



Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment

Foley Farms, Stoke Edith, Herefordshire

Anesco Ltd

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Basis of Report

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Executive Summary

SLR Consulting Ltd was commissioned by Anesco Ltd to produce an Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment for a solar farm on a parcel of land at Stoke Edith, Herefordshire, HR1 4HG (NGR: SO 59550 41664).

The proposed scheme comprises construction and operation of a ground mounted fixed Photovoltaic (PV) solar farm with a maximum installed capacity of 20.53MWp, associated infrastructure including distribution network operator (DNO) substation and landscaping and security fencing.

This assessment considers the known and potential heritage resource within the Site and the surrounding area which might be affected by the proposed development, including the potential for archaeological remains. The report assesses the significance of any identified heritage assets, including a consideration of the contribution of setting to that significance. The report sets out how the Site's development will affect that significance.

Overall, less than substantial harm has been identified to one designated heritage asset, Stoke Edith Registered Park and Garden. This harm should be weighed in accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF (2023). No other harm has been identified to the other designated heritage assets.

Potential archaeological remains within the Site relate to possible deposits of palaeoenvironmental/geoarchaeological potential and prehistoric findspots of a transient nature and medieval or post medieval agricultural activity. The identified archaeological potential of the Site has not referenced a potential for the presence of remains of high importance. Therefore, it is unlikely that any archaeological remains within the Site would be of such significance as to preclude development. Any harm to such assets should be weighed in the balance under the terms of the NPPF (2023) paragraph 209.



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

SLR Consulting Ltd was commissioned by Anesco Ltd (hereafter 'the Client') to produce an Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment for a solar array scheme on a parcel of land at Stoke Edith, Herefordshire, HR1 4HG (NGR: SO 59550 41664) (hereafter 'the Site') (**Drawing 1**).

1.2 The Site

The Site is situated c.7.5km east of the centre of Hereford. It is located between the villages of Stoke Edith, c.1km to the south-east of the Site and Shucknall, 995m north-west. The hamlet of Weston Beggard is located 610m to the west of the Site.

The Site lies within four fields. It is bordered on the east by an unnamed road which links Stoke Edith in the south to Shucknall in the north. The Hereford and Worcester railway line borders the north-east of the Site. The northern Site boundary follows the alignment of the River Frome. A tributary to the river flows through the centre of the Site and another is located along the southern boundary of the Site. A plantation lies partially along the western boundary of the Site.

The Site contains three parish boundaries and is located across the parishes of Stoke Edith in the south, Weston Beggard in the north-west and Yarkhill in the northeast.

1.3 Proposed development

The proposed scheme comprises the construction and operation of a ground mounted fixed PV solar farm with a maximum installed capacity of 20.53MWp, associated infrastructure including distribution network operator (DNO) substation and landscaping and security fencing.

1.4 Scope of Report

This assessment has been prepared in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023), Local Planning Policy - Herefordshire adopted local plan and relevant Neighbourhood Plans, Historic England guidance, and with full regard to the ethical standards of the Institute for Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA).

1.5 Standards and methodology

The methodology employed during this assessment was based upon relevant professional guidance, including the CIfA's Standard and guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment (2020), and relevant technical guidance issued by Historic England, including Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019)



2.0 Methodology

2.1 Data procurement

2.1.1 Archaeology

With regards to the Site, a 1km study area was utilised for the purposes of baseline data collection. This is considered appropriate to determine the archaeological potential of the Site.

2.1.2 Heritage

For the purposes of assessment and in consideration of the nature of the Site, surrounding topography and intervening screening, a study area of 2km was considered appropriate for highly graded designated heritage assets (comprising World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas which contain highly graded designated assets). For designated assets of medium importance (Grade II Listed Buildings, Grade II Registered Parks & Gardens and Conservation Areas which contain medium graded designated assets), a 1km study area was considered appropriate.

