

**LAND NORTH WEST OF
SOUTHWATER, HORSHAM**

**ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT
VOLUME II, APPENDIX 7.2: HISTORIC
BARNs ASSESSMENT, GREAT HOUSE
FARMHOUSE, SOUTHWATER**

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Historic Barns Assessment, Great House Farmhouse, Southwater

Land North-West of Southwater, Horsham

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Executive Summary

This Built Heritage Assessment provides an overview of the pertinent issues relating to built heritage interest of the small group of agricultural barn buildings associated with the Grade II* listed Great House Farmhouse, in respect of Proposed Development of Land North-West of Southwater, Horsham ('the Site').

The document is the result of a process of extensive pre-application engagement, multi-disciplinary teamwork, and collaborative design review. The Berkeley team have been working collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority, Horsham District Council ("the Council"), and key stakeholders in an iterative process since 2022, towards the submission of an Outline Planning Application ('OPA') in 2026, for landscape and heritage-led mixed-use development of the wider Masterplan Site. The proposal will provide a mix of homes including affordable homes to respond to local needs.

Advice, guidance and feedback from the Council, and Historic England has been carefully considered and positively implemented in the new 2026 Masterplan proposal. The Council are advised on Grade I and II* listed building matters by Historic England's Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas - Development Advice (East and West Sussex), and their advice specifically relates to the Grade II* listed Great House Farmhouse and Dining Hall and Water Tower at Christ's Hospital School. As the barns at Great House Farm have a group value alongside the listed Farmhouse and stand within the Site, they have been subject to their own Historic Building Assessment. This report should also be read alongside the Built Heritage Assessment for the wider Masterplan Site (RPS TT, January 2026).

This document forms an updated and completely revised Built Heritage Assessment of the barns complex, building upon work initially carried out by RPS in 2022 but now significantly altered and updated in accordance with the new Masterplan and current industry standards and guidance.

The importance of the Grade II* listed Great House Farmhouse and its rural, medieval landscape setting is at the forefront of the design thinking for the 2026 submission; however, this does not detract from or diminish the value and significance of the other listed and locally listed buildings and structures that are equally considered, both individually and with regard to their group value. It is noted that the rural, medieval landscape setting of the Farmhouse, and other isolated designated heritage assets locally, is a key feature covered by the listings, and whilst 'setting' is not a heritage designation of itself it does contribute to the significance of heritage assets and forms a key part of the reasons for designation. As development will introduce built form into a previously rural greenfield site, it is evident that the Proposed Development does represent heritage harm, particularly with regard to the setting of heritage assets.

Based on current evidence, this Historic Barns Assessment concludes that whilst there are no direct physical impacts to Great House Farmhouse, there is physical impact to the barns group and setting, but this can be balanced and ameliorated by sympathetic design and a range of bespoke mitigation measures. The 2026 Proposed Development actively reduces, avoids and minimises heritage harm, through restoration and repair of the barns and by removing modern elements, and by ensuring their return to a viable use from their current state of dereliction and dilapidation.

This collaborative approach has resulted in recent advice from Historic England recommending to the Council that heritage harm to the barns group has now been reduced to a level '*just below the mid-level*' of less than substantial harm, as required by the NPPF 2024. Additionally, the proposal also delivers a range of public benefits across the wider Masterplan area and at the barns, which the project team believe further balance and ameliorate heritage harm, and these will be designed in consultation with the Council, Historic England and other key stakeholders at a later stage.

This document is intended to provide a clear evidence-base to assist the LPA in the decision-making process and in carrying out their statutory duties towards designated and non-designated heritage assets of built heritage significance, as well as Historic England's statutory remit towards Grade II* listed buildings, as required by the NPPF (2024) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The 2026 Masterplan design is heritage- and landscape-led and aims to celebrate the benefits that the above- and below-ground historic environment and natural and human-made landscape brings to the scheme. It aims to correctly identify levels of harm, and ameliorate perceived harm, in accordance with the NPPF and national standards and guidance. In response to the informed responses and suggestions, key design changes have taken place since 2022, and these are summarised below.

The principal changes are:

- A reduction in the quantum of development. Reducing the number of new homes by one third; from 1,500 to 1,000 dwellings.
- Removing all development to the south of Great House Farmhouse and its agricultural complex, thus removing any sense of 'encirclement' and leaving an open, functional, and visual relationship with the landscape to the south and east that would also consider the dispersed nature of the wider Wealden settlement pattern (including areas further away such as the hamlet of Bonfire Hill).
- The Council and Historic England noted that the medieval landscape setting of the farmhouse is one of the reasons given for its listing at Grade II*. This advice has been followed, and further advice and workshops have taken place in 2025.
- The key change is complete re-design of the access road to have a farm track like nature adjacent to the Farmhouse and Barns. It will not have vehicle access but be a tertiary road for pedestrians and bicycles solely, with access to the Farmhouse. This major change is a key factor in reducing harm to the setting of the listed building and the barns complex. The Movement Parameter Plan shows the layout of road systems across the Site (see planning application parameter plans).
- The 2026 proposal aims to go further on public engagement and delivering public benefits in relation to heritage. It now formulates an on-site interpretation strategy, which will include a new viable community use for the Barns area
- Delivery of the '*clear heritage benefit*' identified by the Council and Historic England in 2022 to the barns group by removal of modern industrial elements, sensitive restoration and finding new, authentic uses especially for Barns A-C. The design of which would be informed by Historic England's Farmstead Guidance. This is recognised as beneficial in heritage terms for both the non-designated assets and for Great House Farm.

The OPA seeks the principle of development in relation to the redevelopment of the barns area, with further details to be provided at a later stage. It is evident that the barns complex lies within the immediate setting of Great House Farmhouse and has a group value with the Farmhouse, sharing its agricultural purpose.

The barns structures are ancillary to Great House Farmhouse but are directly associated with the Grade II* listed farmhouse, sharing an authentic agricultural function. They have historically been within the same legal title but are no longer. The barns are separate and part of the close setting, but they do not meet all the tests for curtilage listing. Whilst they share a function and in part date, they are utilitarian farm buildings as seen at thousands of sites across the UK and have a lower heritage value and significance. With regard to form and fabric they are not really 'special' in the way that the Farmhouse can be appreciated although they do contribute positively to the setting. Barns A, B and C are 'non-designated heritage assets' in recognition of their date, similar purpose and historic contribution to the setting of the listed Farmhouse.

This Built Heritage Assessment relates solely to built heritage matters for the barns group. Archaeology is addressed in a standalone Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment Report prepared by RPS TT. A separate 'Built Heritage Assessment' for the wider Site dated 9th January 2026 has also been prepared by RPS TT. These two reports replace all earlier iterations of Built Heritage Assessment, work by RPS TT for the Site, including a series of interim technical summaries since 2022.

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Appendix A Figures: Historic Mapping (Figures 1 to 12) and Aerial Photographs (Figures 13 to 17)

Appendix B Photographs (Figures 18 to 27).

Appendix C Email Letter from Historic England concerning Built Heritage Matters, 8th December 2025.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A version of this report was originally prepared on behalf of Berkeley Homes (Southern) in 2022. This report has been compiled for Berkeley Strategic Land Ltd ('Berkeley') in relation to a complex of barns associated with Great House Farmhouse, a Grade II* listed building located to the west of Southwater. This 2026 document forms a completely revised Historic Barns Assessment, significantly altered and updated in accordance with the new 2026 Masterplan and current industry standards and guidance.
- 1.2 The document is intended to provide a clear evidence-base to assist the Local Planning Authority, Horsham District Council ('the Council') in the decision-making process and in carrying out their statutory duties towards designated and non-designated heritage assets of built heritage significance, as well as Historic England's statutory remit towards Grade II* listed buildings, as required by the NPPF (2024) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 1.3 Advice, guidance and feedback from of the Council, and Historic England has been carefully considered and positively implemented in the new 2026 Masterplan proposal. The Council are advised on Grade I and II* listed building matters by Historic England's Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas - Development Advice (East and West Sussex), and their advice specifically relates to the Grade II* listed Great House Farmhouse and Dining Hall and Water Tower at Christ's Hospital School. The Inspector's advice has also been given for the barns group because of their proximity to the Farmhouse and with regard to the group value of this agricultural complex (Appendix C).
- 1.4 The report provides factual research to inform discussions with the Council about whether they might consider any of the barns to be curtilage listed, i.e. within the curtilage of Great House Farmhouse.
- 1.5 Determining the exact curtilage of any building is a complex question and whilst the courts have considered the precise extent of curtilage on many occasions, it is not possible to provide a definitive assessment on the extent of curtilage and curtilage listing, because much will depend upon the facts of the individual case. Any findings within this report represent a reasoned and reasonable professional opinion that may be disputed by the Council, or other party and it is recommended that legal advice be sought before proceeding on any course of action based solely on its conclusions.
- 1.6 The importance of the Grade II* listed Great House Farmhouse and its rural, medieval landscape setting is at the forefront of the design thinking for the 2026 Masterplan submission. It is noted that the rural, medieval landscape setting of the Grade II* listed Great House Farmhouse and other isolated local designated heritage assets is a key feature covered by the listings, and whilst 'setting' is not a heritage designation of itself it does contribute to the significance of heritage assets and forms a key part of the reasons for designation. As development will introduce built form into a previously rural greenfield site, it is evident that the Proposed Development does represent heritage harm, particularly with regard to the setting of these assets.
- 1.7 It is evident that the barns complex lie within the immediate setting of Great House Farmhouse and have a group value with the Farmhouse, sharing its agricultural purpose (Figures 1 and 2).
- 1.8 The barns structures are ancillary to Great House Farmhouse but are directly associated with the Grade II* listed farmhouse, sharing an authentic agricultural function. They have historically been within the same legal title but are no longer. The barns are separate and part of the close setting, but they do not meet all the tests for curtilage listing. Whilst they share a function and in part date, they are utilitarian farm buildings as seen at thousands of sites across the UK and have a lower heritage value and significance. With regard to form and fabric they are not really 'special' in the way that the Farmhouse can be appreciated although they do contribute positively to the setting. Barns A, B and C are 'non-designated heritage assets' in recognition of their date, similar purpose and historic contribution to the setting of the listed Farmhouse.

2 Planning Context

- 2.1 The group of barns which form the subject of this assessment is located within the Site known as Land North-West of Southwater, Horsham. The boundary of this Site entirely surrounds Great House Farmhouse, but the listed building and its domestic grounds are excluded whilst the barns complex lies just within the Site red-line (Figure 1).
- 2.2 The statutory requirements and national and local policy provide a clear framework for the consideration of development proposals that affect the historic built environment. Information on these matters is detailed in the accompanying Built Heritage Assessment by RPS TT and is not repeated here. Information on matters of listed buildings and curtilage legislation is discussed in Section 3.
- 2.3 The 2026 Masterplan proposals for the Site seek to redevelop the group of barns, bringing elements back into viable use for community purposes. Those elements of the current barns group (Barns A to C) that are identified as having historic or architectural interest will be retained (where possible), whilst those of later date and no heritage interest will be removed. The unsightly modern barn will be removed, and the barns area will include the reuse and re-provision of existing barn type buildings near to Great House Farm.
- 2.4 The Historic England Inspector also noted that although the modern barns are unsightly, they are at least agricultural features and offer some authenticity to the barns group as being a range of agricultural buildings and linked to the Farmhouse and its primary function within an agricultural landscape (Alma Howell, *pers. comm.* December 2025). Any changes to the barns complex must maintain the agricultural feeling of the buildings and not lose this historic context and link to the farmhouse (Appendix C).
- 2.5 Further advice on these matters can be found in a range of guidance documents available from Historic England regarding the management of rural heritage assets, and these include a swathe of Farm Buildings and Traditional Farmsteads guidance documents:
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/rural-heritage/farm-buildings/>.
- 2.6 The key guidance documents relating to Traditional Farmsteads includes (but is not limited to): Farmstead Assessment Framework; Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement - South East region; South East Farmsteads Character Statement and Adapting Traditional Buildings - Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse.
- 2.7 The 2026 illustrative Masterplan proposes restoration of the historic elements of the barns group, which are identified as Barns A, B and C (Figure 2), following Historic Building Recording. It must be noted that when last inspected in November 2025 elements of the barn complex were in an advanced state of dilapidation and had noticeably deteriorated since they were last recorded in 2022. The current proposals are at outline stage and further details will need to be agreed at the reserved matters stage.
- 2.8 The Proposed Development aims to restore Barns A to C where possible and find a viable community use for the historic buildings (Appendix C). The proposed orchard to the northeast of the Barns is also redesigned to form a more natural cluster of trees for screening and to echo the more authentic historic nature of planting across the Site, as scattered assarts set within open fieldscapes.
- 2.9 The main aims for material that will be used within this area will be to reflect on the particular sensitivities and materiality of the area, including the one of Great House Farm, and complement with materials that may include:
- Natural timber claddings.
 - Stone or timber gabled façades.

