including field systems (Fig. 4: **13**, **15**, **16**) and ridge and furrow (Fig. 4: **14**, **17**, **18**, **19**) have been identified on aerial photographs throughout the study area, attesting to the rural character of the landscape in this period. No such remains have been observed on aerial photographs within the Site, although it is conceivable that any earthworks may have been removed through continual ploughing in the modern period. Three undated mounds, recorded c. 950m to the north-west of the Site (Fig. 4: **20**), potentially represent medieval pillow mounds or building platforms, based on their squarish morphology and apparent association with surrounding strip lynchets and field systems.

- 3.27. The existence of a deer park associated with the Bishop's manor at Westbury is documented in a papal bull dated to AD 1178. The boundary of the medieval deer park has been identified as a stone-faced clay bank, with the northern extent mapped c. 190m to the south of the Site (Fig. 4: **10**). A rectangular earthwork recorded c. 910m to the south of the Site, within a field named 'Lodge Hill', is believed to represent the site of a hunting lodge associated with the park (Fig. 4: **11**).
- 3.28. The medieval settlement at Westbury-sub-Mendip appears to have concentrated around the presumed site of the manor house and the adjacent Church of St Lawrence (**C**), c. 40m to the east of the Site. Designated as a Grade II* Listed Building, the church is of 12th century origin and incorporates a number of Norman elements within its fabric. The Village Cross (**B**), situated c. 110m to the east of the Site at the junction of the roads to Wells, Draycott and Westbury, is also of medieval construction, dating to the 14th or 15th century.

Post-medieval and modern

- 3.29. The study area retained a strongly rural character into the post-medieval period and modern periods. A number of agricultural buildings and features of post-medieval and 19th century origin are recorded within the study area, as listed in Appendix 2. The majority of the Listed Buildings within the study area are also of 18th to 19th century date, indicating further development of the village in these periods.
- 3.30. The medieval manor house is thought to have been demolished and rebuilt on a different plan in the late 16th or early 17th century, during the tenure of Sir John Rodney. The existing Grade II Listed Court House Farmhouse (Fig. 8: **A**) is thought

to represent this later building, and some fabric of this period has been identified within the building's core. It was also around this time that the deer park ceased to be used for raising and hunting deer and was brought into more intensive agricultural use (Lane 2008).

- 3.31. The earliest available cartographic depiction of the Site is on the 1838 Tithe Map for Westbury-sub-Mendip (Fig. 5), which shows it situated across three irregular shaped plots all of which were owned by the Bishop of Bath and Wells. The largest of the fields is plot 535 closest to Court House Farmhouse occupied by Edward Champeney and James Hardwich, the Tithe apportionment names it as 'Butthays' and its use as pasture. The smaller plot 534 is occupied by James Hardwich and is named as 'Stall and Barton' (a barton being a farmyard). Court House Farmhouse plot 533 is occupied by James Hardwich as is plot 532 to its east which is labelled court orchard.
- 3.32. Located within the northern end of the Site on the Tithe Map is single structure (Fig. 5), which is the site of the granary that is still in existence into the present day.
- 3.33. The western side of the Site is located within plot 566 which was occupied by William Robert Junior and is named 'Butt Hays' and was used as pasture. The term 'butt' for two of the plots could illustrate their former historic use for archery. In the medieval period, the archery butts are a flat area of land forming a range along which archers could shoot...often a rectangular area, incorporating a number of circular flat-topped, turf covered target mounds (Halpin 2021). Butts could be rural or urban, usually they were on the margins of villages...where archery practice could take place without interruption (Halpin 2021).
- 3.34. The next available cartographic depiction is the 1886 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 6) and illustrates that small scale development had been undertaken within the Site, which is named Court House Farm. Toward the northern end of the Site the small set of farm buildings within a half square enclosure depicted on the 1838 Tithe Map had expanded with additional outbuildings, and forms a clearly defined farmstead. North of this enclave is 'Mortar Pit Pool' whose name likely relates to its use as a pond supplying some kind of building material or as a village pond in a former quarried pit, it was also present on the Tithe Map so is well established by this point.

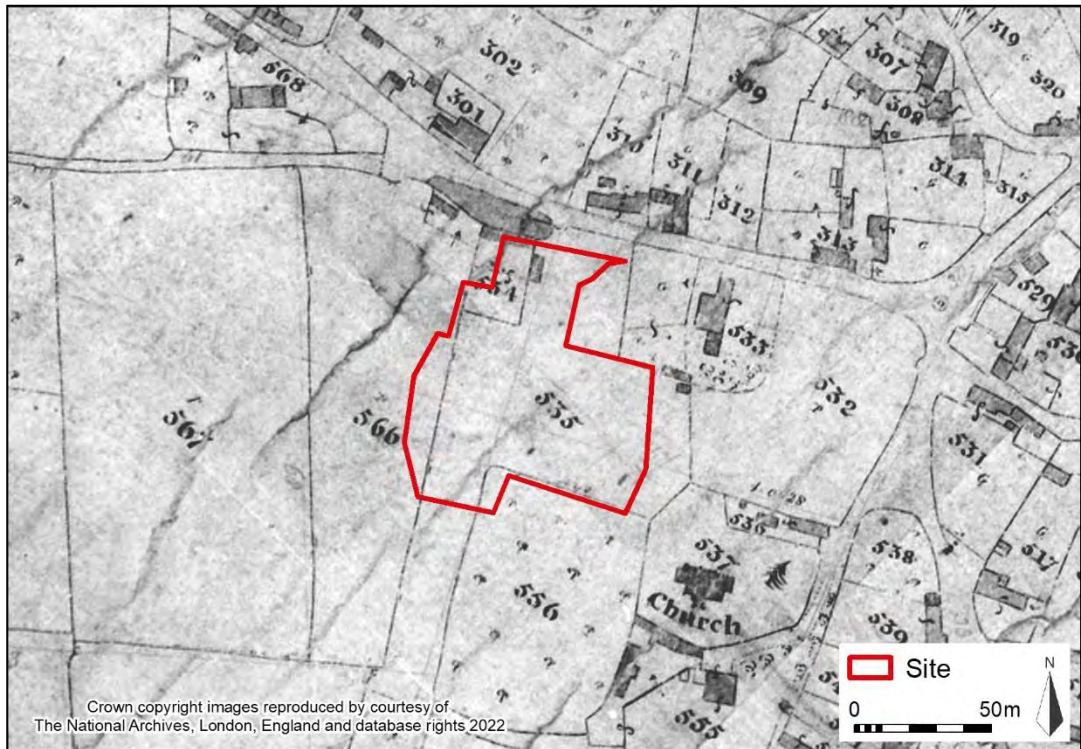


Fig. 5 Extract from the 1838 Tithe Map for the parish of Westbury-sub-Mendip

- 3.35. In addition, the garden associated with Court House Farmhouse to the north-east of the Site had expanded and some of which encompassed within the Site. This plot is depicted as containing a small orchard which would accord with its description as the Court orchard in the Tithe Map. The larger of the field plots toward the centre of the Site and its southern end remain unaltered, but are depicted containing mature trees. The map depicts the Site at the western edge of the village. Some development is depicted along the eastern extent of Roughmoor Lane, immediately north of the Site, but the landscape to the west is shown to be primarily rural and undeveloped.

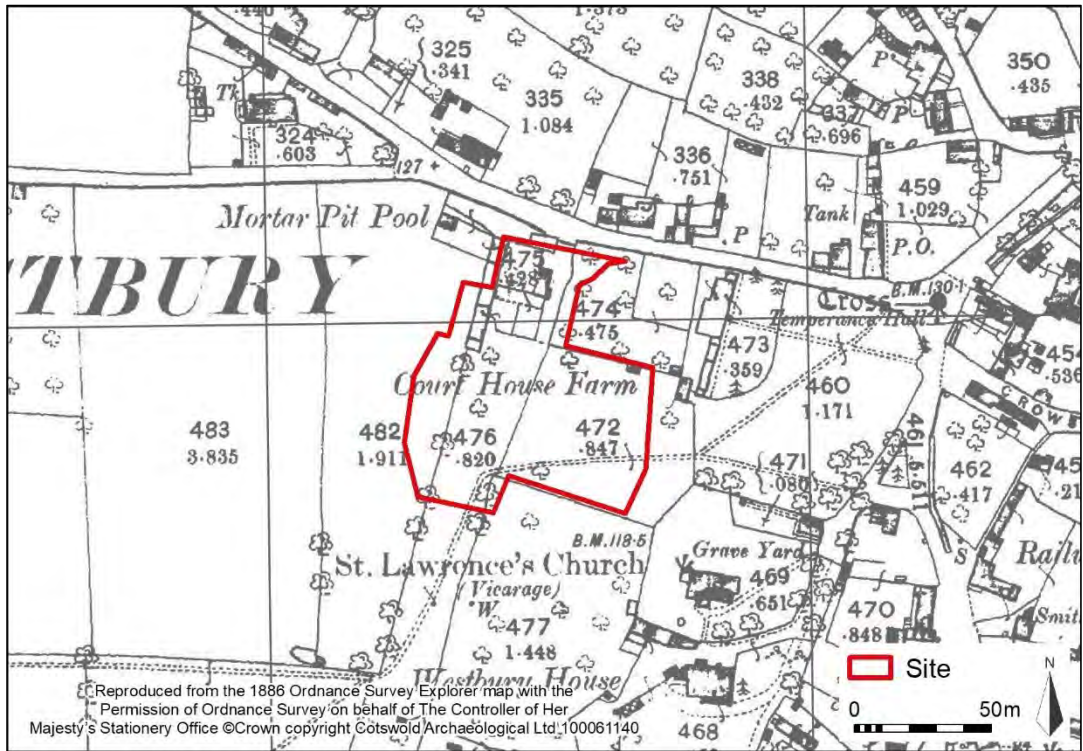


Fig. 6 Extract of the 1886 Ordnance Survey map

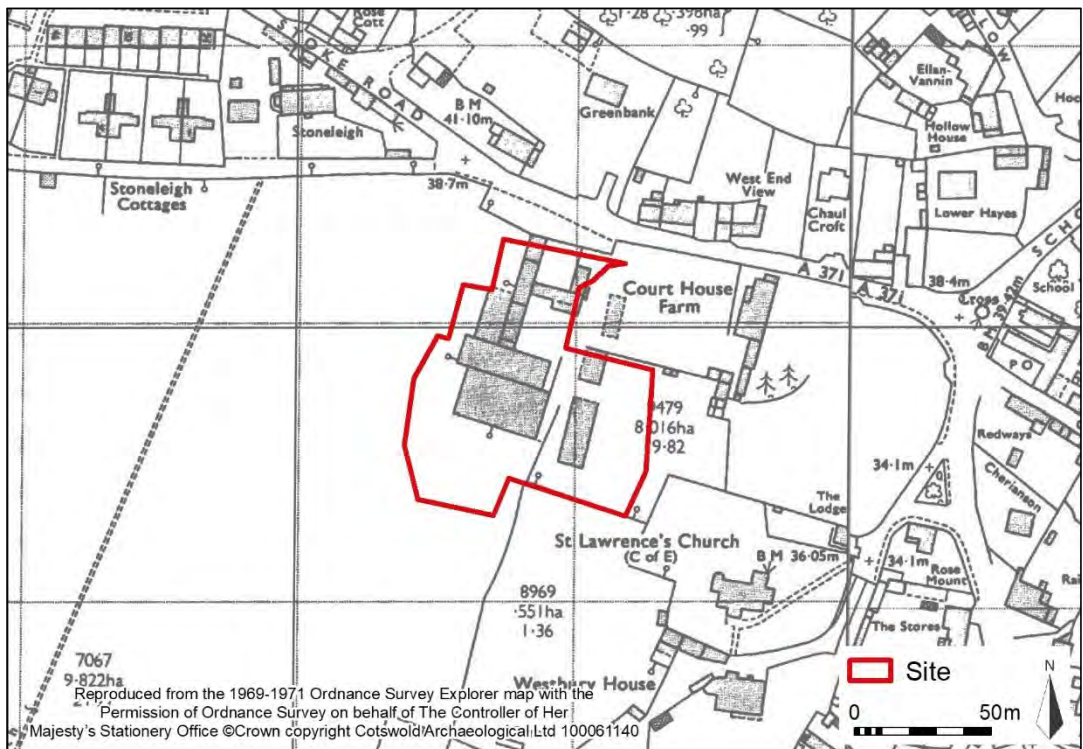


Fig. 7 Extract of the 1969-1971 Ordnance Survey map

3.36. No notable changes within the Site are recorded on the 1903 Ordnance Survey map (not illustrated). No further detailed depictions of the Site are available until the 1969-

71 Ordnance Survey edition (Fig. 7). As depicted on the map the Court House Farm buildings cover the majority of the Site. The original farm buildings and their layout are still in existence, but additional larger rectangular barns are shown around it to the west and south, along with two isolated barns to the east. These barns were constructed in the mid-20th century, as they are visible on aerial photographs from 1947 (Historic England 2022) The former structures to the immediate north-west of the Site appear to have been removed, along with the former orchard to the immediate north-east. The residential expansion of the village is evident, with modern housing between Roughmoor Lane and Stoke Road to the north-west of the Site.