2.1.3 Sources consulted

The following sources were consulted:

- the National Heritage List for England (NHLE), for all records relating to designated heritage assets;
- Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) (CHE2765), for sites, events and Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) data;
- the Environment Agency's library of open access LiDAR data (DSM, DTM and point cloud);
- the Ordnance Survey open-source library, for topographic and cartographic data, including elevation point cloud, contour and hydrological data;
- historic cartographic sources, including large-scale county surveys, tithe mapping and early Ordnance Survey editions;
- Historic England's Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer, for mapped archaeological earthworks and other features identified by the aerial investigation unit;
- Historic England's Aerial Photo Explorer, for online access to the historic aerial photo archive;
- the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photography (CUCAP) online;
- other online resources, including: the British Geological Survey; the Cranfield University Soilscape viewer; and the National Library of Scotland's online mapping database.
- Herefordshire's online planning application portal, for relevant documentation submitted in relation to proximate applications;
- Hereford Record Office for any relevant archival material not held online; and
- grey literature relating to excavations within, and within proximity to, the Site.

2.1.4 HER data

A proportionate level of HER data, sufficient to inform the assessment of archaeological potential, significance and potential impact presented in this report, was obtained. The HER data was reconciled and analysed within the context of the objectives of the present assessment.



While all of the HER data received has been reviewed and considered, not all HER records (sites and events) are discussed further within this report, only those that are of relevance to the determination of potential, significance and potential impact.

HER data is shown in **Drawings 1 & 2**.

2.1.5 LiDAR data

A LiDAR review was undertaken for the Site.

Digital terrain model (DTM) and digital surface model (DSM) LiDAR data, at 1m resolution, was processed using ArcGIS software. Multiple hill-shade and shaded-relief models were created, principally via adjustment of the following variables: azimuth, height, and 'z-factor' or exaggeration. The models created were then colourised using pre-defined ramps and classified attribute data, to reveal the micro-topography and allow for analysis. Identified features are discussed in the relevant places within this report.

LiDAR of the Site is shown in **Plate 2**.

2.1.6 Site inspection

Field observations were undertaken in March 2024 in order to assess the Site within the wider landscape context, identify any evidence for previous disturbance, and examine any known or suspected archaeological features.

2.1.7 Assessment of significance

The NPPF defines 'significance' as:

'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'.

The NPPF glossary and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) define these interests as follows:

- Archaeological interest: "there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point."
- Architectural and artistic interest: "These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture."
- Historic interest: "An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity."

Historic England's recently published guidance: *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*, Historic England Advice Note 12 (2019),¹ concurs with the use of this terminology and methodology, both of which are thus adopted for the purposes of this report.

¹ Historic England, *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*, Historic England Advice Note 12 (Swindon, October 2019).



This approach allows for a detailed and justifiable determination of heritage significance and the interests from which that significance derives. In accordance with the NPPF and the PPG, the level of significance attributed to heritage assets is then articulated as follows:

1. **Designated heritage assets of the highest significance.** These are identified in paragraph 200 of the NPPF as comprising Grade I and II* Listed buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, World Heritage Sites, Registered Battlefields, and non-designated archaeological remains of demonstrably equivalent significance to that of Scheduled Monuments (as identified in footnote 72);
2. **Designated heritage assets of less than the highest significance.** These are identified in paragraph 200 of the NPPF as comprising Grade II Listed buildings and Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens; and
3. **Non-designated heritage assets.** These are defined within the PPG as *“buildings, monuments, Sites, places, areas or landscapes identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets”*.²

² MHCLG, PPG, paragraph 039, reference ID: 18a-039-20190723.



3.0 Statute & Policy

3.1 Statute

Scheduled Monuments are protected from physical development effects under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)**.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are protected under the **Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)**. In relation to development proposals, the legislation states that:

'in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the secretary of state shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' (section 66).

With regards to Conservation Areas, it states that:

'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area' (section 72).

Under the **Levelling-up and Regeneration Act (2023)**, the provision **Section 58b** has been added to the **Town and Country Planning Act (1990)** in relation to Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wrecks, Registered Parks & Gardens, and World Heritage Sites:

'in considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for the development of land in England which affects a relevant asset or its setting, the local planning authority or (as the case may be) the Secretary of State must have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the asset or its setting'.