- Natural and earthy materials at ground level.
- Buildings that are submissive to their natural green environment.
- Modern materials like glass or metal frames which are less dominant.

2.10 More widely still, the extended setting of Great House Farmhouse and the agricultural buildings includes the surrounding fieldscape to the north, west and south, as also highlighted in the advice from Historic England (Appendix C).

2.11 Parts of the surrounding undeveloped land around Great House Farmhouse comprise a relict medieval landscape discussion of this is fully detailed in the Archaeological Desk Based Assessment by RPS (2026).

3 Legislation, Case Law and Guidance

Curtilage Legislation

- 3.1 The relevant legislation in this instance relates to the interpretation of Section 1 (5) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (PLBCA Act 1990), which states that:

In this Act “listed building” means a building which is for the time being included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State under this section and for the purposes of this Act-

- a) *Any object or structure fixed to the building*
- b) *Any object or structure 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, shall be treated as part of the building.*

Case Law

- 3.2 The relevant judgments in determining the extent of curtilage in the context of listed buildings are Attorney General v Calderdale Borough Council (1982) and the House of Lords in Debenhams PLC v Westminster City Council (1987).
- 3.3 Whilst curtilage is not a defined point in law, these cases have helped to establish a three-tier test, which potentially can help to determine the extent of curtilage:
1. The physical layout of the listed building and structure.
 2. Their ownership, past and present, and,
 3. Their use and function, past and present
- 3.4 This does, however, contrast with the subsequent ruling of Morris v Wrexham CBC and the National Assembly (2002), which upheld the position that the date of listing is the sole question, and that the subsequent situation is irrelevant.
- 3.5 These general principles are useful to inform discussions regarding curtilage, but they are not definitive. Every decision will be made on a case-by-case basis since the precise extent of curtilage listing is not a fixed point of law.

Guidance

Historic England Advice Note 10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage (February 2018)

- 3.6 Historic England have issued guidance addressing listed buildings and their curtilage. The advice note gives hypothetical examples to assist in the assessment of the curtilage of listed buildings, based on current legislation and consideration of listed buildings and curtilage in legal cases.
- 3.7 The document makes clear that the curtilage of a building (the principal building) is in general terms any area of land and other buildings that is around and associated with that principal building. The courts have said that there are three key factors to be taken into account in assessing whether a structure or object is within the curtilage of a listed building:
- the physical layout of the listed building and the structure

- their ownership, both historically and at the date of listing; and
- the use or function of the relevant buildings, again both historically and at the date of listing (these tests were first proposed in the Attorney-General ex rel. Sutcliffe and Others v Calderdale BC, 1982, as accepted by Debenhams plc v Westminster CC, 1987)

3.8 The guidance also makes clear that not all buildings will have a curtilage. A town centre building with no garden or yard may have no curtilage whatsoever. With those that do there will be cases where the extent of the curtilage will be clear, such as where there is an obvious garden boundary which has never changed. In other cases, it can be very difficult to distinguish the boundary with confidence.

3.9 The guidance further states that:

We would emphasise that understanding curtilage rests on the particular facts of each case. It will be for the Local Planning Authority and their heritage advisors at Historic England to reach a conclusion as to whether or not buildings are within a particular curtilage, and ultimately a matter for the court to determine if that decision is thought unreasonable.

4 Barns Appraisal

Historic Development

- 4.1 A Site location plan is provided as Figure 1. A layout plan showing and identifying the surviving barns in the present day is provided as Figure 2. A range of historic maps are provided in Appendix A (Figures 3 to 12) as well as aerial photographs (Figures 14 to 17). A series of photographic images of the Site are provided as Appendix B (Figures 18 to 28).
- 4.2 The Site was inspected at various times in 2021-2022 and a Site meeting with Historic England was held on 13th November 2025 and the Inspector, Alma Howell, reviewed the new proposal and walked across the Site with the Berkeley team including the RPS Built Heritage specialist, Gillian King. A further consultation meeting took place between Gillian King and Alma Howell via Teams on 1st December 2025, where the heritage implications of the 2026 proposal were further discussed. As a result, the Inspector issued her advice in the form of a pre-application advice letter dated 8th December 2025. The full text of this letter is shown as Appendix C.
- 4.3 The 1806 Ordnance Survey Drawing (Figure 3) shows Great House Farmhouse labelled as Homeland Farm. Although the base map is regrettably rather fuzzy, it depicts a group of buildings to the south-east of Courtland Wood, indicating it to be a farm of some standing within the local area, but further insight into its exact layout is limited.
- 4.4 The 1844 Horsham Tithe Map (Figure 4) depicts the farmstead in greater detail and allows a clearer understanding of its extent and layout at this time. The map shows that Great House Farmhouse comprised two main ranges and a deep northern bay in the location of the current kitchen (as per updated listing description written in 2012). The immediate grounds include a series of ponds, some of which are no longer visible in the present day. The surrounding farmstead is depicted with a small number of outbuildings, broadly orientated on a north/south axis, concentrated to the south and north of the farmhouse. There are some outlying buildings to the south east in the approximate location of the present-day group of barns, one of which remained partly extant in 2022 (Barn A).
- 4.5 The associated tithe apportionment details provide insight into the ownership and uses of the land Great House Farmhouse falls alongside parcel **1114**, which was owned at this time by Sir Henry Fletcher and tenanted by James Charman. The parcel is described as 'Garden Orchard and Barn'. The immediately surrounding land is recorded under the same ownership and occupancy details, describing the parcels as follows: parcel **1116** to the south east (Barn Plat, pasture), parcel 1076 to the south (Barn Field, arable), parcel **1107** to the north east (Great Meadow, meadow) and parcel **1112** to the west (Rookery Plat, pasture). A full account of the Tithe Apportionment is given in the accompanying Built Heritage Assessment in Section 4.7 (RPS TT 2026).
- 4.5 The 1877 OS map (Figure 5) shows some alteration to the plan of the farmhouse (now named Greathouse Farm), with further changes having taken place to the range of outbuildings. To the south east, away from the main group of outbuildings around the farmhouse, a long structure has been added at a right angle to the south of the larger outlying barn (Barn A). It is depicted with an open front to the east that may represent a shelter-type structure (some of this building may survive as parts of the western walls of Barns B and C, discussed further below). The 1897 OS map (Figure 6) shows a number of new structures added to the immediate north west of this earlier range, running approximately parallel in layout. Land to the south and south east of the earlier range is now shown as an orchard. Closer to the farmhouse, various outbuildings are shown to have been added and removed by this time, along with removal of a large pond to the south.
- 4.6 From 1897 until the 1911 OS map (Figure 7) there were few further changes made to the farmstead, aside from minor additions to the outbuildings and farmhouse. The 1976-77 OS map (Figure 8) shows the farmstead now named as Great House Farm (in which name it has remained the present day). Whilst the group of outbuildings closest to the farmhouse remained broadly unaltered during

this period, the group to the south east had experienced some more considerable changes. New buildings included a new structure to the immediate north of Barn A, as Barn D, and a number of new structures to the south east of the earlier range, comprising Barns E, F and G. A number of new barns had also been added to the south west of the group, which included Barn J. The introduction of some other new barns to the west of this group has by this time blurred the former distinction between the two principal groups of outbuildings, altering the layout of the farmstead (Figure 2).

- 4.7 The 1976-77 OS map (Figure 8) additionally shows that notable changes have been made to the fabric of earlier barns, with the long building to the south of Barn A partly redeveloped to a different footprint as Barns B and C, possibly retaining or reusing some of the original bricks (differences in brickwork support the notion of there being more than one building phase to Barns B and C, which were themselves developed in different stages as suggested by the now partly internalised window of Barn B).
- 4.8 There are few further changes to the farmstead shown on the 1977-78 OS map (Figure 9) or the 1980 OS map (Figure 10). The 1988-1993 OS map (Figure 11) shows some infill of the space between Barns F and G. By this time the orchard use of the land is no longer indicated, and part of the land has been developed as Walnut Cottage.
- 4.9 The 1994-1995 OS map (Figure 12) shows that almost all of the outbuildings in the immediate vicinity of the farmhouse have been demolished, with a large new barn replacing a number of smaller structures to the south of the farmhouse (this barn survives in an altered form to the present day as Barn H). The extent of demolition works around the farmhouse have left the group of outbuildings to the south east as the principal remaining group of barns, although as this review of historic mapping has demonstrated, this group represents only part of the original historic farmstead.
- 4.10 The 2001 Aerial Photograph (Figure 13) shows Barn I now extant, to the east of Barn J. The 2005 and 2012 Aerial Photographs (Figures 14 and 15) show little change to the farmstead, although the infill barn structure between Barns F and G appears to have been removed. The 2018 Aerial Photograph (Figure 16) shows the demolition of some outbuildings between Barns H and the range comprising Barns A, B and C (see Figure 2 for the Barns phasing plan).
- 4.11 The 2021 Aerial Photograph (Figure 17) shows that Barn H has been widened, more than doubling its earlier width. The track approaching the group of barns from the west has been re-routed to the west of Barn H to accommodate the enlarged building. A small outbuilding to the west of Barn C has been demolished (although its footings remain visible on site). The farmstead has since remained broadly unaltered to the present day, although a second site visit is required to support the future outline planning application.

Summary of Significance

- 4.12 The oldest surviving building of the group is Barn A, followed by possible sections of Barns B and C. Barn A has particular interest for the survival of its pre-nineteenth century timber frame (with later alterations) which retains evidential value regarding the structure's construction and evolution. Barns B and C retain a lower degree of interest as later and altered structures, but they retain some modest interest for the agricultural character embodied in their form and materiality (Figure 2).
- 4.13 Clear views of Barns A – C (and therein opportunities to appreciate and understand their varying levels of significance) are currently blocked from the public footpath to the north by the late twentieth century Barn D, with views from the east restricted by Barns E and F (both late twentieth century) and views from the west blocked by Barn H (twenty-first century).
- 4.14 Barns D – J all date from either the late twentieth or twenty-first century. They are broadly functional structures of limited or no architectural interest. Barn E has some modest interest for its pre-cast concrete frame. Barn F is distinctive for its use of redundant lamp posts as part of the roof structure

Barn G is a Dutch-barn type structure of no interest. Barns H, I and J are similarly of no architectural interest.