- 3.37. The Site appears to have remained as Court House Farm for the remainder of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Unknown

- 3.38. In addition to the linear anomalies corresponding with the former field boundaries depicted on historic mapping, the geophysical survey to the immediate west of the Site recorded a small number of anomalies of undetermined origin within the south of the survey area (Magnitude Surveys 2021). These comprised a single sub-circular anomaly which produced a strong response, and weak linear anomalies. It was considered that these features were most likely to relate to geological, pedological or agricultural processes, although an archaeological origin cannot be entirely discounted.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE & POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Previous impacts

- 4.1. A review of the available cartographic and documentary evidence indicates that the Site has been subject to periods of development throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. As indicated on the 1838 Tithe Map, structures and garden or plot boundaries were formerly present within the Site close the northern boundary. In the late 19th century, the Site had developed to become Court House Farm with additional farm buildings. It was not until the mid-20th century that the farm and its outbuildings took on the shape and form that is currently viewed in the present day. These structures would have more of an impact on any potential buried archaeological remains than agricultural activities. The excavation within the footprint of the farm buildings would have removed or severely truncated any archaeological remains, along with the installation of potential buried utility routes towards the A371, access routes and yards. The degree of any impacts associated with the construction of the access routes and yards would depend on the depth of the excavations ; this may have had lesser impact on any buried archaeological remains if only topsoil removal was conducted.
- 4.2. The field name 'Mortar Pit Pool', depicted to the immediate north-west of the Site on late 19th century mapping, does imply that some extractive activities may have been carried out nearby, which would potentially have removed any underlying archaeological remains close to the northern boundary of the Site. No earthworks associated with quarrying, such as hollows, were identified during the Site visit, or on available aerial mapping, and it is assumed that any extractive activities would have been fairly localised and small-scale in nature.
- 4.3. The open areas which border the fields to the west and south beyond the footprint of the present farm structures may have been undeveloped throughout documented history. As such, pre-existing impacts to any potential buried archaeological remains could be minimal, and would chiefly derive from earlier agricultural practices, including plough activity, the laying out of tracks and fencing, and land drainage. These activities are expected to have had a limited impact on any underlying archaeological remains, given their cumulatively small footprint in relation to the overall size of the Site.

The significance of known and potential archaeological remains within the Site

- 4.4. This assessment has identified that no designated archaeological remains are located within the Site; no *designated* archaeological remains will therefore be adversely physically affected by development within the Site. Known and potential archaeological remains identified within the Site are discussed below.

Prehistoric remains

- 4.5. This assessment has identified relatively little evidence for prehistoric activity in the Site's immediate vicinity, with the known remains of this period predominantly focused on areas of higher ground beyond the study area. Possible prehistoric settlement within the study area has been identified through geophysical survey and on aerial photographs, while Bronze Age funerary remains are common throughout the wider landscape. The topographical context of the Site, on the lower slopes of the Mendip Hills, suggests that it is unlikely to have formed a focus for activity in this period, although some minor potential for the presence of prehistoric remains to be present is recognised. Any remains would hold evidential value, relating to their potential to contribute to the present understanding of settlement and exploitation of the landscape at the edge of the Mendip Hills in the prehistoric period. Given the lack of any identified surviving earthworks however, it is unlikely that such remains would qualify as highly significant heritage assets.

Romano-British remains

- 4.6. The presence of Romano-British settlement within the study area is indicated by concentrations of surface finds, as well as limited investigations which have revealed possible enclosures of this period and an inhumation burial. On this basis it appears that there was at least a background level of activity within the local landscape in this period and, accordingly, there is some potential for remains of Romano-British date to exist within the Site. If present, such remains would be of evidential value in view of their ability to enhance the understanding of Romano-British settlement and other activities in the local area in this period, but this is not anticipated to be of such level that they would represent highly significant heritage assets.

Medieval and later remains

- 4.7. The Site is situated at the western fringes of the village of Westbury-sub-Mendip, which originated in the early medieval period. Part of the Site is located within the grounds of the presumed location of the medieval manor house held by the Bishop of Wells. On the basis of current evidence, provided by archaeological investigations

including a geophysical survey to the immediate west of the Site (Magnitude Surveys 2021), and a geophysical survey and excavation to the immediate east (Missingham 2017), there is a moderate to high expectation that medieval remains might be present within the Site associated with the manor. The Site also appears to have been situated beyond the identified boundaries of the Bishop's deer park, as well as the medieval settlement core. The Tithe Map from 1838 describes two field plots that the Site occupies as 'Butt Hays', alluding to the former use of the land as an archery practice area in the medieval period also. It is therefore considered that the Site was likely in agricultural use or grassland in the medieval period, although given the close proximity of the settlement and manor house, the potential for associated remains, including ancillary buildings, to be present should not be discounted. Any such remains, if present, would primarily be of evidential value on account of their potential to further the understanding of the historical development and layout of the medieval settlement and manor, but would be unlikely to represent highly significant heritage assets.

- 4.8. Cartographic evidence indicates that the majority of the Site was land and buildings forming part of Court House farmstead from at least the early to mid-19th century until the expansion of Court House Farm in the late 19th century and mid-20th century, and likely for some time prior to this. Remains relating to medieval or later agricultural activity, such as stock enclosures, former field boundaries and drainage ditches, would not be of heritage significance. Any below ground remains associated with Court House Farm dating to the post-medieval and modern periods are expected to be of negligible heritage interest, and the evidential value of these is, nevertheless, preserved on historic maps.

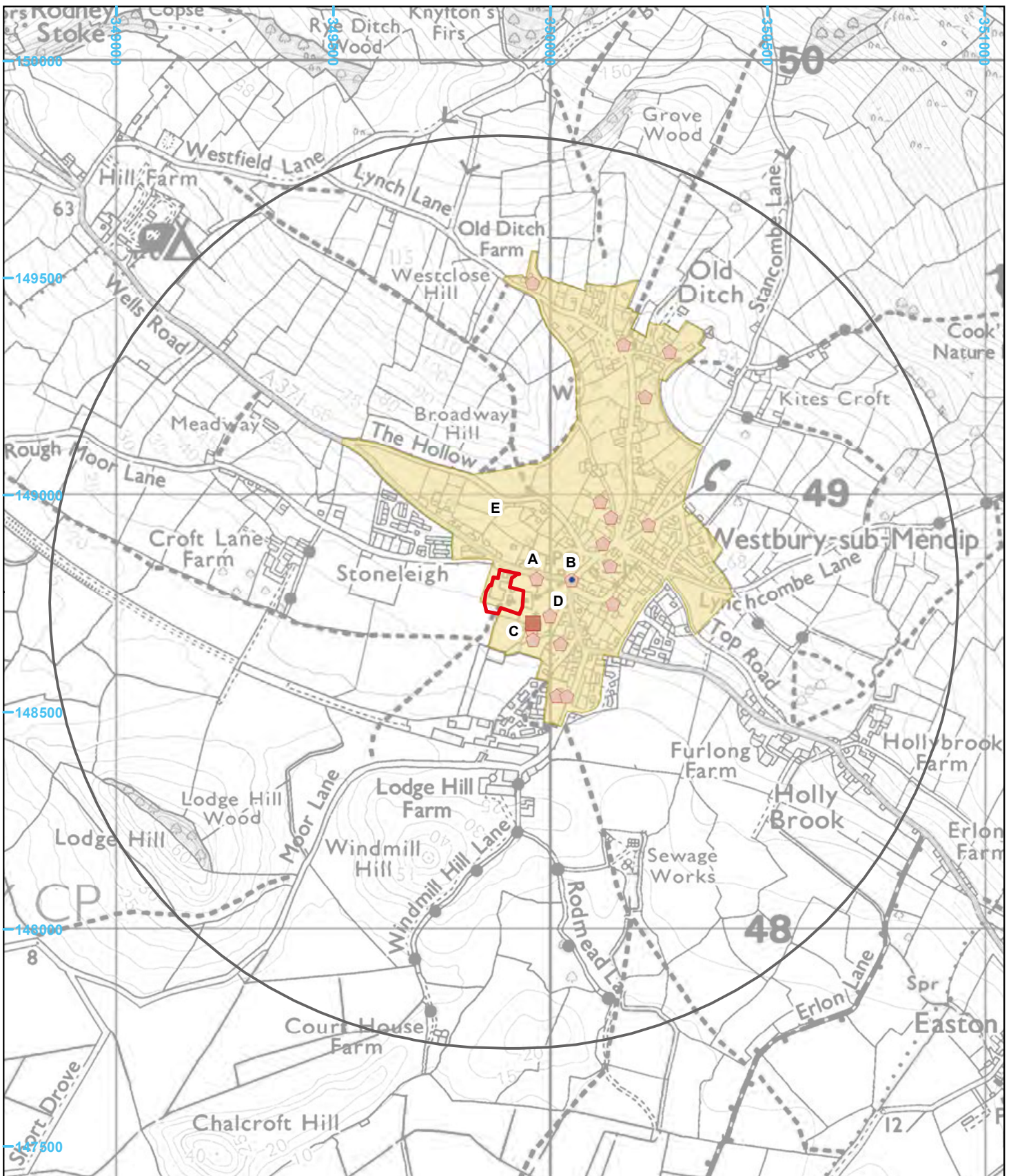
Potential development effects

- 4.9. Due to the Site's proximity to the site of the medieval manor house for the Bishop of Wells, it is anticipated that both significant and non-significant archaeological remains could be truncated by proposed development.
- 4.10. Any truncation (physical development effects) upon those less significant archaeological remains identified within the Site would primarily result from groundworks associated with construction. Such groundworks might include:
- pre-construction impacts associated with ground investigation works;
 - ground reduction;

-
- construction ground works, including excavation of building foundations, service trenches and stripping for roads/car parks;
 - excavation of new site drainage channels (including soakaways); and
 - landscaping and planting.

4.11. The abovementioned ground works and excavations in relation to future development could result in the disturbance to, or loss of, any buried archaeological features that may be present within their footprint, resulting in the total or partial loss of significance of these assets. The extent of the impact would be dependent on the type and depth of proposed foundations, which are not yet fully understood.

4.12. Any adverse effects on buried archaeological resource would be permanent and irreversible in nature. However, as stated, any archaeological features present within the Site are unlikely to comprise remains of highest significance (i.e. equivalent to Scheduled Monuments). Therefore, based on the information available, it is considered that the potential archaeological resource within the Site would not require preservation in situ.