In addition, decision-makers are now to read 'preserving' as 'preserving or enhancing' in relation to Listed buildings under **Sections 16 and 66** of the **Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)**.

3.2 Planning policy

3.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (Revised 2023)

Applicable national policy comprises the National Planning Policy Framework (2023), and specifically the following paragraphs:

Paragraph 200, which states 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a Site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.'



Paragraphs 205 and 206, which provide for designated heritage assets, and state respectively 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,’ and

‘Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- a. grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b. 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 207, which relates to instances of ‘substantial harm’, and states that:

‘Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the Site; and*
- b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the Site back into use.’*

Paragraph 208, which relates to instances of ‘less than substantial harm’, and states 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.’

Paragraph 209, which relates to non-designated heritage assets, and 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.’

3.2.2 Local planning policy

The adopted Local Plan for Herefordshire was adopted in 2015. The Local Plan also includes Weston Beggard Neighbourhood Development Plan (adopted 2016) and Yarkhill Neighbourhood Development Plan (adopted 2018).



Relevant sections are presented below:

Hereford Local Plan

Policy LD4 – Historic environment and heritage assets

Development proposals affecting heritage assets and the wider historic environment should:

1. Protect, conserve, and where possible enhance heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance through appropriate management, uses and sympathetic design, in particular emphasising the original form and function where possible;
2. Where opportunities exist, contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the townscape or wider environment, especially within conservation areas;
3. Use the retention, repair and sustainable use of heritage assets to provide a focus for wider regeneration schemes;
4. Record and advance the understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) and to make this evidence or archive generated publicly accessible and
5. Where appropriate, improve the understanding of and public access to the heritage asset.

The scope of the works required to protect, conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings should be proportionate to their significance. Development schemes should emphasise the original form and function on of any asset and, where appropriate, improve the understanding of and public access to them.

Policy SD2 – Renewable and low carbon energy generation

Development proposals that seek to deliver renewable and low carbon energy will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

1. The proposal does not adversely impact upon international or national designated natural and heritage assets;
2. The proposal does not adversely affect residential amenity;
3. The proposal does not result in any significant detrimental impact upon the character of the landscape and the built or historic environment and
4. The proposal can be connected efficiently to existing national grid infrastructure unless it can be demonstrated that energy generation would be used on-site to meet the needs of a specific end user.

In the case of energy generation through wind power developments, permission will only be granted for such proposals where:

- the proposed site is identified in a Neighbourhood Development Plan or other Development Plan Document as a suitable site for wind energy generation; and
- following consultation with local residents, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified can be fully addressed, and therefore the proposal has the backing of the local community.

Weston Beggard Neighbourhood Development Plan

Policy WB5 - Delivery of Local Infrastructure

Development proposals will need to be supported by appropriate high quality infrastructure to contribute to the local community through developer contributions and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The development of high speed broadband infrastructure to serve the Parish will be supported where it is sympathetically designed and located.



Mobile phone infrastructure proposals will be supported where they are sensitively located, are of an appropriate type and scale which protect local amenity, will have minimal environmental impact and will be of direct benefit to the community.

This Plan will support the inclusion of low carbon renewable energy initiatives including solar, heat pumps and waterpower within individual proposals or to sensitively sited community renewable energy schemes, which directly benefit the community.

Proposals for commercially led renewable energy schemes will not be supported within the parish unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the local environment through the submission of information appropriate to the scale of development relating to the impact of the proposal on;

- Landscape appearance and character
- Traffic and transport
- Wildlife and ecology
- Residential amenity
- Flood risk

Yarkhill Neighbourhood Development Plan

Policy Y13 - Local Energy Schemes

Small scale renewable energy schemes and community energy schemes will be supported in Yarkhill Parish where any adverse impacts on landscape character and built heritage are mitigated by siting, design and landscaping / screening.



4.0 Archaeological Baseline

4.1 Introduction

The following section provides an overview of the Site's historical development, based on an assessment of the Herefordshire HER (CHE2765), relevant historic mapping, and online data sources.

Designated heritage assets are presented in **Drawing 1**, Historic Environment Record (HER) monument data is presented in **Drawing 2**.