- 4.15 The group of barns located within the setting of Great House Farmhouse, i.e. the surroundings within which the listed building is experienced and understood. Barns A-C make a variably positive contribution to the setting and significance of the farmhouse by virtue of their agricultural character. Barns D-J do not make a positive contribution to this setting and are broadly neutral features although Barns H, I and J have notably negative effect for their large scale and the way in which they block views towards Great House Farmhouse. The concrete block constructed Barn D additionally impinges on key views westwards along the access track towards the principal elevation of Great House Farmhouse.
- 4.16 The Site visit in 2025 revealed that there had been further dilapidation to the barns group, in comparison to the observations made in May 2022 (Appendix C Figures 18 to 28).

Physical Layout

- 4.17 The extent of the present-day domestic gardens and grounds of Great House Farmhouse appears to have been established at some point after the 1988-1993 OS map (Figure 9) and by the time of the 1994-1995 OS map (Figure 12). By this time most of the original group of barns and outbuildings immediately surrounding the farmhouse had been removed, leaving the current group of barns to the south east as the sole remnants of the farmstead. Whilst historically forming part of the overall farmstead, this group has always maintained a degree of separation from Great House Farmhouse, formerly due to the cluster of outbuildings and ponds which immediately surrounded the farmhouse and latterly by the defined limits of the domestic gardens, comprising a mixture of brick walls, timber fencing, ponds and ditches.
- 4.18 Most of the barns are arranged loosely parallel to one another to the south of the farm access lane that approaches from the east. Almost all of the barns are positioned with a north east/south west axis, aside from two outlying structures to the south west (Barns I and J) that have an east/west alignment (Figure 2).
- 4.19 The physical layout of the group of barns and their spatial relationship with Great House Farmhouse in the present day is illustrated in Figure 2, which also identifies the broad period of construction for each structure. The barns are listed below in Table 1, along with a summary of their age and interest. Supporting photographs are provided in Appendix B Figures 18 to 28.

Table 1: Summary of Barns

Barn Reference	Age	Summary
A	Pre-nineteenth century, with twentieth century alterations	Timber framed barn, with later alterations, shown to be extant on the 1844 Tithe Map (as a possibly larger structure which was later shortened), of historic and architectural interest, physically connected to Barn B with internal access, raised infill walkway between Barn A and Barn D, abutting historic fabric.
B	Possible late nineteenth century, with twentieth century alterations	Roof structure of machine cut timbers and metal tie rods, western wall may contain some fabric from an earlier building first shown on the 1877 OS map, barn has some limited interest for its agricultural character, physically connected to Barns A and C with internal access to both.

C	Possible late nineteenth century, with twentieth century alterations	May contain some fabric from an earlier building first shown on the 1877 OS map, barn has some limited interest for its agricultural character, physically connected to Barn B with internal access.
D	Late twentieth century	First shown on 1976-1977 OS map, aesthetically poor building of concrete breeze block construction, abuts and blocks views of Barn A, raised infill walkway between Barn A and Barn D, abutting historic fabric.
E	Late twentieth century	First shown on 1976-1977 OS map, open sided pre-cast concrete frame, abuts and restricts views of Barns A, B and C along their eastern elevations.
F	Late twentieth century	First shown on 1976-1977 OS map, aesthetically poor building, position blocks views towards Barn A when looking westwards along the access track.
G	Late twentieth century	First shown on 1976-1977 OS map, modest Dutch barn design.
H	Twenty-first century	Large, aesthetically poor building close to Great House Farmhouse, dominating the historic building with its massing, Barn H blocks views towards Great House Farmhouse from the Downs Link.
I	Late twentieth century	First shown on 2001 Aerial Photograph, aesthetically poor structure, blocks views towards Great House Farmhouse from the Downs Link.
J	Late twentieth century	First shown on 1976-1977 OS map, aesthetically poor structure, blocking views towards Great House Farmhouse from the Downs Link.

Ownership (Past and Present)

- 4.20 The group of barns and Great House Farmhouse have historically fallen within the same ownership, as indicated on the tithe mapping and the associated apportionment details. In addition to this, Great House Farm (and its group of barns) was tenanted by the Charman family for over two hundred years.
- 4.21 In recent years the barns and farmhouse have been owned by The Fletcher Trust. They existed under one title until 2014, when ownership of Great House Farmhouse was separated from the barns and transferred to a separate entity within the Trust.

Use and Function (Past and Present)

- 4.21 Great House Farmhouse historically functioned as an active farmhouse at the heart of the farmstead, which included the group of surviving barns, surrounded by its farmland.
- 4.22 Whilst the farmhouse no longer fulfils an active role as part of the remaining farmstead, some of the barns continue to be used for some limited agriculture-related activities, including the stalling of cattle (Barn H) and storage for hay bales (Barns G and J and Vehicles (Barn I)).

- 4.23 This information demonstrates that whilst there are no longer direct functional links between the group of barns and Great House Farmhouse (i.e. as part of an active farmstead with resident farmer), there has historically been a clear and long-standing pattern of linked usage which prevailed up until the twenty-first century.

Position at the Date of Listing

- 4.24 Great House Farmhouse was first listed at Grade II on 27 November 1980, in recognition of its special historic and architectural interest. At this point in time the barns and Great House Farmhouse were under the same ownership, in active use as part of a functioning farmstead.
- 4.25 Whilst Barn A, and possibly Barns B and C, retain varying degrees of historic fabric and interest, Barns D-H, were all built in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Barns A-G were all extant when Great House Farmhouse was listed in 1980. Barns H, I and J post-date the listing.
- 4.26 The listed building was upgraded to Grade II* and the statutory listing description updated on 20 February 2012. The listing description refers to the group of barns as follows.
- The current farm buildings, which date from the late C17 or early C18 to the present, lie to the south-east of the house, outside the area enclosed by ponds and ditches. The earliest of these, the barn is one of a small group of buildings marked on the Tithe Map... A wall and hedge line to the west and south of the house indicate the extent of the enclosure.*
- 4.27 This description specifically notes the existence of Barn A as a historic part of the listed building's surroundings. It also notes the nature of the current boundary between Great Farmhouse and the group of barns.
- 4.28 There have been no upgrades to the list description since February 2012. Some deterioration of the barns has taken place, and it was evident during the site visit in November 2025 that this was worse than recorded in May 2022.
- 4.29 Historic Building Recording will be required of the existing barns to determine the current state of the fabric and to inform options for refurbishment, repair or replacement.

5 Discussion

- 5.1 This assessment is intended for the specific purpose of informing potential works affecting the group of barns as part of the forthcoming 2026 outline planning application for Land North-West of Southwater. The barns are mentioned in the list description for Great House Farmhouse (List Entry 128602) but they are not included in the listing alongside the Farmhouse. The historic contribution that the barns make to Great House Farmhouse is recognised and provided for in the 2026 Masterplan proposals.
- 5.2 The question over curtilage in relation to listed building provisions remains a grey area legally and is a complex issue. It should be noted that the extent of listing (and curtilage listing) is not a settled point of law and so it is recommended that a legal opinion be sought before proceeding on a course of action based on any findings of this report alone.
- 5.3 The first consideration is the status of the barns under the definition provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:
- i) Are any of the barns listed by virtue of being fixed to a listed building?
 - ii) If the answer to (a) is 'no' then are any of the barns listed by virtue of curtilage?
- 5.4 As part of this assessment, consideration has additionally been given to relevant judgments in determining the extent of curtilage in the context of listed buildings, including Attorney General v Calderdale Borough Council (1982) and the House of Lords in Debenhams PLC v Westminster City Council (1987).
- 5.5 These cases helped establish a three-tier test, which potentially can help to determine the extent of curtilage:
- The physical layout of the listed building and structure
 - Their ownership, past and present, and,
 - Their use and function, past and present.
- 5.6 This does, however, contrast with the subsequent ruling of Morris v Wrexham CBC and the National Assembly (2002), which upheld the position that the date of listing is the sole question, and that the subsequent situation is irrelevant. As such, consideration has also been given to the position at the date of listing for Great House Farmhouse in 1980.
- 5.7 Whether further updates are relevant with regards to curtilage matters since 2022 requires review for 2025.

Barns A, B and C

- 5.8 In answer to the first question (i) none of these barn buildings are physically linked or attached to the principal listed building of Great House Farmhouse. The barns would therefore not appear to form part of the listed building as per criterion (i) of the PLBCA Act 1990 (Figure 2).
- 5.8 In answer to the second question (ii) three of the barns (A, B and C) have been shown to have been extant pre-1948 (in the case of Barns B and C only parts of the building may have been extant). It has been demonstrated in Section 4 of this report that these barns may be regarded as forming part of the land of Great House Farmhouse, with reference to all of the three tests established via the relevant judgments (the physical layout, ownership (past and present) and use (past and present)). As such it is considered that Barns A, B and C may be seen to fulfil criterion b) of the PLBCA Act 1990 and, if the Council agree with this assertion, should be treated as being part of the listed building. Listed building consent would therefore be required for any works to their fabric that may affect the character

of the listed building as a building of special architectural or historic interest or historic interest which it possesses.

- 5.9 Barn A retains architectural and historic interest in its own right. However, Barns B and C have been largely rebuilt and therefore possess limited architectural and historic interest in their own right. The barns additionally contribute positively to the setting of Great House Farmhouse as surviving elements of its much-altered farmstead that maintain the agricultural character of its historic surroundings.

Barns D, E, F, G, H, I and J

- 5.10 In answer to the first question (i) none of these barns (Barns D-J) are physically linked or attached to the principal listed building of Great House Farmhouse. The barns would therefore not appear to form part of the listed building as per criterion (i) of the PLBCA Act 1990.
- 5.11 Barns D-J were all constructed after 1948, with two other barns (Barns H and I) constructed after the date at which Great House Farmhouse was listed in 1980. As such, it is likely that these barns would not be regarded as being curtilage listed under Section 1 (5) of the PLBCA Act 1990 and listed building consent would not be required for works to their fabric or for their demolition (subject to building control requirements).
- 5.12 The above position notwithstanding, it is necessary to consider the three identified judgements, since the extent of curtilage has relevance beyond the specific terms of the PLBCA Act 1990 and in other circumstances, or for particular types of development, Barns D - J may still be regarded as falling within the curtilage of Great House Farmhouse in its broadest sense.
- 5.13 With regard to the first test (physical layout of the listed building and barns) Barns D - J are located to the south east of Great House Farmhouse. Early mapping indicates that the farmstead's principal group of barns and outbuildings were originally focused immediately on the farmhouse, with only a few outlying buildings in the location of the present-day group of barns. Over the following century this secondary group of barns was expanded with multiple additional structures introduced. Between the 1988-1993 OS map (Figure 11) and the 1994-1995 OS map (Figure 12) the group of outbuildings in the immediate vicinity of the farmhouse were demolished, leaving a clear distinction between the newly enclosed domestic grounds of the farmhouse and the barns to the south east as part of the remaining farmstead. In the present day the group of barns maintain, to varying degrees, a visual and spatial relationship with the principal listed building.
- 5.14 With regard to the second test (ownership, past and present) it has been demonstrated that there was a clear and long-standing pattern of ownership between Barns D - J and Great House Farmhouse. This arrangement prevailed until 2014, when ownership of the farmhouse was separated from the barns and transferred to a separate entity within The Fletcher Trust.
- 5.15 With regard to the third test (use and function, past and present) Barns D - J have existed throughout their recorded history in agricultural use. They have been directly associated with the farming activities of Great House Farmhouse, with a range of buildings built, demolished and replaced to meet changing needs of the farmstead and in line with modernised farming practices. All of the surviving barns have served as ancillary structures to the farmhouse insofar that they were related to associated agricultural activities, rather than the specifically domestic functions of the farmhouse.
- 5.16 In the present-day Great House Farmhouse exists solely in residential tenanted use, although it was currently untenanted while some repairs were being undertaken in 2022. Whilst there are no longer direct functional links between Barns D - J and Great House Farmhouse, there has historically been a clear and long-standing pattern of linked usage which prevailed until the early twenty-first century.
- 5.17 Having considered the three tests (the physical layout, ownership (past and present) and use (past and present)) it would appear that Barns D - J could be regarded as being located within the curtilage of Great House Farmhouse according to its broadest interpretation, i.e. relating to non-heritage matters lying outside of the terms of Section 1 (5) of the PLBCA Act 1990.