- Site
- Study Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- Conservation Area



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Milton Keynes 01908 564860
 Suffolk 01449 900120

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 E enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Court Farm, Stoke Road
 Westbury-sub-Mendip, Somerset

FIGURE TITLE

Designated Heritage Assets

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5. HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT

Development and context

- 5.1. As outlined in the above map regression, it appears that the present farmstead associated with Court House Farmhouse began to be constructed in the late 18th or early 19th century, though earlier agricultural buildings could possibly have been present. Court House Farmhouse itself is noted by Historic England to be an early 19th century building but it is understood that remnants of the earlier 16th or 17th century building on the site associated with the Bishop of Bath and Wells was incorporated into the structure.
- 5.2. Available cartographic sources illustrate that the farm buildings at the time of the 1839 Tithe Map comprised only the granary and a linear range running west-east in line with the road and Mortar Pit Pond, both of which are no longer extant (as seen in Fig.9). This linear range has a dashed southern building line, which suggests that it is some form of animal shelter such as a cow shed, where animals would go to eat, shelter and potentially be milked.
- 5.3. The next available map is the 1st Edition OS map of 1886. The map sourced for this report (with commercial reuse licence) is a little unclear but a more detailed, crisper, coloured version of this map is available from the Know Your Place website¹ (but cannot be reproduced here for copyright reasons). This map shows a long linear range of buildings running north/south with a centrally placed east/west range appended to it, and the granary building forming the east side of a courtyard. The linear range running east-west at the northern side of the courtyard appears to have disappeared but if not, is located externally to the 19th century courtyard (circled blue in Fig.10). It may have been associated with Mortar Pit Pool and was removed when the pool was filled (it is now a layby). Fig.10 illustrates the 1886 map with additional shading to show the extent of the farm buildings.

¹ <https://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=som>



Fig.9 Tithe map buildings detail (granary circled)

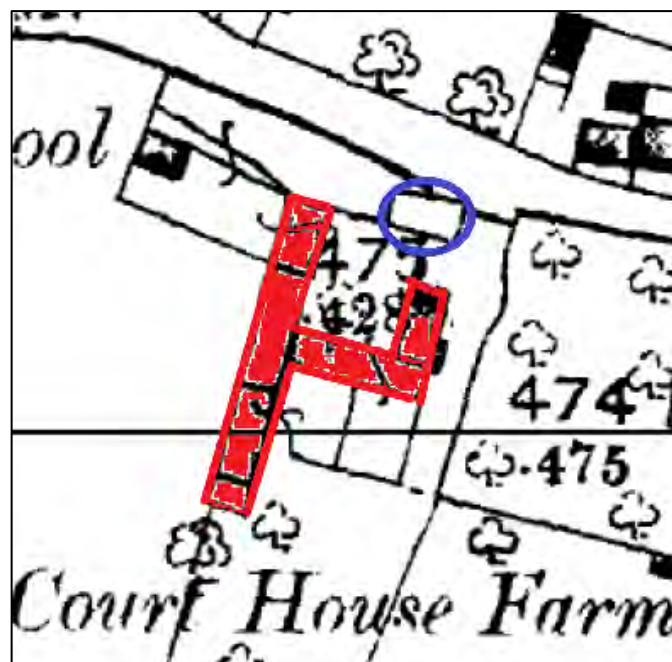


Fig.10 1886 detail with shading (building no longer extant circled blue)

5.4. The available mapping thus evidences that the earliest building on the farmstead is the granary, extant by 1838, with the other ranges being constructed in the mid-19th century between 1838 and 1886. Fig.7 from 1971 illustrates that the farmstead expanded in the 20th century with the construction of a number of larger Dutch barn style buildings directly south of the historic farmstead. These would have supported the expansion and functioning of the farmstead as a modern farm.

5.5. Access linkages to and from the main farmhouse to the farm courtyard only become apparent in the late 20th century, when a drive between the rear of Court House Farmhouse and the farmstead was established. Prior to this it is assumed that the farmstead was accessed via the main road or informal pathways. This offers opportunities, alongside the appearance and orientation of the farmhouse, to understand the status of the farmhouse and its functionality. The farmhouse addresses the centre of the village, and sits with its back to the farmstead, though clearly the farmer would access the farmstead from the back door. This deliberate separation and orientation, alongside the quite spacious grounds in which the farmhouse sits (both presently and in cartography), suggests that the status of the farmer was relatively elevated, such as a gentleman or yeoman farmer and that the farmhouse acted as a manor farmhouse. The presence of a monument to the Hardwich family (lessees of the farmhouse and farm lands in 1838) also corroborates this. The history of the farmhouse site as a manor house retreat for the Bishop, its ecclesiastical ownership and its proximity to the church and village centre would also support this theory.

5.6. The 19th century was a time of great change in agriculture (the 'agricultural revolution'), brought about by the advances in transportation and machinery courtesy of the industrial revolution, by development of new techniques and knowledge in both crop rotation/production and animal husbandry, and by the demands for crops and food stemming from general societal development brought about by the increase in urbanisation and general population. The availability of imported foreign feed, fertiliser and manures were also key. The period 1850 - 1875 is known as the time 'high farming' and is associated with 'high input/high output' farming prosperity and rich harvests. This period saw a boom in farmstead building, and many farmstead buildings originate from this time.

5.7. Historic England's Historic Farmsteads Preliminary Character Statement – South West (2006) region offers insight into the regional character of farming in the region. Its states:

'Pastoral farming dominated much of the Region from the 14th century on account of its generally mild winters, heavy rainfall and cool summers. By the 17th century a large proportion of the arable land had been converted to pasture for cattle or sheep or given over to other uses such as orchards. Cider production became a speciality from Gloucestershire to east Cornwall. As national markets developed, parts of the

Region such as east Cornwall and north Devon focused on the rearing of stock, which was moved eastwards into Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire for fattening to supply the growing populations of London and other major towns and cities across the south.

- 5.8. Farmstead building types across the region were quite diverse in their typology according to whether they were in an arable or pasture dominated area, and display strong variation in materials and forms, the former depending on the local vernacular and available stone. Court Farm is clearly based in an area of pastoral animal farming where linear and regular courtyard plans were more prevalent, and where the various functions of the farm have been carefully placed together in a linear arrangement to improve functionality and minimise waste of labour. Such plans also made the management of animals, such as dairy cows and their access, corralling and egress more efficient. The lack of a combination barn within the farmstead set of buildings also underpins the reliance on animals, though some form of mixed farming activity will likely have taken place for subsistence.
- 5.9. The expansion of the farm in the 20th century appears with a number of Dutch barn structures suggesting that the farm possibly diversified into arable as well as pasture farming at this time.
- 5.10. Fig.11 provides a spatial overview of the farm buildings, alongside details of their provenance and age according to cartography, and their significance. This plan also includes photographic location points and labels for each building to identify them in the recording.

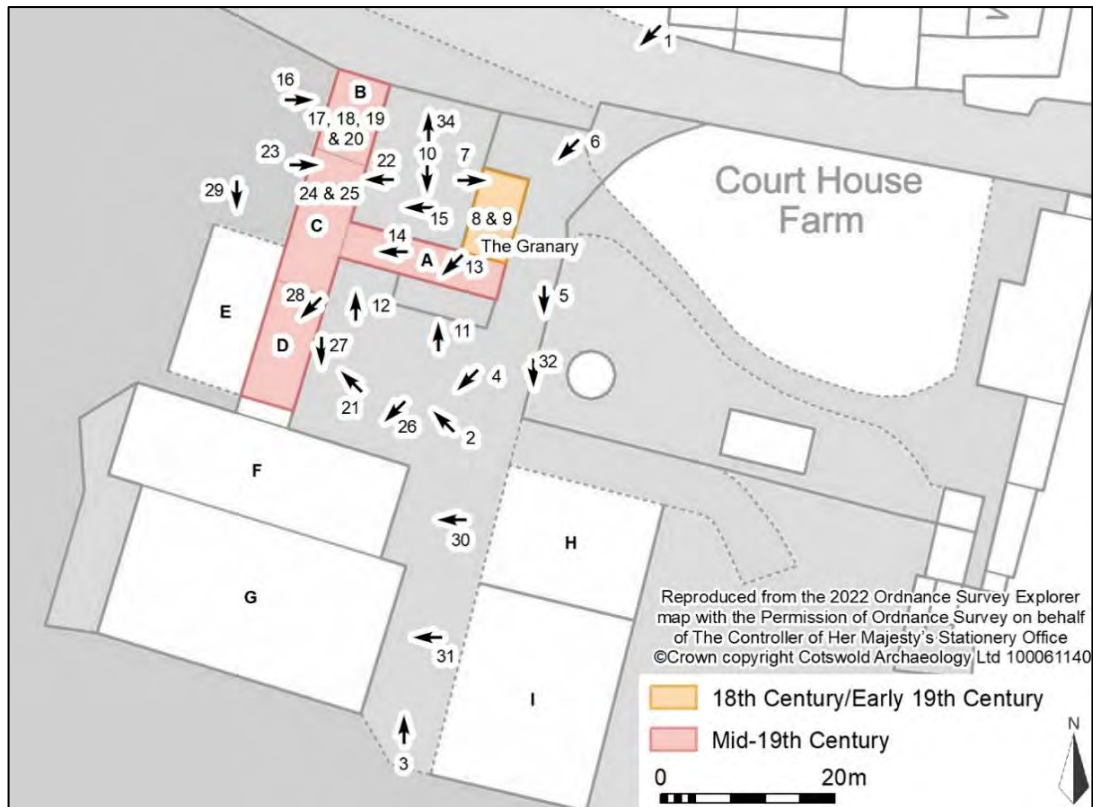


Fig.11 Farmstead building plan with phases of development and photo location points

Building recording – site plan

5.11. As Fig.11 illustrates, the core of the traditional farmstead centres on the northern farm courtyard with the north-south linear range extending south from this enclave. Four larger 20th century agricultural buildings have been constructed south of the linear range (labelled F - I) whilst an outshot, essentially an open sided shelter shed, has been appended to the western side of the southern range (Fig.11, E).. Photos 1 to 4 offer wider views of the farmstead from differing points. As can be seen in these images and Fig.11, there is a large amount of modern farmstead equipment in the courtyard south and east of the traditional buildings, and a circular slurry tank.



Photo 1 View of the farmstead entrance and granary, looking south-west



Photo 2 View of the traditional buildings from the south

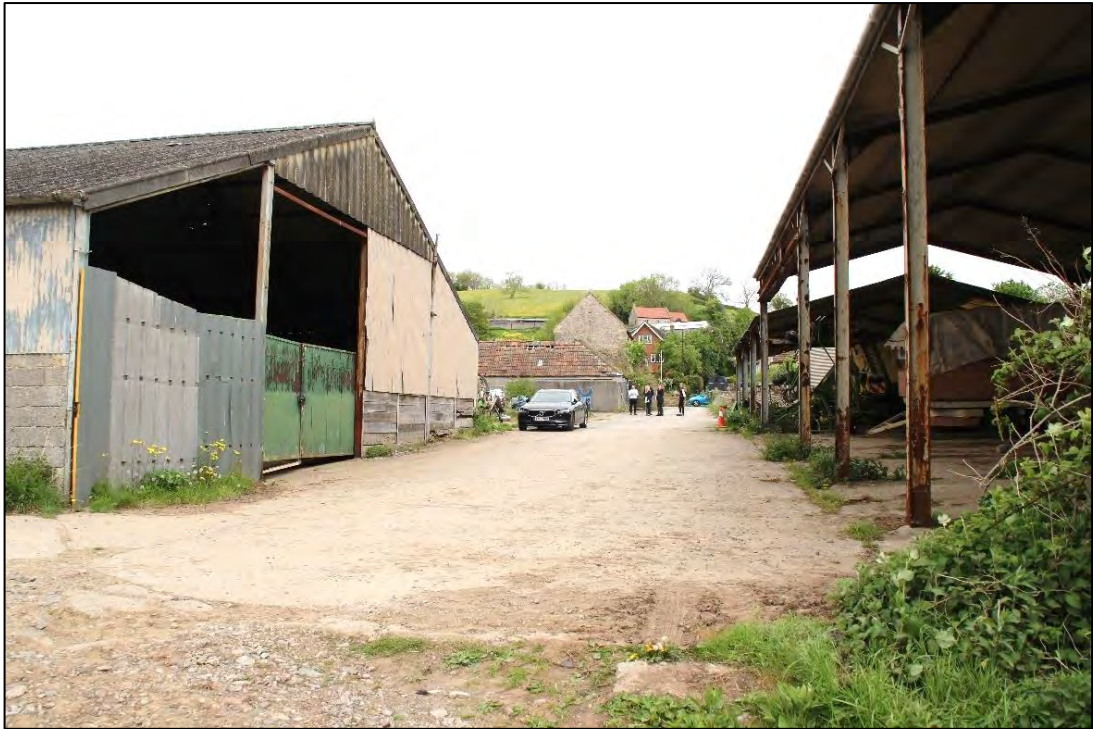


Photo 3 View of the farmstead from its southern extent looking north



Photo 4 View of barns F and G from the north



Photo 5 View of the sheds H and I from the north looking south with slurry tank in foreground

The granary

- 5.12. The granary is present on the 1838 Tithe Map and thus is an 18th or early 19th century building (Photo 6). It is the only two storey farm building, and is constructed of local rubble limestone under a red clay pantile pitched roof with capped stone gable ridges. It is rectangular in shape and features stone steps on its eastern side, leading up to the first-floor doorway with timber lintel. Due to its condition it was not safe to enter the first-floor area, so this has not been inspected.