No designated heritage assets of an archaeological nature (i.e. Scheduled monuments) are located within the Site. No non-designated HER assets are recorded within the Site.

4.2 Designated heritage assets

There are no designated heritage assets of an archaeological nature within the Site boundary. Within the search area, a scheduled boundary earthwork is located 510m south-east of the Site (NHLE 1009833) and a scheduled bowl barrow is located 655m south-west (NHLE 1015484).

4.3 Topography and Geology

The Site lies within the valley of the River Frome which lies along the northern boundary of the Site. The Site is level, situated at a height of c.50m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The ground gradually rises to the north and south of the Site (**Plate 1**).

The northern Site boundary follows the alignment of the River Frome. A smaller tributary to the river flows through the centre of the Site and another is located along the southern boundary of the Site.

The Site is underlain by Raglan Mudstone Formation (interbedded siltstone and mudstone), interbedded.³ This is overlain by superficial deposits of alluvium (clay, silt, sand and gravel) which is sandwiched between head deposits to the north and south of the Site.

The soils within the Site comprise freely draining floodplain soils. Such environments are naturally conducive to grassland and wet carr woodlands in old river meanders.⁴

³ https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk/?_ga=2.195378092.1298461988.1706627765-835748206.1706627765 [accessed 19.03.24]

⁴ Landis Soilscales, available at <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales/#> [accessed 19.03.24]



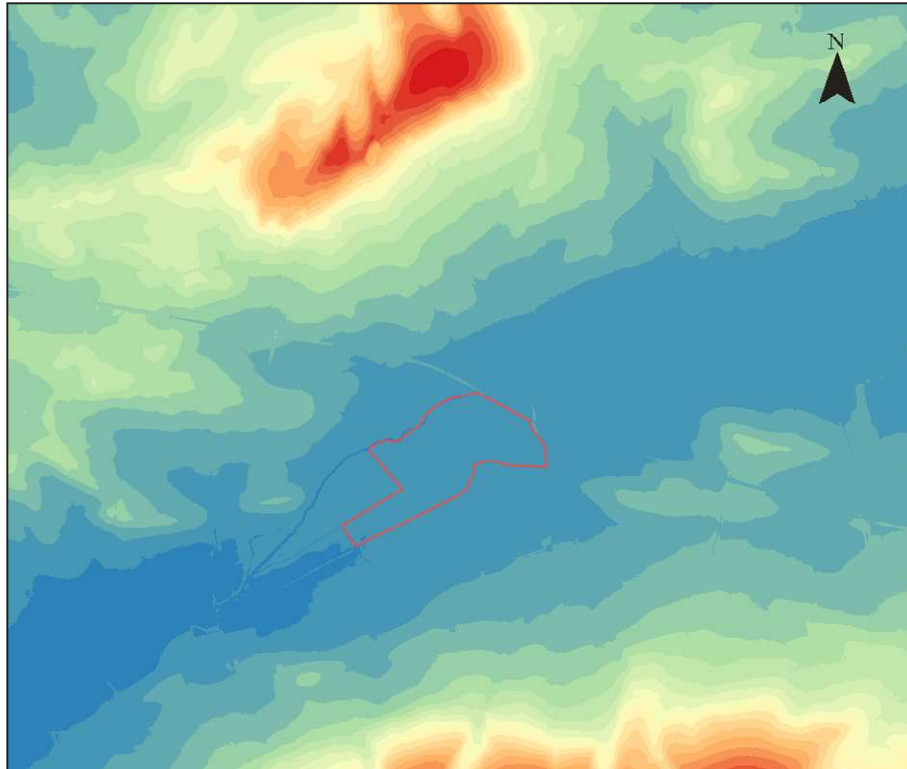


Plate 1: Topographic relief of the Site and surrounding landscape

4.4 LiDAR

Digital surface model (DSM) LiDAR data, at 1m resolution, was processed using GIS software. Multiple hill-shade and shaded-relief models were created, principally via adjustment of the following variables: azimuth, height, and 'z-factor' or exaggeration. The models created were then colourised using pre-defined ramps to reveal the micro-topography and allow for analysis.