- 5.18 For the *specific* purposes of informing the 2026 Masterplan relating to Land North-West of Southwater, however, the post-1948 date of Barns D - J would indicate that they should not be regarded as forming part of Great House Farmhouse as the principal listed building and would not therefore be considered to be “curtilage listed”. If the Council agree with this position, then listed building consent would not be required for works to their fabric or for their demolition (subject to building control requirements).
- 5.19 It has additionally been demonstrated that some of the barns in this group are notably negative features within the setting of Great House Farmhouse, including Barns H, I and J. This was confirmed in an advice letter from Historic England in 2022. This negative contribution arises from their size and proximity where they block views towards the principal listed building and restrict opportunities for a viewer to appreciate its architectural and historic interest. The redevelopment of the barns area therefore presents important opportunities to enhance the setting of the principal listed building of Great House Farmhouse.

Next Steps

- 5.20 As part of ongoing 2026 outline planning application submission, it is hoped that the above position could be formally agreed with the Council, to inform the on-going design development stages of the masterplan for Land North-West of Southwater. Crucially, it is anticipated that such an agreement would establish any requirements for listed building consent in association with the potential redevelopment of the barns area.
- 5.21 As noted above a decision on this point was not fully concluded in 2022, although the Conservation Officer did refer to the barns as ‘non-designated assets’ suggesting that they were not curtilage listed but separate to the listed building, although recognising their historic contribution to the setting.
- 5.22 The recent advice from Historic England (Appendix C) also does not specifically address this point but perhaps by this absence acknowledges them to be ancillary non-designated buildings of similar purpose and value, but not curtilage listed elements of the main Farmhouse.
- 5.23 The advice set out in the Historic England letter will be followed including:
- ‘Redesigning the parcels to the north-east of the farmhouse to provide an enlarged green open space and to safeguard key views.’*
- ‘Creating a more informal arrangement for the proposed new barns that better reflects the historic layout.’*
- ‘We [Historic England] have also prepared a series of guidance documents relating to Traditional Farmsteads that includes: Farmstead Assessment Framework; Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement - South East region; South East Farmsteads Character Statement and Adapting Traditional Buildings - Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse.’*
- ‘We advise that the layout of the proposed orchard barn area should reflect historic mapping and the design and character of new buildings in this character area should reflect the advice in the above farmstead guidance.’*
- ‘In order to effectively retain a semblance of the former rural setting, it is crucial the roads are created to be as rural in character as possible; a network of connected open spaces is provided near to the farmhouse; soft landscapes edges rather than hard edges and rural type fencing are provided around the housing parcels that are in close proximity to Great House Farmhouse. In addition, floodlighting should be avoided on the sport pitches near to the farmhouse.’*
- ‘Finally, you should look for opportunities to better reveal the significance of Great House Farmhouse in line with paragraph 219 of the NPPF. Restoration of the front elevation of the Farmhouse and its repair would deliver an enhancement to the farmhouse’s appearance. This could also deliver a heritage benefit that would significantly help offset some of the harm caused by the proposed development.’ (Appendix C).*

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The report provides factual research to inform discussions with the Council about whether they might consider any of the barns to fall within the curtilage of Great House Farmhouse. A final decision on this point was not confirmed in 2022 and is required to determine whether an application for listed building consent may also be required.
- 6.2 It is emphasised, however, that determining the exact curtilage of any building is a complex question and whilst the courts have considered the precise extent of curtilage on many occasions, it is not possible to provide a definitive assessment on the extent of curtilage and curtilage listing, because much will depend upon the facts of the individual case.
- 6.3 With reference to Section 1a (5) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the following point is noted:
- None of the barns in the group are fixed to, or share any physical connection with, the principal listed building of Great House Farmhouse.
- 6.4 With reference to Section 1b (5) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- Barns A, B and C, are likely to be regarded as forming part of the land and have been so since before 1 July 1948.
- 6.5 As such it is considered that Barns A, B and C may be seen to fulfil criterion b) of the PLBCA Act 1990 and, if the Council concur with this assertion, these barns should be treated as being part of the listed building. Listed building consent would therefore be required for any works to their fabric which may affect the character of the listed building as a building of special architectural or historic interest or historic interest which it possesses.
- 6.6 Barns D - J were all constructed after 1948, with two of the barns (Barns H and I) constructed after the date at which Great House Farmhouse was listed in 1980. As such, it is likely that Barns D – J would not be regarded as being curtilage listed under Section 1 (5) of the PLBCA Act 1990 and listed building consent would not be required for works to their fabric or for their demolition (subject to building control requirements).
- 6.7 With regards to assessing whether Barns D – J could be regarded as falling within the curtilage of Great House Farmhouse in the broadest sense of curtilage (i.e. beyond the terms of the PLBCA Act 1990), the following factors have been considered:
1. The physical layout of the listed building and structure;
 2. Their ownership, past and present, and,
 3. Their use and function, past and present
- 6.9 Based on an understanding of the physical layout, ownership (past and present) and use (past and present) it would appear that Barns D - J could be regarded as being located within the curtilage of Great House Farmhouse according to its broadest interpretation, i.e. relating to non-heritage matters lying outside of the terms of Section 1 (5) of the PLBCA Act 1990.
- 6.10 For the *specific* purposes of pre-application discussions relating to Land North West of Southwater, the post-1948 date of Barns D - J would indicate that they should not be regarded as forming part of Great House Farmhouse as the principal listed building and would not therefore be considered to be “curtilage listed”.
- 6.11 The research presented in this report has demonstrated that Barn A retains fabric of architectural and historic interest. Barns B and C have been significantly altered and retain only a modest degree of interest in their own right. Barns A, B and C contribute positively to the setting of Great House Farmhouse as surviving elements of its much-altered farmstead, maintaining the agricultural character of the listed building’s surroundings.

- 6.12 None of the barns (Barns D – J) have historic or architectural interest in their own right, nor do they contribute positively to the setting of Great House Farmhouse. In the case of Barns H, I and J, the barns are notably negative features for the way in which they restrict views towards the listed building by virtue of their proximity and massing.
- 6.13 The 2026 Masterplan for Land North-West of Southwater seeks to partially redevelop the group of barns, retaining those barns identified as having historic or architectural interest whilst removing those of later date and no interest. The removal of modern, overly large barn structures close to Great House Farmhouse would open up new views of the listed building, delivering important heritage benefits.
- 6.14 It is intended that the retained historic barns would be subject to heritage-led design to be sensitive to the setting of Great House Farmhouse and would be the subject of a future detailed reserved matters planning application (supported with detailed pre-application discussions).
- 6.15 The OPA seeks to establish the principle of development in relation to the redevelopment of the barns area. It is evident that the barns complex lies within the immediate setting of Great House Farmhouse and has a group value with the Farmhouse, sharing its agricultural purpose.
- 6.16 The barns structures are ancillary to Great House Farmhouse but are directly associated with the Grade II* listed farmhouse, sharing an authentic agricultural function. They have historically been within the same legal title but are no longer. The barns are separate and part of the close setting, but they do not meet all the tests for curtilage listing. Whilst they share a function and in part date, they are utilitarian farm buildings as seen at thousands of sites across the UK and have only a modest heritage value and significance. With regard to form and fabric they are not really 'special' in the way that the Farmhouse can be appreciated, although they do contribute positively to the setting. Barns A, B and C are 'non-designated heritage assets' in recognition of their date, similar purpose and historic contribution to the setting of the listed Farmhouse.

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Appendices

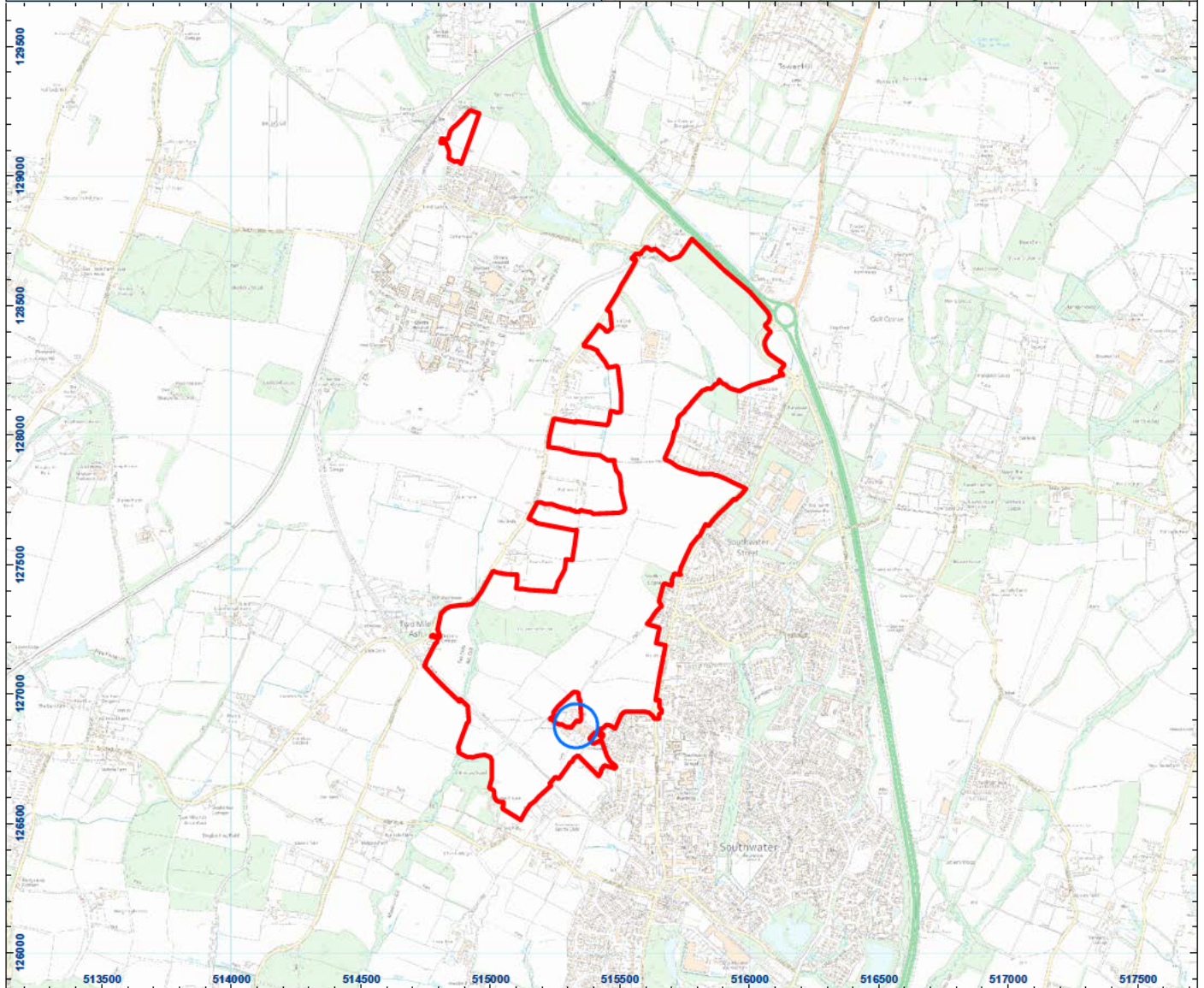
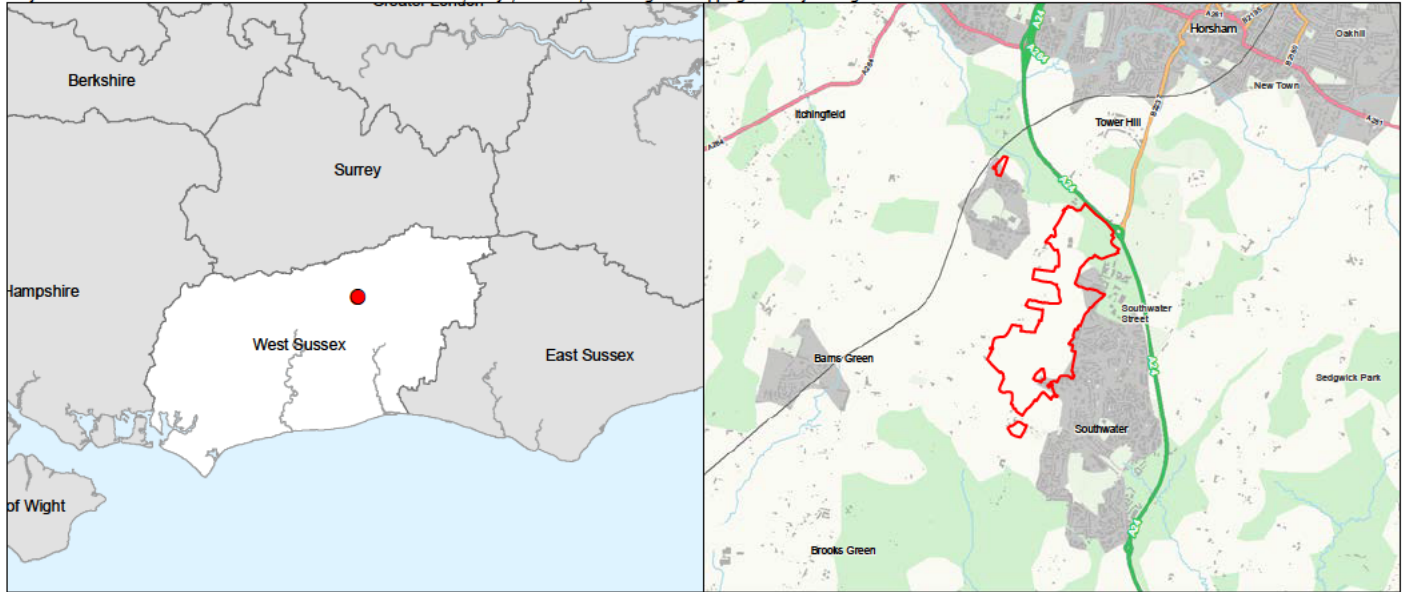
Appendix A