Photo 6 **The granary viewed from the north looking south-west**

- 5.13. The western, courtyard facing elevation features two arched openings which indicate that this level was used as a cart shed. The arches are headed and dressed in brick with large, coursed stone blocks dressing the sides of the openings. A first-floor hoist door is seen above the southern arched opening, this is where the grain/hay stored at this level would have been hoisted into the farm courtyard for feed and/or processing.
- 5.14. Internally, the cart shed has a rough rubblestone wall finish, and a large timber lintel provides structural support to the south gable, which is also appended to Building A. The structure of the upper floor can be seen from the ground floor; it is formed of thick joists supporting timber boards, with criss-cross bracing to some of the joists which is often seen in farm building construction, as seen in Photo 9.



Photo 7 **The granary viewed from the west looking east**



Photo 8 **The interior of the granary cart shed**



Photo 9 **Detail of the first-floor structure**

Building A

- 5.15. Building A is a one storey linear range running east-west as best seen in Fig.11. It is appended to the granary on its southern side and as with the other traditional buildings of the farmstead it is constructed of semi-coursed rubblestone with brick dressings and a clay pantile roof of ridged construction. At the eastern extent the roof forms an extended hipped corner to return northwards and abut the granary. It is first seen in the 1st Edition OS map of 1886 and was likely built in the 1850's or 60's. The map illustrates that it was open fronted on its southern side (indicated by dashed parts) indicating its use as an animal shelter. As seen in Photo 10, it forms the southern enclosure of the farm courtyard. On its northern elevation, it features two wide door openings dressed with brick. The eastern opening of the northern elevation has a concrete lintel and appears to have been altered to accommodate a secure metal door.



Photo 10 **Building A viewed from the north looking south**

- 5.16. The southern elevation is seen in Photo 11. It has been rendered, likely in the second half of the 20th century (it being open fronted in 1886), and a concrete block open yard has been appended to it on its eastern half. This yard was not accessible but appeared to be some sort of animal pen. The western half of this elevation is shown in Photo 12 and illustrates how the building has been rendered and altered with modern metal door openings. Two metal windows with top hopper openings are also present, and likely to be later additions.



Photo 11 **The southern elevation of Building A**



Photo 12 **The southern elevation of Building A, western section**

5.17. For safety reasons this building was only examined from doorways. Internally it has been modernised with the construction of large stalls constructed of concrete blockwork as seen in Photo 13. This also evidences how the southern elevation has been rebuilt in concrete blockwork (as arrowed). As also can be seen in Photo 13, a

loft has been boarded out in modern materials, creating some kind of loft room or storage area, though this was not accessible or visible due to safety reasons.

- 5.18. A view taken looking west along the building illustrates how the tall animal stalls dominate the space and how a half height concrete block wall has been constructed at the junction with Building C, though the roof structure continues to be visible.



Photo 13 The interior of Building A, with concrete block southern wall arrowed



Photo 14 Interior of Building A looking west

Building B

- 5.19. Building B forms part of the west side of the courtyard enclosure as seen in Photo 15. As can be seen, it connects with Building C, but is distinct in form and scale. It has been rendered on its eastern face, and internal inspection confirmed that the construction is now cement blockwork on this elevation. Two metal hopper windows have been inserted here. A centrally placed stable accesses the internal space. The roof is formed of clay tiles with an interesting ridge line of what appears to be paired stone and slate ridge pieces. The rear (western) elevation is formed of rubblestone as seen in Photo 16, this likely being the original appearance of the eastern elevation.



Photo 15 **Building B seen from the east looking west**



Photo 16 **Building B seen from the west looking east**

- 5.20. Internally the building is of largely traditional construction with what appears to be an original roof (evidenced by the patina of rafters and battens), though it may be that the building was thatched judging by the remnants of straw that are adhering to the roof side of the battens. This would also explain the interesting new ridge formation. A concrete blockwork stable or stall has been created in the north-west corner as seen in Photo 18, whilst a traditional hay rack is appended to the western wall, albeit some cement layering has been added to the wall beneath, possibly to stabilise the rack. The floor has been partially laid to 20th century square tile cobbles as seen in Photo 19. At the southern end, the building is interlinked with building C via a brick dressed doorway.



Photo 17 View of the hay rack in Building B



Photo 18 (left) modern stall in Building B



Photo 19 (right) 20th century floor 'cobbles' in Building B



Photo 20 View looking into Building C from Building B

Building C

- 5.21. Building C forms the middle range of the traditional linear range that extends north-south on the Site. It connects at right angles with Building A and is internally connected here also. It is a simple one storey range with pitched clay tile roof. The eastern elevation is seen in Photo 21 and shows a modernised wall with metal hopper window and wide barn style opening with sliding door. The eastern elevation is seen in Photo 22, showing a modern rendered section of wall alongside a retained section of stone work adjacent to a wide stable door. Much of the exterior on the western side was obscured by vegetation but the eastern elevation facing the open modern courtyard is seen in Photo 23; as evident much of the exterior fabric has been removed and concrete blockwork built in its place.



Photo 21 View of Building C (arrowed)



Photo 22 View of Building C from the courtyard

5.22. The west facing elevation is largely obscured but a brick dressed door opening is present as seen in Photo 23, and the walls of both Building C and D on this elevation are rubblestone.



Photo 23 **The western door of Building C**

- 5.23. Internally the building is subdivided into stalls as seen in Photo 24, the stalls appear modern due to the use of concrete blockwork. This is corroborated in Photo 25, where cement render is present lining the interior of the stall, likely present for reasons of washing and hygiene. The roof structure is plain truss with collar of potential original machine cut pine construction.



Photo 24 Internal view of Building C looking south



Photo 25 Internal view of stall in Building C

Building D

- 5.24. Building D forms the southernmost of the linear ranges oriented north-south. It first appears on mapping in 1886 and is likely contemporary with buildings B and C. In its eastern elevation it has modernised with render and new window openings as seen in Photo 26. The rear western elevation is rubblestone. The roof is also what appears to be corrugated asbestos or similar.



Photo 26 View of Building D from the east (arrowed)



Photo 27 Detail of the eastern wall of Building D

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- 5.25. The interior was inaccessible but images were taken from behind the barrier fencing. As can be seen in Photo 28, the interior of the building has been modernised with the concrete block work to create stalls. A new roof structure is also evident though the main trusses may have been re-used.



Photo 28 **The interior of Building D**

Buildings E – I

- 5.26. Building E is an open Dutch barn which has been appended to Buildings C and B, as best illustrated in Photo 29. Buildings F to I are all 20th century barns of modern construction (both enclosed and open sided) and are illustrated in Photos 30 to 32. These buildings have not been surveyed due to their modern construction.



Photo 29 Modern barn E appended to Buildings C and D



Photo 30 Modern barn F



Photo 31 **Modern barn G**



Photo 32 **Modern barns H and I**

Courtyard and boundary walls

5.27. The farmstead has some established historic boundary treatments which include stone walling with cock and hen capping, these include a walled entrance area as seen in in Photo 33. The enclosed courtyard wall has been treated internally with a

layer of cement (likely for cleaning and hygiene reasons) and the courtyard surface is also cement, lightly sloped for drainage as seen in Photo 34.



Photo 33 **Detail of farmstead cock and hen walls**



Photo 34 **The courtyard cement ground surface**

Summary of the buildings survey

- 5.28. The building survey has identified that there are four traditional 19th century buildings within the site, and four 20th century buildings of no heritage interest. The traditional buildings, aside from the granary, whilst retaining elements of a traditional vernacular character, all show signs of quite substantial alteration such as the rebuilding of walls in concrete blockwork, new concrete walls and subdivisions, the insertion of new windows and modern sliding metal barn doors, modern stalls, cement floor surfaces, and cement render. These, alongside the programme of new barn building in the 20th century, all evidence a farmstead that has been heavily modernised in the 20th century to facilitate an increase in capacity and functionality. That the farmstead was primarily an animal farm is evident in the proliferations of stalls and pens, the instigation of 'hygienic' concrete surfaces for easy washing, and the presence of slurry storage to fertilise pasture, though it may have undertaken mixed farming at certain points in its development and the modern barns may have supported such a diversification. The fact that the farmstead was labelled 'stalls and barton' in the 1838 Tithe Apportionment also underpins the reliance on animal husbandry.
- 5.29. The farmstead went out of active use in 2013 and its condition has deteriorated since then. As a result some of the buildings are inaccessible for safety reasons.

Significance of the buildings in the Site

- 5.30. The buildings are a clearly defined group of traditional vernacular farm buildings of modest and functional character. They are strongly associated with Court House Farmhouse which is a Grade II listed building, and as a result should be considered curtilage listed, as the farmstead and farmhouse were only separated in ownership in recent years. Until this time, the buildings were associated in use, ownership and physical linkages and therefore meet the criteria for curtilage listing.
- 5.31. Curtilage listing does not automatically bestow significance upon a structure, except that special interest inherent in the associative historic relationship between the listed buildings and its curtilage structures. However, all the traditional buildings of the farmstead hold a level of heritage interest as discussed below.

The granary

- 5.32. The granary is the oldest surviving farm building on the Site, and is still interpretable as a typical granary building with cart shed below and grain storage floor above, including a high-level hoisting door. It appears to have not been substantially altered,

which means it retains evidential value in both its surviving plan, fabric and form, which offer evidence of the use, construction and operation of granaries in this part of Somerset, including building craft and materials. The rare survival of the building as is, without the accretions and alterations seen elsewhere on this farmstead, results in it holding a good level of evidential interest.

- 5.33. In aesthetic terms, its simple, strong, vernacular appearance of local rubblestone combined with the patina of age means that it is a positive and characterful rural building within the local streetscene.
- 5.34. Its age, predating the other buildings within the farm courtyard, also bestows a level of historic interest of illustrative value, in offering an understanding of the appearance and character of the farmstead in the early 19th century and underpinning the understanding of the history of the farmstead.
- 5.35. As such, the granary holds the most significance of the four traditional buildings of the farmstead.

Building A

- 5.36. Building is a strong linear range enclosing the southern side of the courtyard which retains its original walling to the north elevation, but appears to have been infilled with concrete blockwork and render on its southern side, which is also abutted by a concrete open animal pen. Internally alterations are evident in all areas, including the insertion of tall concrete block stalls, a boarded out ceiling and concrete flooring.
- 5.37. The remains of historic fabric offer some evidential value, as does the basic linear plan form. There is some aesthetic interest in the patina and vernacular character of the northern elevation of the courtyard. It retains only a modest amount of heritage interest given the changes that have occurred, but it still appears as a traditional farmstead building. Its interaction with and contribution to the courtyard group is a key element of its value, in and of itself its special interest is very limited, but when 'read' in the conjunction with the courtyard, both spatially and in overall appearance, its appreciable value is slightly augmented.

Building B

- 5.38. Building B has been altered over time, but still has a moderate level of historic fabric inherent in its structure and plan. This includes the building envelope (bar the modern

eastern wall) and roof timbers (which shows evidence of possibly formerly being thatched). Modern additions include the tiled floor, eastern wall and northern stall.