Site Location (Figure 1)

Historic Phasing of the Barns (Figure 2)

Historic Mapping (Figures 3 to 12)

Aerial Photographs (Figures 13 to 17)



-  Site Boundary
-  Location of the Barns



0 100200m
Scale at A4: 1:25,000



Figure 1
Site Location



- Legend
- Great House Farm
 - Late 17th/ Early 18th Century
 - Possible 19th Century fabric within twentieth century remodelling works
 - Late 20th Century
 - 21st Century

N
Not to Scale:
illustrative Only



Figure 2
Historic Phasing Plan and
January 2026 Barns Assessment
at Great House Farm

S:\Archaeology\Archaeology_Jobs\794-PLN-HER-1000-1999\01835 - North Southwater\CH01590 - North Southwater\Graphics\CAD\Appendix B Phasing Plan.dwg

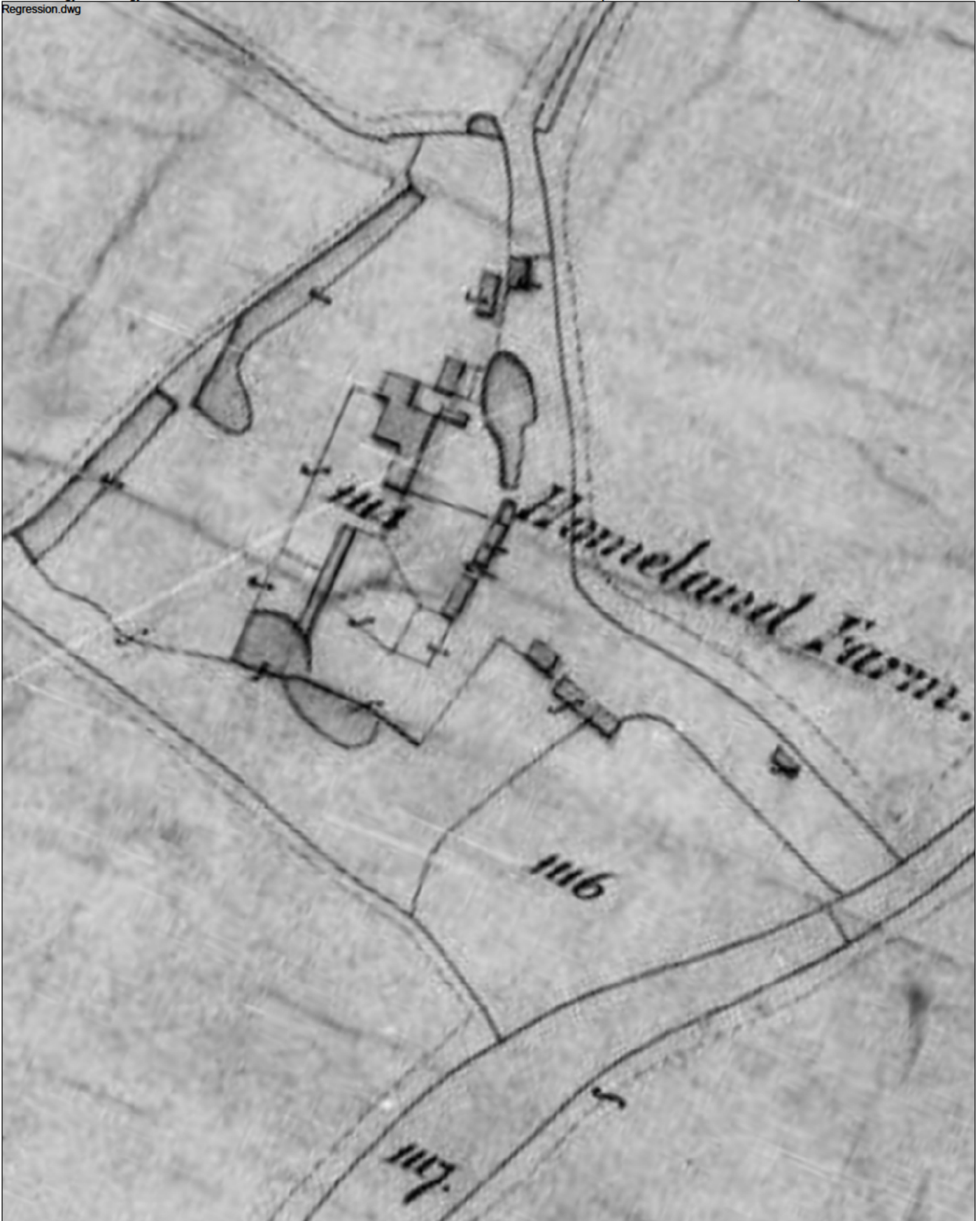


Not to Scale
Illustrative Only



Figure 3

1806 Ordnance Survey Drawing

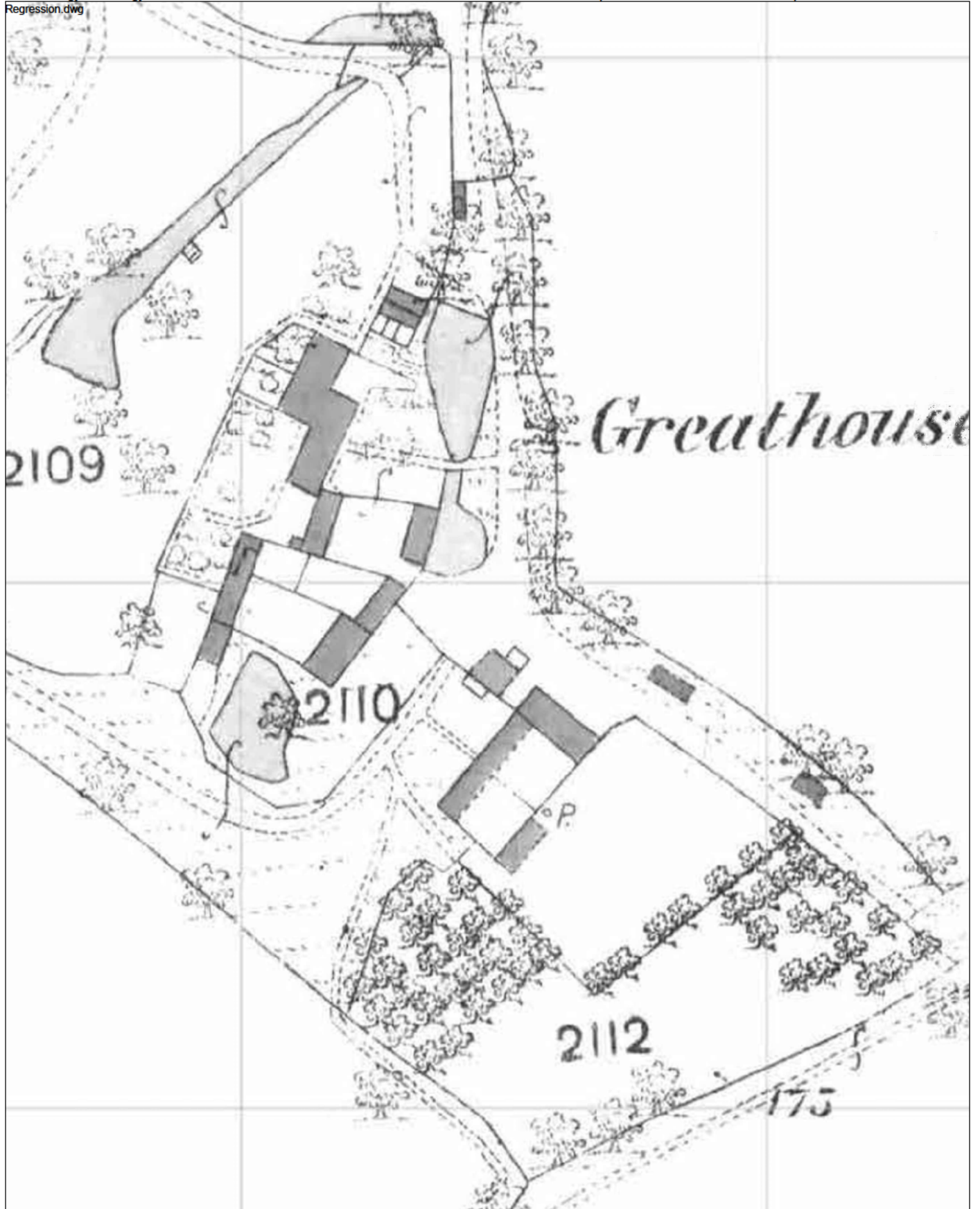


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Scale at A4: 1:1,250



Figure 4

1844 Horsham Tithe Map

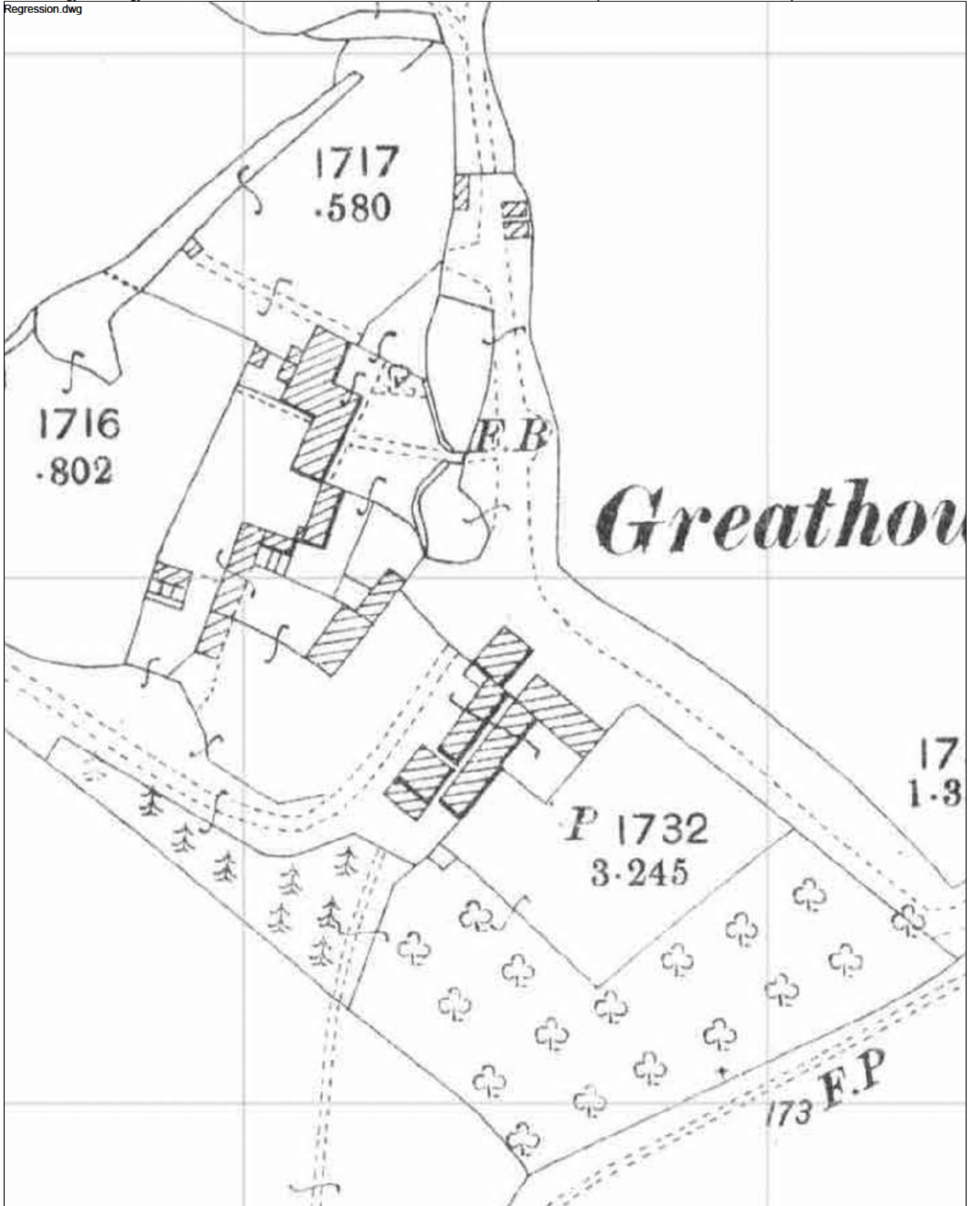


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Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 5

1877 Ordnance Survey Map

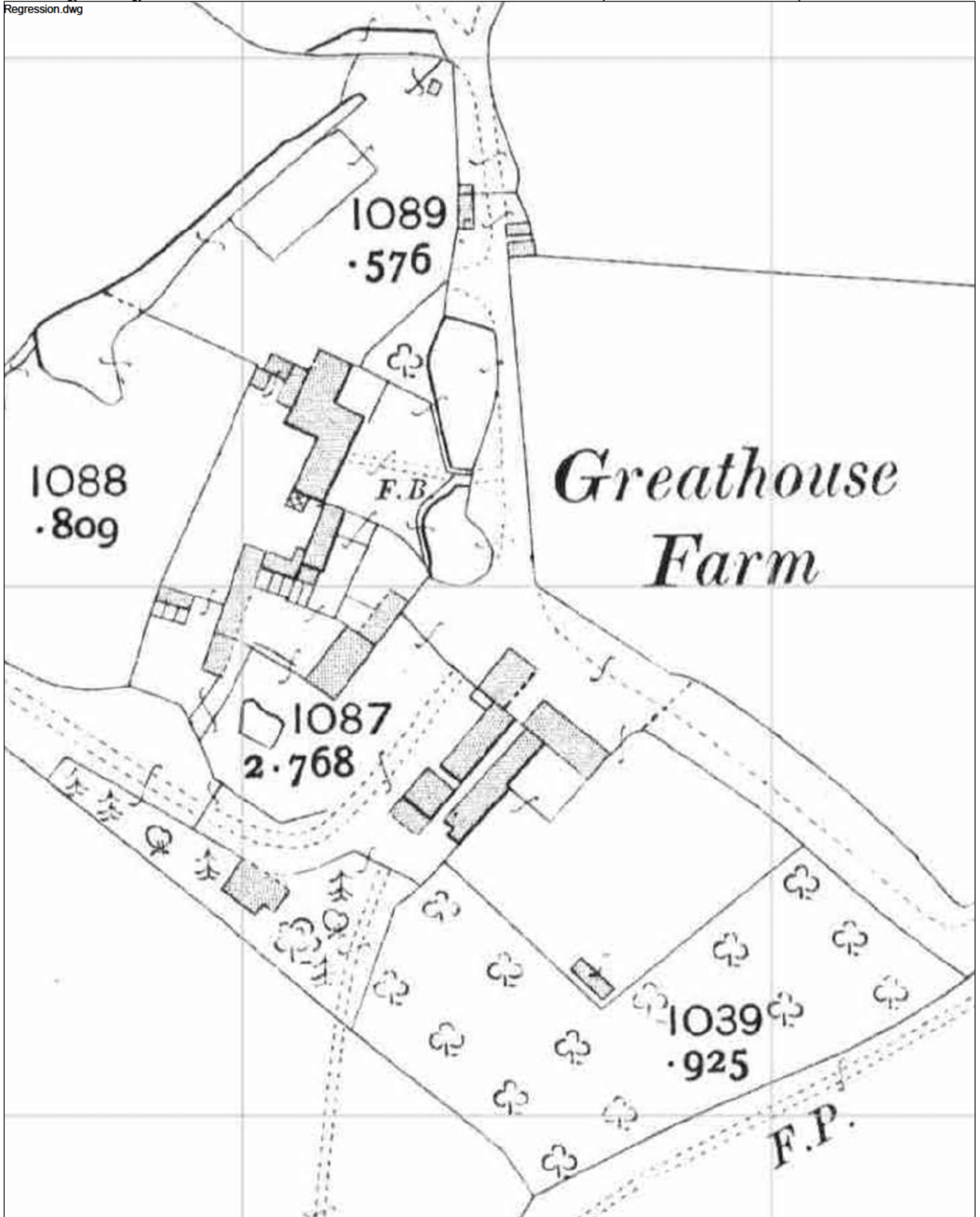


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Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 6

1897 Ordnance Survey Map

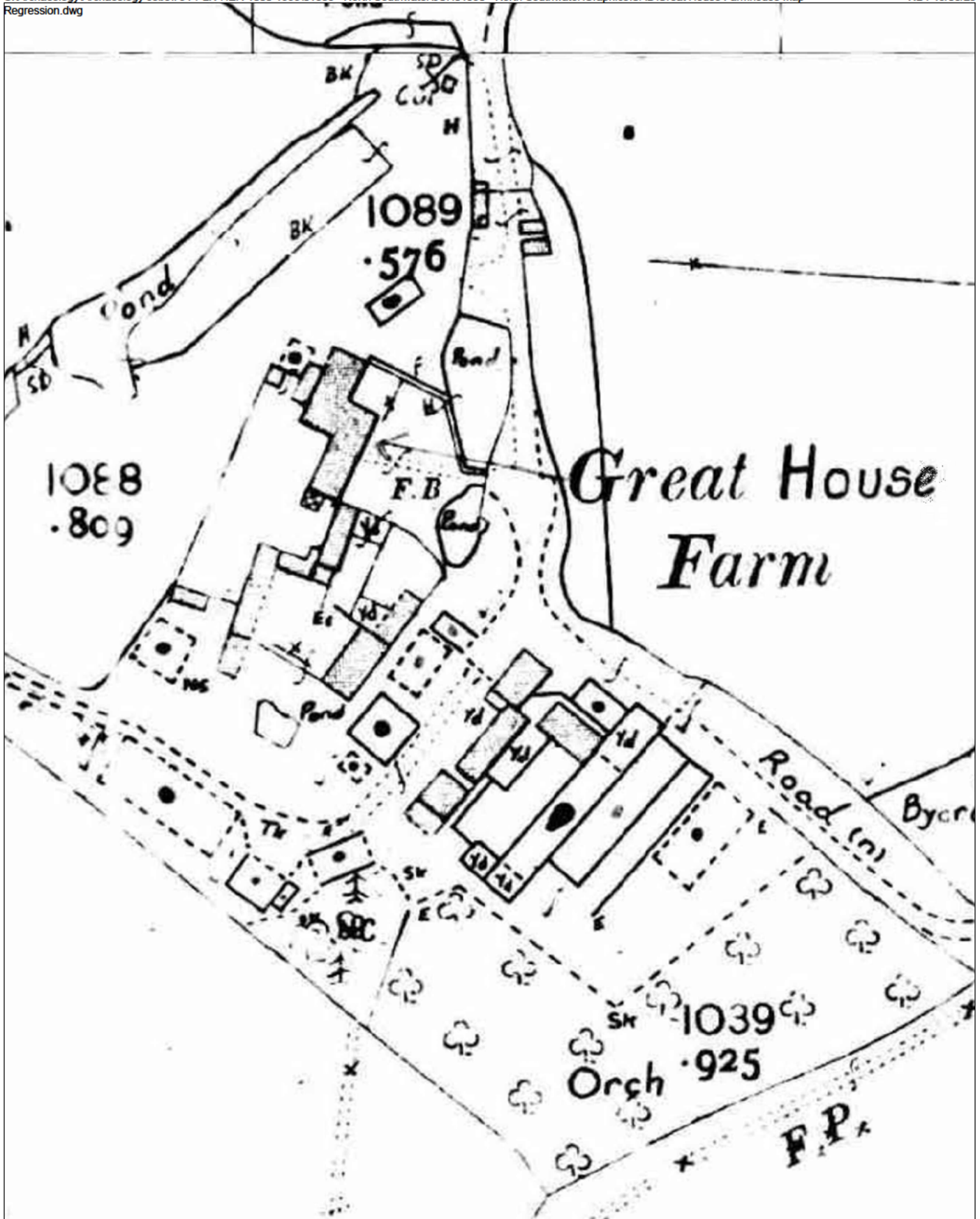


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Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 7

1911 Ordnance Survey Map



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Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 8