- 5.39. It retains only a modest amount of heritage interest given the changes that have occurred, but it still appears as a traditional farmstead building. Its interaction with and contribution to the courtyard group is a key element of its value, in and of itself its special interest is very limited, but when 'read' in the conjunction with the courtyard, both spatially and in overall appearance, its appreciable value is slightly augmented.

Buildings C and D

- 5.40. Buildings C and D form the most altered buildings of the enclave, though they, as with the others retain the one storey form and overall vernacular character of the other traditional buildings. They have been heavily altered and modernised, but appear to retain traditional walling to the western elevations with the eastern courtyard being a mixture of concrete blockwork and render. Accessibility was an issue so examination of the timber trusses was not possible, but it appears from glimpses that they are machine cut members, possibly original or a mixture of new timbers (during a phase of repair) and old.

- 5.41. As with the other buildings, the remaining fabric of the buildings, and their basic plan and form all mean it retains evidential value, though the level of this value is concluded to be low. They are less aesthetically interesting as well given the level of change they have undergone.

- 5.42. Therefore, in and of themselves the buildings hold a very limited amount of heritage value, however as with the other buildings, it is their contribution to the farmstead group which has the most value, both evidentially and historically.

Summary of significance

- 5.43. As identified above, separately the buildings, bar the granary, hold a limited amount of evidential and aesthetic value. This is due to 20th century functional alterations which have diminished their original fabric and its appearance. However, their spatial attachment and relationship, combined with their retained vernacular form, creates a characterful farm group which offers evidential, historic and aesthetic value. This value is not deemed to be substantial but is certainly appreciable.

- 5.44. The granary is the most significant of the farm buildings due its age, form, appearance and lack of alteration.

6. CONSTRAINTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

Planning context

- 6.1. As highlighted above, the traditional farm buildings' significance lies primarily in their group value, with additional value being accorded to the granary, and in their contribution to the historic enclave of Court House Farmhouse. They are curtilage-listed by virtue of being part of the use, ownership and land of Court House Farmhouse (the principal Listed Building) at the time of listing (1966). Thus, any alterations or works to the buildings will be subject to the statutory duties to preserve and enhance under Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework related to listed buildings, specifically paragraphs 199-202. Policy DP3, Heritage Conservation of the Mendip Local Plan (part 1) also requires due consideration.
- 6.2. Demolition of the buildings would bring about substantial harm to significance which the NPPF outlines would be refused, unless substantial public benefits would come forward from a new scheme.
- 6.3. Whilst the modern farm buildings also fall under curtilage listing as they are seen in aerial images of 1947, they have been discovered to have no heritage value, are not heritage assets and thus the statutory duties to preserve and enhance significance are not applicable.
- 6.4. With this in mind, our recommendations would centre around the re-use and conversion of the traditional farmstead (putting them to uses consistent with their conservation), and the demolition of the modern structures which would bring general heritage benefits in removing unsightly structures and improving the experience and appreciation of the rural scene surrounding the Listed Buildings including St Lawrence Church and Court House Farmhouse. There is likely some capacity for sensitive, low rise, low density, vernacular inspired development on the site of the modern barns, but with the caveat that a new scheme would need to reference, respect and take cues from the identified character of the farmstead.

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- 6.5. Historic England offer guidance documents on the conversion and re-use of traditional farmsteads:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/adaptive-reuse-traditional-farm-buildings-advice-note-9/>

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/adapting-traditional-farm-buildings/heag158-adapting-traditional-farm-buildings/>

The Advice Note 9 (above top) offers general advice on approach, whilst Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings offers best practice detailed approaches to designing re-use schemes.

Conversion and reuse

- 6.6. As the farm went out of use in 2013 and no new farming use has been found for it, there is adequate justification for the principle of its conversion in the light of paragraph 197 of the NPPF which highlights how it is desirable to place assets in viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- 6.7. In terms of the details of the conversions, which could be residential or for business use, these should look to retain the form, scale and general characteristics of the buildings in order to retain meaningful interpretation of their former uses and appearance. The amount of intervention should be placed on a sliding scale related to the level of survival of significant fabric and features. In the cases of the Buildings A – B, there is quite a significant capacity for alteration and subdivision given the change they have already undergone. This includes new openings in modern walls, new internal subdivisions and new features such as windows. Design of such features can be contemporary to retain honesty, but it is best to reference and take cues from the character of the vernacular too including in materiality.
- 6.8. Structural survey could assist in understanding the provenance and integrity of the current roof trusses, none of which appeared on brief distant inspection to be more than machine cut pine of 19th or 20th century construction (bar the granary, see below). This could also highlight where trusses are deteriorated beyond repair and justify new roof structures. Roof coverings should retain clay tiles, and conservation roof lights could also be considered.

6.9. The lack of access to the granary first floor means that the survival or otherwise of historic fabric in this area (roof truss etc) is unknown, but assumed to be relatively high. The granary has less capacity for alteration and subdivision given this, and efforts should be made to retain the openness and historic fabric of each space. Internal connection to Building A could likely be justified utilising the historic timber lintel already in situ. The cart shed openings lend themselves to having light touch modern glazing installed.

6.10. Heritage benefits to assist in the planning balance would flow from works which looked to repair fabric in poor condition, to reinstate or uncover historic fabric and features such as walling (removing cement render for example) and to reinstate a more traditional character to surfaces such as the courtyard and courtyard stone walling.

New development

6.11. As outlined above, a low-density new scheme in place of the current modern sheds (whose demolition would bring benefits) could likely be justified on viability reasons provided the approach to the traditional buildings was conservationist. New buildings would need to be low-rise (i.e. ideally one or one and a half storeys) and follow the linear form and pattern of the farmstead. Buildings ranged around a second courtyard for example, would likely compliment the extant courtyard. Whilst the new scheme could be modern in design, a key approach would be to reference and take cues from the traditional farm buildings and the local vernacular. Materiality and colour palette would again need to complement and not compete with or be incongruous to the existing rustic character of the traditional elements of the Site. The approach would need to embrace the specific spatial and experiential character of rural farmsteads rather than seeking to create a domestic, suburban cul de sac or similar.

6.12. The settings assessment (Chapter 7) has outlined how the farmstead does contribute to the significance of both the listed Farmhouse and St Lawrence Church both through their physical and historical relationship, but also experientially, as a pastoral rural setting. A new scheme could bring about beneficial change to the setting of these assets if key positive elements of the setting contributing to significance were preserved and enhanced through sensitive design and landscaping.

Boundary treatments, landscaping and overall character

- 6.13. The success of adaptive farmstead schemes often rest on the finer detail of the approach to hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments. The rubblestone cock and hen walling which is a feature of the farmstead is also curtilage listed and would need to be retained. New walling in the same character would be highly beneficial. Large areas of timber fencing would be quite domestic in nature and contrary to the farmstead character so should be avoided where possible. Estate fencing or similar would be more appropriate and retain visual connections to the surrounding land.
- 6.14. The informal, pastoral and soft green character of the surrounds of the farm (leaving aside the concrete of the modern elements) should act as a reference point for the landscaping schemes, leaving aside hard or incongruous surfaces and features such as tarmac in favour of natural rustic surfaces such as gravel and signposting soft hedging and areas of grass and meadow, though areas of formality such as trough beds etc could be introduced to delineate areas.

Summary

- 6.15. Overall, the farmstead offers good opportunities and capacity for change for a sensitive and complementary historic building conversion and new build scheme which would bring heritage benefits in improving the setting of the Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area whilst also ensuring the traditional buildings are put in a viable use consistent with their conservation.

7. THE SETTING OF HERITAGE ASSETS

7.1. This section considers potential non-physical effects upon the significance of susceptible heritage assets within the Site environs. Non-physical effects are those that derive from changes to the setting of heritage assets as a result of new development. All heritage assets included within the settings assessment are summarised in the gazetteer in Appendix 2, and shown on Fig. 8 above. Those assets identified as potentially susceptible to non-physical impact, and thus subject to more detailed assessment, are discussed in greater detail within the remainder of this section.

Step 1: Identification of heritage assets potentially affected

7.2. Step 1 of the Second Edition of Historic England's 2017 'Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3' (GPA3) is to 'identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected' (see Appendix 1). GPA3 notes that Step 1 should identify the heritage assets which are likely to be affected as a result of any change to their experience, as a result of the development proposal (GPA3, page 9).

7.3. A number of heritage assets were identified as part of Step 1, as potentially susceptible to impact as a result of changes to their setting. These are:

- Court House Farmhouse (Grade II), Fig.8, **A**
- Village Cross (Grade II), Fig.8, **B**
- Church of St Lawrence (Grade II*), grouped with Weston House (Grade II) and Hardwich Monument (Grade II) Fig.8, **C**
- The Lodge (Grade II), Fig.8, **D**

7.4. The Site visit, and study area walkover, identified that there would be no non-physical impact upon the significance of any other heritage assets as a result of changes to the use and/or appearance of the Site.

7.5. All heritage assets assessed as part of Step 1, but which were *not* progressed to Steps 2 – 3, are included in the gazetteer in Appendix 2 of this report. One specific heritage asset not included in Step 2 is the Village Cross (Fig.8, B) due to its lack of experiential, physical or historic link to the farmstead, and due to the fact that the setting of the Cross which contributes to its significance comprises its road junction location in the centre of the village.

Steps 2 – 3: Assessment of setting and potential effects of the development

- 7.6. This section presents the results of Steps 2 to 3 of the settings assessment, which have been undertaken with regard to those potentially susceptible heritage assets identified in Step 1. Step 2 considers the contribution that setting makes to the significance of potentially susceptible heritage assets. Step 3 then considers how, if at all, and to what extent any anticipated changes to the setting of those assets, as a result of development within the Site, might affect their significance.

Grade II Listed Court House Farmhouse (A)

- 7.7. The Grade II Listed Court House Farmhouse is located approximately 50m to the east of the farmstead. It is believed to have been constructed in the late 16th or early 17th century on the site of a former medieval manor house held by the Bishop of Wells, by the then lessee, Sir John Rodney. The core of the building is believed to date to this original construction, although few internal features survive, with the structure having been extensively altered and extended in the early 19th century. The building has a symmetrical, east facing front, and is of two storeys in height with colour washed roughcast elevations and a slate roof. The building is adjoined by 19th century extensions to the north and south.
- 7.8. Court House Farmhouse derives its significance primarily from the evidential and historical illustrative value embodied within its physical form and fabric, as an example of an early post-medieval farmhouse with later modifications. Additional historical value is derived from its association with the former manor house, evidence for which has been identified through archaeological investigations within the building's grounds. The building also possesses aesthetic value, relating to its consciously designed attractive east front.

Physical surrounds – ‘what matters and why’

- 7.9. Court House Farmhouse is set back from the main road, with its principal, east facing elevation overlooking a spacious front garden with long pathway (Photograph 10). The garden, comprising a lawn and scattered with trees, is enclosed by a low fence and so maintains an open feel with the building easily visible from the road. These attractive and verdant immediate surroundings enhance the building's aesthetic value, and form a key aspect of its setting. Beyond the garden, the wider surrounds to the east of the building are defined by the surrounding village, with which it has a broad historical relationship. These elements of setting are positive to significance.



Photo 35 Grade II Listed Court House Farmhouse (A), viewed from the east

- 7.10. To the west, the building is surrounded by a rear garden, beyond which lie its associated traditional farm buildings. Although these structures appear to be largely disused, they do reflect the historical function of the building as a farmhouse and these physical attributes are positive to significance. Agricultural land located beyond this, also provides some contribution to the significance of the building, by placing it within a rural context reflective of that within which would have served.

Experience of the asset – ‘what matters and why’

- 7.11. Due to its largely open immediate surroundings, Court House Farmhouse can be easily experienced from the roadside to the north and east, from where the architectural form of the building can be appreciated, and its historical and spatial relationships within the settlement understood. From within the garden, which can be accessed via a public footpath, trees provide a sense of tranquillity and quiet which adds to the aesthetic value of the building. These are all positive qualities of setting contributing to significance.
- 7.12. The modern farm sheds and concrete hard standing which lie south and west of the building are negative aspects of the experience of the building and thus to its significance, in that their condition and utilitarian modern construction impede the experience of the building as a traditional farmhouse set in a rural location.