1976-1977 Ordnance Survey Map

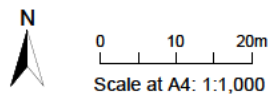
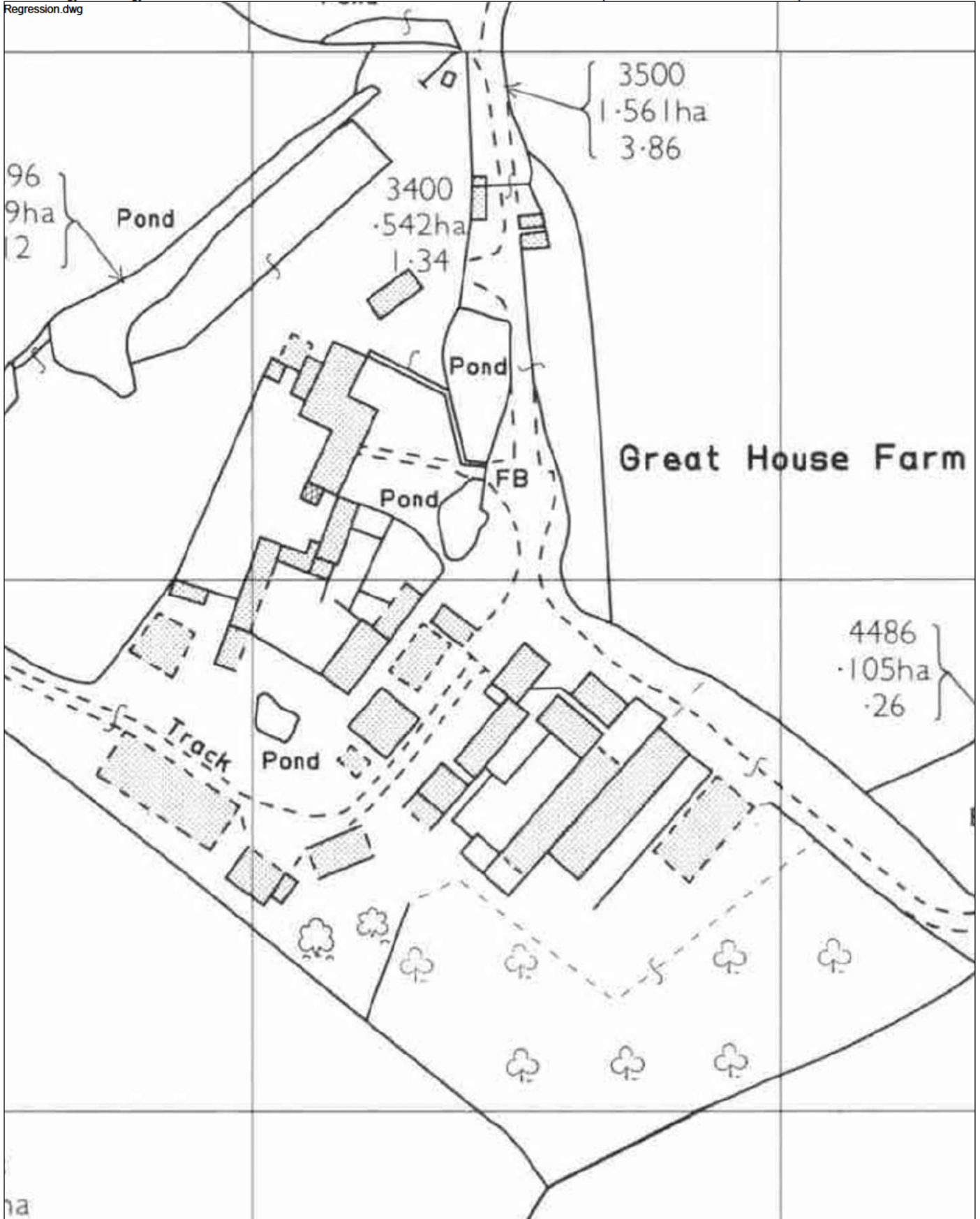
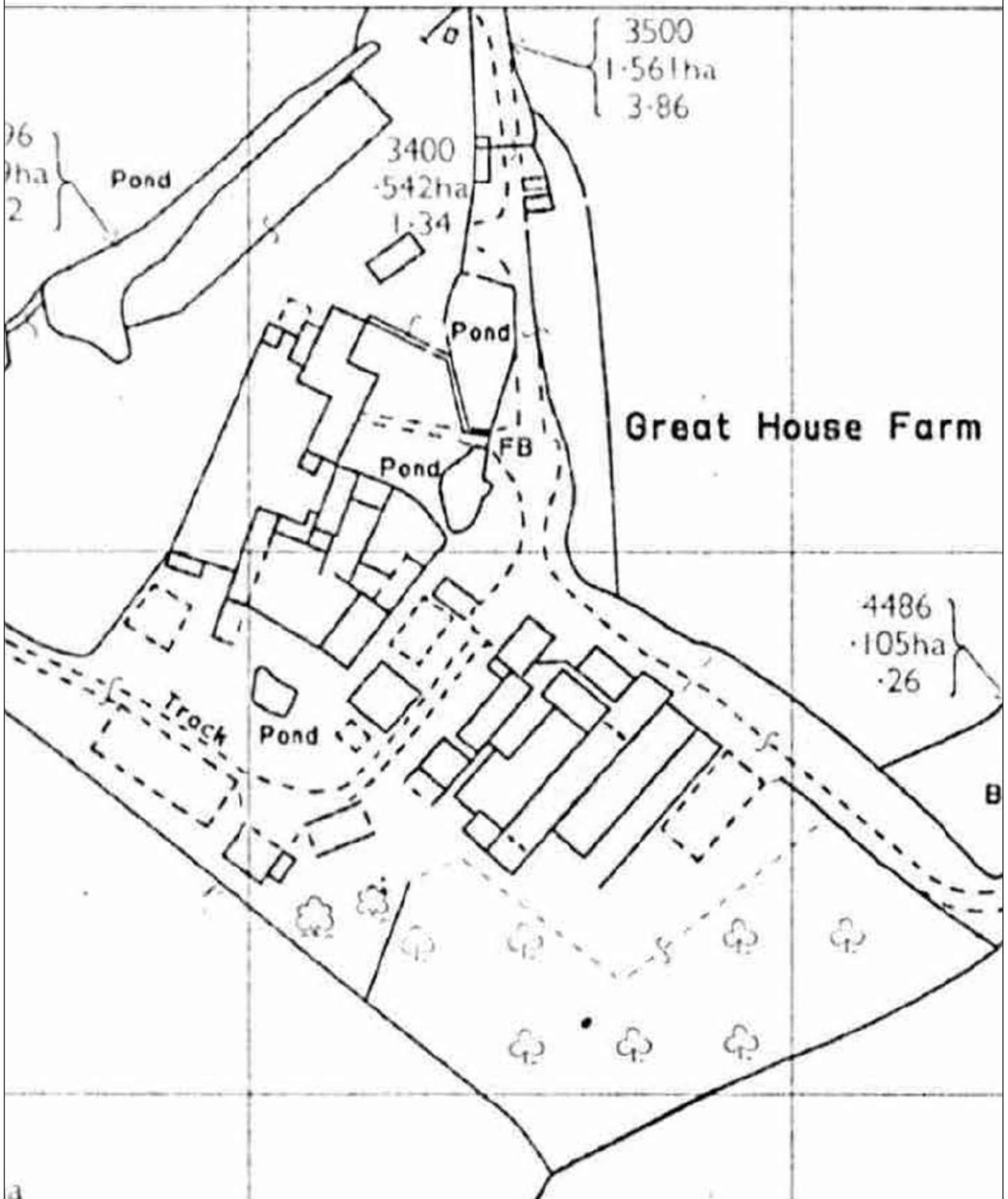