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- 7.13. Views to and from the rear of the building to the Site are generally open and the farmstead and the farmhouse are experienced and interpreted together in that regard. This is positive to significance in anchoring the farmhouse to its farmstead and associated land. As outlined above, the modern sheds bring an element of intrusion to the view when considered experientially, but as part of the farmstead they are still attributes of setting which assist in interpreting the historic function of the farmhouse.

Summary of possible development effects

- 7.14. The above assessment has identified that setting makes a considerable contribution to the appreciation and interpretation of the farmhouse. The interaction with the farmstead and Site and its buildings is appreciable both physically and experientially.
- 7.15. The conversion and re-use of the farmstead buildings, if undertaken sensitively and with regard for their vernacular character would bring these buildings back into use. Whilst this use would not be farming related, the relationship would still be discernible and would thus be positive in terms of setting and significance of the Listed Building.
- 7.16. The removal of the unsightly modern sheds would return the Site to a physical and experiential state more akin to its historical appearance. As such, this aspect of the proposals would comprise a heritage benefit in enhancing the significance of the farmhouse by bringing positive change to its setting. New development in its place, if sensitively designed and complementary to the vernacular of the locale, would also bring change to setting, but, dependant on design, would be more appropriate and assimilate better and therefore bring neutral to positive impacts on significance.

Grade II* Listed Church of St Lawrence, Grade II Listed Hardwich Monument and Westbury House (C)

- 7.17. Due to their close spatial and contextual relationships, the Listed Buildings at St. Lawrence's Church are considered together. The Grade II* Listed Church of St Lawrence, located c. 110m east of the Site, is of 12th century origin, and retains Norman elements including tower arches and a (now blocked) doorway. The remainder of the building dates predominately to the 14th and 15th centuries, with 19th century restorations including the tower, which was rebuilt in 1887.
- 7.18. The Grade II Listed Hardwich monument, dated to 1816 and dedicated to John Hardwich, is situated within the churchyard, approximately 8m to the south of the porch. It is built of dressed stone and features a moulded plinth, fluted corner pilasters and a central pilaster on the north and south sides. The Grade II Listed Westbury

House is situated c. 130m to the south-east of the Site, and comprises a substantial 17th century house with 18th and 19th century alterations. The building is of four bays and two storeys in height and is constructed of stone rubble with Bridgwater patent triple Roman tile roof.

7.19. The significance of the Church of St Lawrence is derived primarily from its historical (illustrative) and evidential value as a medieval church representing a key part of the history and development of the settlement of Westbury, and retaining historical fabric which may inform the construction and use of the building. As a place of worship, and a settlement focal point, the church also holds communal value, while aesthetic value stems from its architectural form. The Grade II Listed Hardwich Monument obtains its significance from its historical value as 19th-century monument dedicated to a prominent local Fig. (the Hardwich family were the lessees of the adjacent Court House Farmhouse), and also to a lesser degree from the evidential values held in its historic fabric.

7.20. The significance of Westbury House stems primarily from the evidential and historical illustrative value embodied within its physical remains, as an example of an early post-medieval house, with later modifications. On account of its conscious, attractive design, the building also retains aesthetic value

Physical surrounds – ‘what matters and why’

7.21. The church and its building enclave is situated at the western edge of the village, within a surrounding churchyard bounded by a stone wall (Photo 35). The churchyard is known to have been established in at least the medieval period, and forms an integral setting to the church, enabling the building to be appreciated within its distinctive historical and functional context. Within the churchyard are a number of memorial and religious monuments, including the Grade II Listed Hardwich Monument, which share important associative relationships with the church that contribute strongly towards its intelligibility, and thus historical value. As a quiet and open space, set back from the principal streets, the churchyard also forms a tranquil and attractive surrounding to the church building, as befits its function as a place for religious worship and contemplation. These immediate physical surroundings therefore represent the aspect of setting which contributes most highly towards the significance of the asset.



Photo 36 Grade II* Listed Church of St Lawrence, viewed from the west from within the churchyard

- 7.22. As a focal point within the settlement since its construction in the medieval period, the church has an important contextual relationship with the village which makes a strong contribution towards its historical value. Associative relationships can be discerned between the church and other historic structures within the village, most notably the adjacent Grade II Listed Court House Farmhouse (**A**) to the north, Westbury House to the south, and The Lodge (**D**) to the east.
- 7.23. Beyond the churchyard to the west, the wider surroundings of the church are agricultural in character, with the derelict barns of Court House Farm located immediately to the north. The surrounding agricultural land is considered to make some, limited, contribution to significance, by way of illustrating the historically rural wider context of the church and its associated settlement, although the dominating modern barns are considered to represent a negative aspect within the setting of the assets.
- 7.24. Westbury House is situated within its own grounds, which are reached via a gated driveway leading from Stoke Road, alongside which is the Grade II Listed The Lodge (**D**). The immediate surroundings to the south (front) of the building, are defined by a large, landscaped garden surrounded by mature trees and vegetation, while a complex of outbuildings and a recreational space are situated to the west. These grounds form a key setting to the asset, through enhancing the building's intelligibility as a private dwelling of some apparent local status, as well as providing aesthetic

value. It is from these immediate surroundings that architectural and historic interest of the building can be best appreciated and understood.

- 7.25. Immediately to the north of Westbury House is the churchyard of the Grade II* St Lawrence's Church. The rear elevation of the building can be seen from the southern edge of the churchyard (Photo 37), although this limited view does not allow for a good appreciation of the asset. The wider surroundings to the east of the building are defined by the historic core of Westbury-sub-Mendip, with which the building has a positive historical association as a surviving, built element of the 17th century development of the village.



Photo 37 Rear of the Grade II Listed Westbury House, viewed from the east from within the churchyard

Experience of the asset – ‘what matters and why’

- 7.26. The historical and architectural interest of the church, as embodied within its physical form, can be best experienced within the interior of the building, and at close range within the churchyard. The churchyard contains relatively few trees, as a result of which there are views across the village to the north and north-east. These views enable an understanding of the church and its relationship with the historic settlement, and so contribute to the significance of the asset.
- 7.27. From the western end of the churchyard, the outward views are dominated by farm buildings associated with Court House Farm (the Site). The Site can be seen beyond the hedge boundary at the western edge of the churchyard along with modern development along Roughmoor Lane in the background. This view does illustrate the

rural location of the church and associated settlement, but makes a lesser contribution to significance than those focused towards the village to the north and north-east.

7.28. The churchyard is accessed by a secluded tree lined access driveway leading off Stoke Road which, together with its somewhat isolated position at the edge of the settlement, means it is not easily experienced from within the village itself. A good appreciation is, however, offered from the adjacent public footpath within the garden of Court House Farmhouse, to the north.

7.29. The church can otherwise be experienced from the approach into the village along Roughmoor Lane (Photo 38), where it features alongside the barns and structures associated with Court House Farm. These views, as experienced frequently by passers-by, allow the church to be seen within its rural context at the edge of the village, however the derelict and somewhat dominating farm buildings serve to detract from the appreciation of the asset's aesthetic value.



Photo 38 **Grade II* Listed Church of St Lawrence, viewed from the north along Roughmoor Lane**

7.30. Due to its relative proximity, the church can be seen within views from the southern edge of the Site (Photo 39) and in glimpses through and between the modern barn buildings. More distant views of the church are available towards the western edge of the Site, although these do not allow for a clear appreciation of its architectural form or detailing. The views of the church from within the Site, although

representative of its rural siting, are in themselves fortuitous and do not offer an intentional or uniquely favourable vantage point from which to experience the asset.



Photo 39 **Grade II* Listed Church of St Lawrence, viewed from the west of the Site**

- 7.31. With regards to Westbury House, beyond its enclosed grounds, it is visually and physically separated from the wider agricultural landscape by its own enclosing walls and a substantial tree belt, which obscures views between the Site and the building. The Site furthermore does not have any known historical or functional associations with the asset therefore its setting is not anticipated to be sensitive to development of the Site.

Summary of development effects

- 7.32. Residential development of the Site would introduce different built form into the setting of the Grade II* Listed Church, albeit this form would be more complementary and positive than the current experience of the built form of the Site. This would alter the views from within the western end of the churchyard, as well as the views towards the church from within this surrounding landscape. However, as discussed above, neither of these views are considered to offer the best appreciation of the church or its wider context, and the Site makes only a minor contribution to the significance of the asset. The principal contributors to the significance of the church and its associated assets, namely the heritage values embodied within its physical fabric, would remain unaffected, as would the key elements of its setting, comprising its surrounding churchyard and the important historical and spatial relationships with the village of Westbury-sub-Mendip.

7.33. Ensuring that the design of new build elements is of an appropriate design, density, scale, height and massing that would not visually dominate the church and would complement the existing vernacular farmstead on the Site would be key to ensure that its setting is preserved and likely enhanced (by the removal of the current sheds and appropriate new buildings in their place). It is not expected that development would detract from the present experiences of the asset from the garden of Court House Farm and Roughmoor Lane. The fundamental purpose of the church, to serve the settlement surrounding it, would not change, and the intelligibility of the relationships between the church and other associated nearby historic structures would be in no way affected. Therefore no harm is anticipated in relation to a new build scheme at Court House Farm, though this caveated as above regarding building layout and design.

Grade II Listed The Lodge (D)

7.34. The Grade II Listed The Lodge, situated c. 150m to the east of the Site (Photo 40), was constructed in the early 19th century as a former lodge to Westbury House to the south. The building is of two storeys in height, with colour washed rendered elevations and a half hipped slate roof. It is of a Gothic style, with pointed head windows and a central pointed head door opening.



Photo 40 **Grade II Listed The Lodge (D), viewed from the north-east**

7.35. The significance of The Lodge is derived primarily from its physical fabric, which holds evidential value relating its construction, development and use, as well as early 19th

century architectural styles. The building also has historical value, relating to its former function as a lodge to Westbury House and its status as an illustrative component of the 19th century development of the village.

Setting – ‘what matters and why’

7.36. The Lodge is situated along an access road leading from the main Stoke Road, at the south-east corner of the St Lawrence’s churchyard. The access road continues south-westwards from The Lodge, towards Westbury House. This secluded setting, screened from the main road by trees and vegetation, provides aesthetic value to the asset, while also illustrating its former functional association with Westbury House.

7.37. Beyond these immediate surroundings, the broader historical context of the asset is defined by the village to the north, east and south. The farmstead located beyond the churchyard does not have any direct relationship with the building, other than representing the historic landscape within which the village developed.

Summary of development effects

7.38. Due the presence of surrounding vegetation and built form, The Lodge does not feature within views from the wider landscape, and no intervisibility with the Site was identified during the site visit. The Site furthermore has no discernible historical or functional associations with the building. As such, development of the Site would not result in any harm to the significance of this asset.

8. WESTBURY-SUB-MENDIP CONSERVATION AREA

8.1. The site lies within the western boundary of the Westbury-sub-Mendip Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was designated in 1991 and encompasses the historic core of the settlement. Modern development, including that along Roughmoor Lane to the north of the Site, is largely excluded from the designation.

8.2. No Conservation Area Appraisal has been produced for the Westbury-sub-Mendip, and the following assessment is therefore based on observations made during the walkover survey, as well as an understanding of the village's historic development. The assessment has been guided by advice provided in Historic England's Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2019).

Character of the Conservation Area

8.3. The character and appearance of the Conservation Area is influenced by the historic development of the village, which originated in the medieval period with a broadly linear settlement, concentrated around the Grade II* Listed Church of St Lawrence (C) and site of the former medieval manor house marked by the Grade II Listed Court House Farmhouse (A), and extending along Old Ditch Road / Lynch Lane in the north and Stoke Road (A371) and The Hollow in the west. The basic layout of the village appears to have remained largely unchanged since at least the mid-19th century, excepting some modern development at the eastern, southern and western fringes (including along Roughmoor Lane), and its historic form remains intelligible in the existing layout of the main roads.

8.4. In addition to those mentioned above, the Conservation Area contains a further 17 Grade II Listed Buildings, as well as the medieval village cross Scheduled Monument (B). It is from the evidential, historical and aesthetic value of these assets, which collectively illustrate the development and origins of the village, that the Conservation Area obtains much of its character. The Conservation Area derives further significance from its archaeological potential relating to the medieval settlement, as is reflected in the identification of the village core as an Area of High Archaeological Potential by Somerset County Council.

8.5. Key open spaces within the village include the large garden to the east of Court House Farmhouse (which is publicly accessible via a designated footpath), the churchyard, and the crossroads at the junction of Stoke Road and School Hill, which

is marked by the Scheduled village cross (Photo 41). These spaces provide historically important focal points and gathering places, as well providing amenity value which is further enhanced by the presence of trees and vegetation within the garden to the house and surrounding the entrance to the church. The prevailing sense of openness around these areas, and in particular the crossroads, contrasts with the much more enclosed feel created by the often winding, narrow streets, which is apparent throughout much of the village.



Photo 41 Scheduled village cross (B), viewed from the south

- 8.6. The architectural styles and building materials displayed within the Conservation Area are fairly unified, with most buildings being of two storeys in height and built of stone rubble with tile or slate roofs. Several buildings are faced in roughcast, and limewashed elevations are also relatively common. Buildings are generally spaced out and set within irregular plots, reflecting the organic nature of the village's development.
- 8.7. Westbury-sub-Mendip is situated on a north-south slope, just below the limestone uplands of the Mendip Hills. This topographic siting, which would have been a key factor in the historical development of the settlement, makes an important contribution towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and is apparent in the steep incline of Old Ditch Road, at the northern end of the village, and in outward views available from elevated areas of the village.

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- 8.8. The surroundings of the Conservation Area are strongly rural in character, although bands of modern development separate it from its wider rural setting to the south-east, south and south-west. Through maintaining the historical landscape context within which the settlement originated and developed, this setting is considered to provide some contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.
- 8.9. Due to the much more open aspect of the area around the village cross / Court House Farmhouse, and extending westwards along Roughmoor Lane, outward views are more readily available from this location. These views, which lie principally to the south towards Knowle Hill and Glastonbury Tor, provide a sense of the wider landscape context of the village, and enhance the aesthetic value of the Conservation Area.
- 8.10. The Site features within the Conservation Area as a partially positive and partially negative feature. Its positive qualities include the historic walls which enclose the farm, and the appearance (albeit dilapidated) of the traditional farmstead buildings, with the granary in particular being a striking positive building in the streetscene. The utilitarian appearance and dilapidation of the modern sheds is a detracting feature, which, though evidencing modern farming in the area, does not complement the inherent historic and vernacular character of the village as identified above.

Summary of development effects

- 8.11. In summary, the aspects which can be seen to contribute to the character and appearance, and thus significance, of the Conservation Area include the architectural and historic interest of the built heritage; the historic layout preserved in the open spaces and principal roads; the aesthetic quality provided by trees and vegetation; and the potential archaeological interest of the medieval settlement core. The traditional farm buildings of the Site do contribute positively to the Conservation Area, however the modern sheds do not. Loss of the traditional buildings would be a loss to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and thus to its significance.
- 8.12. Therefore opportunities to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (as per the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) are present in the proposed development of the Site. The uplift in the appearance of the traditional buildings (if sensitively designed) would bring positive effects, as would sensitively designed new

development on the site of the current sheds (again caveated that new development should reference and take cues from the surrounding farmstead character and be low rise and low density in design, taking care to use materials and a colour palette to complement the existing features of the Conservation Area).

- 8.13. In conclusion, it is considered that the degree of change arising from the proposed development could be positive and constitute an enhancement to the appearance of the Conservation Area (subject to the adoption of appropriate design), would not affect the appreciation of the special character of the Conservation Area, or cause harm to its significance.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1. This assessment has included a review of a comprehensive range of available sources, in accordance with key industry guidance, in order to identify known and potential heritage assets located within the Site and its environs which may be affected by any development proposals. The significance of the identified known and potential heritage assets has been determined, as far as possible, on the basis of available evidence. The potential effects of any proposals on the significance of identified heritage assets, including any potential physical effects upon buried archaeological remains, and potential non-physical effects resulting from the anticipated changes to the settings of heritage assets, have been assessed. Any physical or non-physical effects of the proposals upon the significance of the heritage resource will be a material consideration in the determination of the planning application for any proposal.
- 9.2. A Level 1 – 2 building survey has been undertaken of the farm buildings to understand their development, form, fabric and significance, and from this a summary of suitable opportunities, constraints and capacity for change has been identified. The objective of this part of the assessment is to inform the development of designs for the future of the farmstead. The optimum approach can be summarised as repair, conversion and reuse of the traditional buildings and options for demolition of the modern sheds and low density, farmstead inspired new development in their stead.

Archaeology

- 9.3. This assessment has identified a low potential for prehistoric remains to present within the Site. Prehistoric monuments and other features are widespread within the surrounding higher ground of the Mendip Hills, but relatively little evidence for this period is recorded within the more immediate environs of the Site.
- 9.4. Previous investigations, as well as aerial photography and findspots, indicate a general, background level of Romano-British activity within the local landscape, and there is accordingly some potential for remains of this period to present within the Site. While any remains would likely be of archaeological interest, they would not be expected to constitute highly significant heritage assets.
- 9.5. The Site is situated at the western fringes of the village of Westbury-sub-Mendip and located within the Area of High Archaeological Potential. The Site is within the immediate vicinity of the presumed location of the medieval manor house held by the

Bishop of Wells as well. The Site lies partially within the grounds of the manor complex and beyond the limits of the medieval settlement. It is likely that the Site was under agricultural use or grassland in this period, as indicated by the Tithe Map describing the field plots as 'Butt Hays' and a potential historic association with archery, although the potential for remains of associated structures or other features to be present should not be discounted. Any such remains, if present, be unlikely to represent highly significant heritage assets.

- 9.6. The Site appears to have remained primarily in use as agricultural land throughout the post-medieval period and partly through the modern period, except for the development of Court House Farm throughout the 19th century and a significant expansion of the farm in the 20th century. Therefore, archaeological remains of these dates are therefore likely to be present, but are unlikely to constitute remains of high significance. The geophysical survey to the immediate west of the Site did not identify any anomalies which were indicative of significant archaeological remains also, although an archaeological origin should not be discounted for a small number of anomalies classified as 'undetermined' (Magnitude Surveys 2021) which may continue to within the Site boundary
- 9.7. Any effects of the proposals upon the significance of the buried archaeological resource will be a material consideration in the determination of any future planning application. While this assessment has identified potential for the presence of archaeological remains within the Site, it is unlikely that any features of high significance (i.e. equivalent to Scheduled Monuments) would be present. As such, it is not anticipated that the potential significance of the archaeological resource within the Site would be such as to require preservation in situ.

Built heritage

- 9.8. As outlined above, the assessment has sought to understand the significance of built heritage in and around the Site, and outlined an optimum approach to the development of the Site which would preserve significance in-line with the duties under local planning policy (specifically DP3), national planning law (1990 Act), and planning guidance (NPPF). Both physical and non-physical effects would stem from such a development but via Historic England guided building survey, settings and Conservation Area assessments it has been determined that the type of effect (subject to design) is likely to preserve and even enhance the local heritage environment through conservation and regeneration of the Site, uplift in its

appearance and putting at risk historic buildings into viable uses consistent with their conservation. As such, no harm is anticipated from a sensitive scheme as outlined in this assessment.

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APPENDIX 1: HERITAGE STATUTE POLICY & GUIDANCE

Heritage Statute: Scheduled Monuments

Scheduled Monuments are subject to the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The Act sets out the controls of works affecting Scheduled Monuments and other related matters. Contrary to the requirements of the Planning Act 1990 regarding Listed buildings, the 1979 Act does not include provision for the 'setting' of Scheduled Monuments.

Heritage Statute: Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are buildings of 'special architectural or historic interest' and are subject to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Under Section 7 of the Act 'no person shall execute or cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised.' Such works are authorised under Listed Building Consent. Under Section 66 of the Act '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 feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.

Note on the extent of a Listed Building

Under Section 1(5) of the Act, a structure may be deemed part of a Listed Building if it is:

- (a) fixed to the building, or
- (b) within the curtilage of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948

The inclusion of a structure deemed to be within the 'curtilage' of a building thus means that it is subject to the same statutory controls as the principal Listed Building. Inclusion within this duty is not, however, an automatic indicator of 'heritage significance' both as defined within the NPPF (2021) and within Conservation Principles (see Section 2 above). In such cases, the significance of the structure needs to be assessed both in its own right and in the contribution it makes to the significance and character of the principal Listed Building. The practical effect of the inclusion in the listing of ancillary structures is limited by the requirement that Listed Building Consent is only needed for works to the 'Listed Building' (to include the building in the list and all the ancillary items) where they affect the special character of the Listed building as a whole.

Guidance is provided by Historic England on '[Listed Buildings and Curtilage: Historic England Advice Note 10](#)' (Historic England 2018).

Heritage Statue: Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are designated by the local planning authority under Section 69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'), which requires that '*Every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'. Section 72 of the Act requires that '*special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'.

The requirements of the Act only apply to land within a Conservation Area; not to land outside it. This has been clarified in various Appeal Decisions (for example APP/F1610/A/14/2213318 Land south of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Paragraph 65: '*The Section 72 duty only applies to buildings or land in a Conservation Area, and so does not apply in this case as the site lies outside the Conservation Area.*').

The NPPF (2021) also clarifies in [Paragraph 207](#) that '*Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance*'. Thus land or buildings may be a part of a Conservation Area, but may not necessarily be of architectural or historical significance. Similarly, not all elements of the setting of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance, or to an equal degree.

National heritage policy: the National Planning Policy Framework

Heritage assets and heritage significance

Heritage assets comprise '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' (the NPPF (2021), Annex 2). Designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas (designated under the relevant legislation; NPPF (2021), Annex 2). The NPPF (2021), Annex 2, states that the significance of a heritage asset may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' looks at significance as a series of 'values' which include 'evidential', 'historical', 'aesthetic' and 'communal'.

The July 2019 revision of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) expanded on the definition of non-designated heritage assets. It states *that 'Non-designated heritage assets are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as*

having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.’ It goes on to refer to local/neighbourhood plans, conservation area appraisals/reviews, and importantly, the local Historic Environment Record (HER) as examples of where these assets may be identified, but specifically notes that such identification should be made ‘based on sound evidence’, with this information ‘accessible to the public to provide greater clarity and certainly for developers and decision makers’.

This defines *non-designated heritage assets* as those which have been specially defined as such through the local HER or other source made accessible to the public by the plan-making body. Where HERs or equivalent lists do not specifically refer to an asset as a *non-designated heritage asset*, it is assumed that it has not met criteria for the plan-making body to define it as such, and will be referred to as a *heritage asset* for the purpose of this report.

The assessment of *non-designated heritage assets* and *heritage assets* will be equivalent in this report, in line with industry standards and guidance on assessing significance and impact. They may not, however, carry equivalent weight in planning as set out within the provisions of the NPPF, should there be any effect to significance.

The setting of heritage assets

The ‘setting’ of a heritage asset comprises ‘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’ (NPPF (2021), Annex 2). Thus it is important to note that ‘setting’ is not a heritage asset: it may contribute to the value of a heritage asset.

Guidance on assessing the effects of change upon the setting and significance of heritage assets is provided in ‘Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets’, which has been utilised for the present assessment (see below).

Levels of information to support planning applications

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2021) identifies that ‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’.

Designated heritage assets

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2021) explains that heritage assets 'are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'. Paragraph 199 notes that 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Paragraph 200 goes on to note that 'substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building...should be exceptional and substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance (notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites)...should be wholly exceptional'.

Paragraph 202 clarifies that 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.