Figure 9
1977-1978 Ordnance Survey Map



a

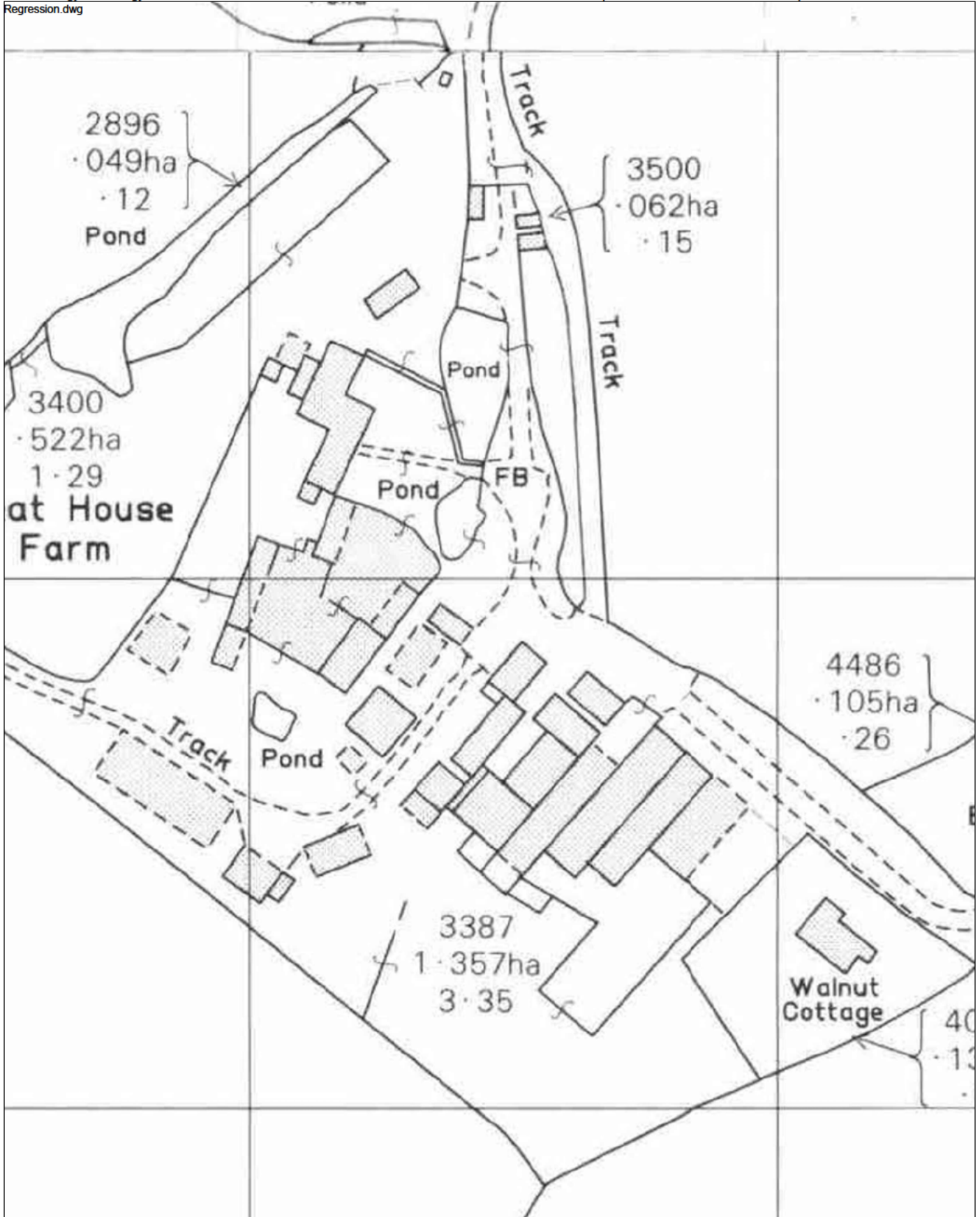


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Figure 10

1980 Ordnance Survey Map

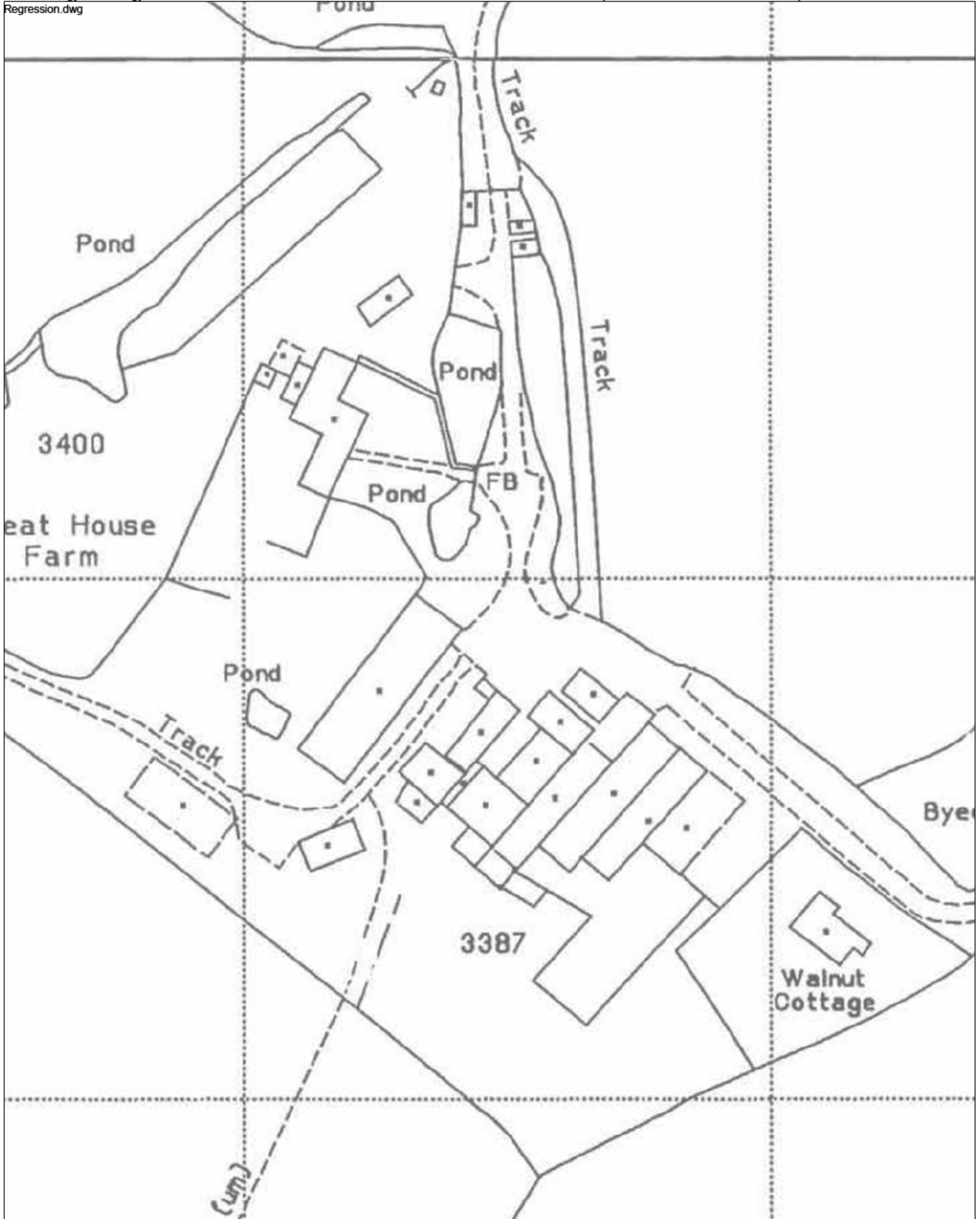


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Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 11

1988-1993 Ordnance Survey Map



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Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 12

1994-1995 Ordnance Survey Map



0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 13

2001 Aerial photograph



0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 14

2005 Aerial photograph



0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 15
2012 Aerial photograph



0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 16

2018 Aerial photograph



0 10 20m
Scale at A4: 1:1,000



Figure 17

2025 Aerial photograph

Appendix B: Photographs (Figures 18 to 28)



Figure 18: Barn A, late seventeenth/early eighteenth century.



Figure 19: Interior of Barn A, showing timber frame with later alterations.



Figure 20: Barn B, with brick masonry and tile covered roof, late nineteenth century.



Figure 21: Interior of Barn B



Figure 22: Barn C, with brick masonry and tiled roof, late nineteenth century.



Figure 23: Interior of Barn C



Figure 24: Barn D (with Barn A to the rear), late twentieth century.



Figure 25: Barn E looking south, with concrete frame (Barn D to the right and Barn F to the left), late twentieth century.



Figure 26: Barn F interior, looking north (with Barn E to the left), late twentieth century.



Figure 27: Barn G, Dutch-style barn, late twentieth century.



Figure 28: Barn H, early twenty-first century.



Figure 29: Barns I (left) and J (right), both late twentieth century.

Appendix C: Advice Letter from Historic England (8th December 2025)



Historic England

Mr William Smith
Berkeley Strategic Land Limited
Berkeley House, Mill Lane
Taplow
Maidenhead
SL6 0AG

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3627

Our ref: PA01185785

8 December 2025

Dear Mr Smith

Pre-application Advice

LAND NORTH WEST OF SOUTHWATER, SOUTHWATER, HORSHAM, WEST SUSSEX

Introduction

Thank you for seeking further pre-application advice from Historic England and arranging the site visit on 13th November 2025 to discuss the revised proposals.

Our advice focuses on Great House Farmhouse. Horsham District Council's Conservation specialists should advise you on all other heritage matters, including about grade II listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets. Advice relating to undesignated archaeology should be sought from the County Archaeologist.

Background

Historic England previously provided pre-application advice on proposals for this site in our letter dated 1st August 2022. We also provided advice to the Local Planning Authority on 7th November 2022 with regards to an Outline planning application (DC/22/1916) for a strategic mixed-use development of up to 1,500 dwellings, employment, community, education and sports spaces and facilities, 5 gypsy and traveller pitches; public open space; landscaping and highway infrastructure.

In both those letters, we raised objections to the proposals as they would have caused a high level of less than substantial harm (under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework) to the significance of Great House Farm a grade II* listed building.

We did not think that this harm had been sufficiently avoided or minimised harm, as



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required by paragraph 208 of the NPPF. We therefore recommended that this could be achieved by: removing some parcels of housing development from within the setting of the farmhouse, so that it was not so encircled by development; creating more space between the farmhouse and new development to the west; as well as re-aligning the primary access road and housing so that it is further away from the listed building.

We are aware that the Outline application was withdrawn and Berkeley Homes are now seeking pre-application advice on a revised scheme.

Summary

We welcome the efforts that have been made to take on board our previous advice and are supportive of the amendments that are now proposed to reduce the harm to the significance of Great House Farmhouse.

A large green buffer is proposed to be created around the farmhouse to provide a semblance of its rural setting and its appreciation as a former dispersed farmstead within the Low Weald. In addition, the main spine road has been moved further away from the farmhouse.

It is inevitable with a strategic development of this scale, that some harm will still remain as houses, gardens and roadways will still be perceived in some views, and by users of the rights of way, in place of the existing open fields.

As a result of the proposed amendments, we consider that the harm has been reduced from a high level of less than substantial harm in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) terms to just below the mid-level within that range.

However, we appreciate that the proposals are a draft allocation in the Regulation 19 Horsham Local Plan and the northern part of the site is an adopted allocation in the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, we recognise a balance needs to be struck between seeking to reduce the harm further and delivery of the strategic allocation by making efficient and effective use of land.

Therefore, when an application is submitted for planning permission, it will be for the Local Planning Authority to weigh the remaining harm against the public benefits, including any heritage benefits.



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As recommended in our previous advice, a clear heritage benefit would be to better reveal the significance of Great House Farmhouse, in line with paragraph 219 of the NPPF. Restoration of the front elevation of the farmhouse and its repair would be a clear enhancement and would deliver heritage benefits that could help to offset the harm to some degree.

Significance of Great House Farmhouse

The significance of Great House Farmhouse and the contribution its landscape setting makes to its significance is set in detail in our previous letters.

In summary, Great House Farmhouse is the principal farmhouse of an historic farmstead that dates from the late 16th to late 17th century. Its name implies a high-status residence, and that is borne out by it being a large and prominent house set within a relict Medieval landscape. It is listed at grade II*, which identifies it as among the most significant 6% of listed buildings in the country.

The proposal

The proposal is for a residential-led development to provide up to 1,000 homes (a mix of C2 and C3 use classes), an employment area, local retail, community and leisure facilities, provision for nursery, primary and secondary school, gypsy and traveller pitches, landscaping, open space and new road improvements.

The Impact of the Amendments on the Significance of Great House Farmhouse

The revised proposals have been made much less harmful than the previous ones in 2022 by principally:

- Moving the main spine road further away from Great House farmhouse;
- Removing the parcel of development to the south and relacing this with sports pitches;
- Creating a greater buffer between Great House Farmhouse and the housing parcels to the west;



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- Removal of the allotments;
- Retaining the land between Great House Farm and College Farm as open space;
- Setting the residential parcels within the framework of existing hedgerows and the Saxon manorial boundary that runs on an approximately north-south alignment across the Site.

In addition, since the site visit, some further amendments have been made which include:

- Redesigning the parcels to the north-east of the farmhouse to provide an enlarged green open space and to safeguard key views;
- Creating a more informal arrangement for the proposed new barns that better reflects the historic layout.

Nevertheless, the proposals would still cause some harm to the understanding of the Great House Farmhouse's as former high-status farmhouse that had functional relationship with the surrounding countryside as well as to the locally characteristic dispersed pattern of farmsteads of which it was part large.

Taken as a whole the revised proposals would cause just below a mid-level of less than substantial harm in the terms of the NPPF.

Planning Policy

When the proposals come forward as an application for planning permission, they will need to be assessed against Horsham's Local Plan Policies, the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The key policies within the NPPF to consider will be paragraphs 212, 213 and 215, which require great weight to be given to the assets conservation and the more important the assets, the greater weight; any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset to be clearly and convincingly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.



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In addition, paragraph 219 highlights that opportunities should be sought for new development within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.

Historic England Guidance

Historic England has produced Good Practice Advice Note 3: 'The Setting of Heritage Assets', which provides a framework to help assess the impacts of development within the setting of heritage assets. It defines setting as 'the surroundings in which an asset is experienced'. This explains that impacts on heritage significance might result from changes to, among other things, visual and historic relationships, noise and activity.

We have also prepared a series of guidance documents relating to Traditional Farmsteads that includes: Farmstead Assessment Framework; Historic Farmsteads: Preliminary Character Statement - South East region; South East Farmsteads Character Statement and Adapting Traditional Buildings - Best Practice Guidelines for Adaptive Reuse.

We advise that the layout of the proposed orchard barn area should reflect historic mapping and the design and character of new buildings in this character area should reflect the advice in the above farmstead guidance.

Historic England's Position on the Proposals

The revised proposals have addressed many of the issues we raised in our previous advice and most significantly, the elements that were causing the highest level of harm.

Given the scale of the proposed strategic development and the need to make efficient and effective use of the land, however, it is inevitable that some harm will still remain.

In order to effectively retain a semblance of the former rural setting, it is crucial the roads are created to be as rural in character as possible; a network of connected open spaces is provided near to the farmhouse; soft landscapes edges rather than hard edges and rural type fencing are provided around the housing parcels that are in close proximity to Great House Farmhouse. In addition, floodlighting should be avoided on the sport pitches near to the farmhouse.



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Finally, you should look for opportunities to better reveal the significance of Great House Farmhouse in line with paragraph 219 of the NPPF. Restoration of the front elevation of the Farmhouse and its repair would deliver an enhancement to the farmhouse's appearance. This could also deliver a heritage benefit that would significantly help offset some of the harm caused by the proposed development.

Next Steps

Thank you for involving us at the pre-application stage. We consider your proposals have now reached a stage where they have addressed the most harmful elements of the previous scheme. When an application for planning permission is submitted, it will be for the Local Planning Authority to weigh any remaining harm against the public benefits, including any heritage benefits.

Yours sincerely

Alma Howell

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List of information on which the above advice is based

07.11.2025 Land West of Worthing Road Southwater Built Heritage Technical Note v3;
27112025_A019 Masterplan Evolution Study_Amendments post site walk_Chapter 4
(v2) and A019 Masterplan Evolution Study_RevA 10112025



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