Development Plan

The relevant policy contained within the Mendip District Local Plan Part 1 (adopted 2014) is DP3: Heritage Conservation:

'Proposals and initiatives will be supported which preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance and setting of the district's Heritage Assets, whether statutorily or locally identified, especially those elements which contribute to the distinct identity of Mendip.'

1. *Proposals affecting a Heritage Asset in Mendip will be required to:*

a) *Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the Heritage Asset and/or its setting by describing it in sufficient detail to determine its historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest to a level proportionate with its importance.*

b) *Justify any harm to a Heritage Asset and demonstrate the overriding public benefits which would outweigh the damage to that Asset or its setting. The greater the harm to the significance of the Heritage Asset, the greater justification and public benefit that will be required before the application could gain support.*

2. Opportunities to mitigate or adapt to climate change and secure sustainable development through the re-use or adaptation of Heritage Assets to minimise the consumption of building materials and energy and the generation of construction waste should be identified. However, mitigation and adaptation will only be considered where there is no harm to the significance of a Heritage Asset.

3. Proposals for enabling development necessary to secure the future of a Heritage Asset which would otherwise be contrary to the policies of this plan or national policy will be carefully assessed against the policy statement produced by English Heritage – Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places.’

The Site is allocated within the emerging Local Plan Part II: Sites and Policies as WM1. The relevant policy for this is outlined below.

Policy WM1: Development Requirements and Design Principles:

- ‘1. A minimum of 40 dwellings including affordable housing consistent with relevant policy.*
- 2. Have particular regard to site layout, building height, and soft landscaping, to minimise the visual impact of the development in this rural location.*
- 3. New development should reflect the local materials and style.*
- 4. The site should be designed to safeguard the amenity of neighbouring residential properties.*
- 5. Opportunities should be taken to maintain or enhance biodiversity and 0.27 ha of accessible bat habitat should be provided.’*

Good Practice Advice 1-3

Historic England has issued three Good Practice Advice notes (‘GPA1-3’) which support the NPPF. The GPAs note that they do not constitute a statement of Government policy, nor do they seek to prescribe a single methodology: their purpose is to assist local authorities, planners, heritage consultants, and other stakeholders in the implementation of policy set out in the NPPF. This report has been produced in the context of this advice, particularly ‘GPA2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment’ and ‘GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets’.

GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment

GPA2 sets out the requirement for assessing ‘heritage significance’ as part of the application process. Paragraph 8 notes ‘understanding the nature of the significance is important to understanding the need for and best means of conservation.’ This includes assessing the extent and level of significance, including the contribution made by its ‘setting’ (see GPA3 below). GPA2 notes that ‘a desk-based assessment will determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so’ (Page 3).

GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets

The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced...’. Step 1 of the settings assessment requires heritage assets which may be affected by development to be identified. Historic England notes that for the purposes of Step 1 this process will comprise heritage assets ‘where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way)...’.

Step 2 of the settings process ‘assess[es] the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated’, with regard to its physical surrounds; relationship with its surroundings and patterns of use; experiential effects such as noises or smells; and the way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated. Step 3 requires ‘assessing the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset(s)’ – specifically to ‘assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it’, with regard to the location and siting of the development, its form and appearance, its permanence, and wider effects.

Step 4 of GPA3 provides commentary on ‘ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm’. It notes (Paragraph 37) that ‘Maximum advantage can be secured if any effects on the significance of a heritage asset arising from development liable to affect its setting are considered from the project’s inception.’ It goes on to note (Paragraph 39) that ‘good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement’.

Heritage significance

Discussion of heritage significance within this assessment report makes reference to several key documents. With regard to Listed buildings and Conservation Areas it primarily discusses ‘architectural and historic interest’, which comprises the special interest for which they are designated.

The NPPF provides a definition of ‘significance’ for heritage policy (Annex 2). This states that heritage significance comprises ‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic’. This also clarifies that for World Heritage Sites ‘the cultural value described within each site’s Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance’.

Regarding ‘levels’ of significance the NPPF (2021) provides a distinction between: designated heritage assets of the highest significance; designated heritage assets not of the highest significance; and non-designated heritage assets.

Historic England’s ‘Conservation Principles’ expresses ‘heritage significance’ as comprising a combination of one or more of: evidential value; historical value; aesthetic value; and communal value:

- Evidential value – the elements of a historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including physical remains, historic fabric, documentary/pictorial records. This evidence can provide information on the origin of the asset, what it was used for, and how it changed over time.
- Historical value (illustrative) – how a historic asset may illustrate its past life, including changing uses of the asset over time.
- Historical value (associative) – how a historic asset may be associated with a notable family, person, event, or moment, including changing uses of the asset over time.
- Aesthetic value – the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a historic asset. This may include its form, external appearance, and its setting, and may change over time.
- Communal value – the meaning of a historic asset to the people who relate to it. This may be a collective experience, or a memory, and can be commemorative or symbolic to individuals or groups, such as memorable events, attitudes, and periods of history. This includes social values, which relates to the role of the historic asset as a place of social interactive, distinctiveness, coherence, economic, or spiritual / religious value.

Effects upon heritage assets

Heritage benefit

The NPPF clarifies that change in the setting of heritage assets may lead to heritage benefit. Paragraph 206 of the NPPF (2021) notes that ‘Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals

that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably’.

GPA3 notes that ‘good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement’ (Paragraph 28). Historic England’s ‘Conservation Principles’ states that ‘Change to a significant place is inevitable, if only as a result of the passage of time, but can be neutral or beneficial in its effects on heritage values. It is only harmful if (and to the extent that) significance is reduced’ (Paragraph 84).

Specific heritage benefits may be presented through activities such as repair or restoration, as set out in Conservation Principles.

Heritage harm to designated heritage assets

The NPPF (2021) does not define what constitutes ‘substantial harm’. The High Court of Justice does provide a definition of this level of harm, as set out by Mr Justice Jay in *Bedford Borough Council v SoS for CLG and Nuon UK Ltd*. Paragraph 25 clarifies that, with regard to ‘substantial harm’: ‘Plainly in the context of physical harm, this would apply in the case of demolition or destruction, being a case of total loss. It would also apply to a case of serious damage to the structure of the building. In the context of non-physical or indirect harm, the yardstick was effectively the same. One was looking for an impact which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced’.

Effects upon non-designated heritage assets

The NPPF (2021) paragraph 203 guides that ‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgment will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

APPENDIX 2: GAZETTEER OF SELECTED RECORDED HERITAGE ASSETS

Designated Heritage Assets

Ref	Description	Status	NGR	HE ref. HER ref.
A	Court House Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building	349968 148808	1295096
B	Westbury Village Cross	Scheduled Monument and Grade II Listed Building	350048 148806	1016292 1345142 22002
C	Church of St Lawrence	Grade II* Listed Building	349960 148704	1178326 24850
	Hardwich Monument in churchyard about 8 metres south of porch Church of St Lawrence	Grade II Listed Building	349957 148690	1058578
	Westbury House	Grade II Listed Building	349959 148667	1178345
D	The Lodge	Grade II Listed Building	349999 148722	1345143
E	Westbury-sub-Mendip Conservation Area	Conservation Area	350070 148985	-
-	Drappel Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building	350274 149330	1058571
-	Crow Lane Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building	350144 148749	1058572
-	Old Inn	Grade II Listed Building	350225 148931	1058573
-	Old Ditch Farmhouse And forecourt wall	Grade II Listed Building	349958 149488	1058574
-	Old Ditch Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building	350168 149346	1058575
-	Newlyn	Grade II Listed Building	350120 148889	1058576
-	Boundary wall piers and gates to Coombe Hay Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building	350139 148948	1058577
-	Coombe Hay Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building	350114 148985	1178294
-	Lodge Hill House	Grade II Listed Building	350014 148537	1178310
-	Pair of gate piers immediately east southeast of Lodge Hill House	Grade II Listed Building	350037 148536	1241320
-	Ash Tree Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building	350218 149226	1345140
-	The Old Vicarage	Grade II Listed Building	350138 148837	1345141

Ref	Description	Status	NGR	HE ref. HER ref.
A	Court House Farmhouse	Grade II Listed Building	349968 148808	1295096
-	Box Bush Villa	Grade II Listed Building	350023 148657	1387310

Archaeological Assets

Ref	Description	Period	NGR	HER ref.
1	Alleged prehistoric enclosure, NE of Westbury-sub-Mendip	Prehistoric	350604 149397	41541
2	Prehistoric and Roman settlement identified by surface finds and geophysical survey at Thornbury	Prehistoric	350619 148000	37327
3	Iron age coin find, Westfield Lane	Prehistoric	349300 149700	27191
4	Possible Roman settlement, south of Westbury-sub-Mendip	Romano-British	350110 148014	25648
5	Possible Roman settlement, west of Lodge Hill	Romano-British	348510 148601	12991
6	Roman inhumation burial found during excavation at The Straits	Romano-British	350151 147966	39421
7	Roman finds recovered from garden at Back Lane, Westbury-sub-Mendip	Romano-British	350370 148894	31606
8	Findspot of two Roman coins	Romano-British	350214 148887	24872
9	Roman lead pig find, south of Holly Brook	Romano-British	350600 148100	40052
10	Westbury deer park, owned by the Bishops of Bath and Wells.	Medieval	349440 148186	24861
11	Medieval or post-medieval lodge site, Westbury deer park	Medieval	349183 148112	24860
12	Bishop's manor house, Westbury	Medieval	349955 148773	35970
13	Field system identified as cropmarks and earthworks to NW of Westbury-sub-Mendip	Medieval	349423 148903	24258
14	Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, west of Westbury-sub-Mendip	Medieval	348857 148768	19291
15	Medieval fields east and west of Slowland Lane	Medieval	349965 149775	25853
16	Field boundaries probably forming part of a medieval field system, identified as earthworks at Holly Brook	Medieval	350612 148557	25872
17	Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, north-west of Lodge Hill Wood	Medieval	349120 148537	19289

Ref	Description	Period	NGR	HER ref.
18	Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, west of Westbury	Medieval	349473 148630	19290
19	Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, north of Lodge Hill Wood	Medieval	349253 148347	19288
20	Mounds and building platforms, south of Westfield Lane	Unknown	349432 149665	24257

Previous Archaeological Investigations

Description	Date	NGR	HER ref.
Earthwork survey (2010-2011)	2010-2011	348745 149224	29995
Excavation (2016), Court House Farm	2016	349991 148772	34783
Magnetometer survey (2010), Kingshays	2010	350394 148972	30302
Excavation (2015), Westbury Park lodge	2015	349182 148108	32842
Excavation (2008), Lodge Hill	2008	349251 148096	28654
Resistivity survey (2006), The Straits	2006	350159 147948	27167
Geophysical survey and trial pits (2013), Windmill Hill	2013	349705 148172	32330
Resistivity survey (2007), Hurns Close	2007	350102 147996	27662
Magnetometer survey (2007), Hurns Close	2007	350099 147991	27655
Magnetometer survey (2010), The Straits	2010	350159 147948	30299
Fieldwalking (2010-2011), north-west of Westbury	2010-2011	348753 149216	29996
Fieldwalking (2010), Withing Shurd field, Westbury	2010	348966 149011	30298
Fieldwalking (2009), New Close, Westbury-sub-Mendip	2009	350036 149645	28454
Fieldwalking (2008), Cowleaze, West of Lodge Hill	2008	348527 148675	22028
Resistivity survey (2005), Court House Farm, Westbury-sub-Mendip	2005	349987 148767	27955
Fieldwalking (2011), south-east of Westbury	2011	350661 148224	31648
Fieldwalking (2009), Waterslade, Westbury-sub-Mendip	2009	350355 149588	28456

Description	Date	NGR		HER ref.
Fieldwalking (2010), north-east of Court House Farm, Westbury	2010	349907	147804	29783
Geophysical survey (2021), land off Roughmoor Lane	2021	349743	148774	45343

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Cotswold Business Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Milton Keynes Office

Unit 8 - The IO Centre
Fingle Drive, Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

Suffolk Office

Unit 5, Plot 11, Maitland Road
Lion Barn Industrial Estate
Needham Market
Suffolk
IP6 8NZ

t: 01449 900120

e: enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