Visible features within the data (**Plate 2**) include a sub-circular enclosure is also visible in the centre of the Site at the northern end of the southern field. No other anomalies of archaeological interest visible within the Site.





**Plate 2: LiDAR Data, possible circular enclosure marked by the blue arrow (National LIDAR Programme Environment Agency survey data; 1m resolution).
21.03.24**

4.5 Events

The Site has not been subject to any previous fieldwork investigations.

The HER records one event in the study area comprising a watching brief during the laying of the Ledbury Trunk Main water pipeline in 2007, located 355m north-east of the Site.⁵ Within the study area, no archaeological features were observed by the watching brief.

4.6 Chronological Background

4.6.1 Prehistoric

The presence of alluvium within the footprint of the Site and within the floodplain of the River Frome has the potential to conceal and preserve earlier land surfaces of geoarchaeological potential.

Within the study area, definitive prehistoric remains are limited to two findspots of Neolithic to Bronze Age axe heads which have been recorded 450m south-east (HER 55069) and 540m north-west (HER 6523) of the Site respectively.

In addition, cropmarks representing a sub-rectangular enclosure and other linear features, which are cut by the current field system, have been recorded 970m north-west of the Site and have been ascribed a general prehistoric date (HER 31816). However, this is uncertain, and the cropmarks could date to the later Iron Age or Romano-British or medieval periods.

⁵ Border Archaeology (2009) *Ledbury Trunk Main: Archaeological Programme of Works*



4.6.1.1 Summary of prehistoric potential

Given the above, there is considered to be a low to medium potential for prehistoric deposits within the boundary of the Site. River valleys have the potential for extensive prehistoric activity with well-preserved organic remains providing evidence of environmental change and past exploitation of the river and adjacent areas. Anthropogenic remains would likely relate to transient exploitation activities and be represented by a flint assemblage, rather than settlement features, which would have favoured the higher, drier land to the north and south of the river.

4.6.2 Iron Age & Romano-British

Within the study area, a record of a cropmark representing three sides of a probable enclosure, provided a general date of Iron Age or Roman, is recorded 825m south-west of the Site (HER 53477). As stated above, a further cropmark enclosure 970m north-west of the Site could relate to this period (HER 31816).

Herefordshire was important during the Roman period as a frontier outpost, known as the Welsh Marshes. Under their control, greater land clearance occurred due to the requirement to pay the Roman Tribute Tax.

Within the study area, whilst no definitive Roman finds have been recovered, the projected route of the Roman road from Stretton Grandison to Kenchester is noted, 350m north of the Site (HER 58246). However, the route is untested by fieldwork and remains uncertain.

4.6.3 Summary of Iron Age & Romano-British potential

Whilst there is a clear Romano-British presence within the landscape, activity appears to have favoured higher ground, typically on south-facing slopes, which would have been topographically more advantageous with freer-draining soils. There is no evidence for settlement activity within the Site, which is within the floodplain, and subject to flooding from the River Frome. As such, potential for Roman remains within the Site is considered to be low.

4.6.4 Early medieval to medieval

With the retreat of the Romans in the 5th century, the Herefordshire section of the Marches was conquered and occupied by the Saxons in the late 6th century. By the middle of the 8th century Anglo-Saxon political control had been constituted throughout the whole of the Marches.⁶

Whilst no archaeological evidence for early medieval settlement is noted by the HER within the study area, placename evidence of Yarkhill, Weston Beggard and Stoke Edith indicate the settlements have Saxon origins, the inhabitants likely attracted by the fertile Frome Valley. All three settlements are recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) with Yarkhill and Weston Beggard recorded as having 18 households and Stoke Edith with 21.

At Weston Beggard, a shrunken medieval village is recorded 525m west of the Site (HER 23934). The settlement contains medieval structures in the form of the church which dates to the 13th century (NHLE 1348736) and a medieval cross (NHLE 1016123 & 1179844).

Medieval settlement at Yarkhill is attested to by the presence of a scheduled moated site 1.13km north-east of the Site (NHLE 1005344). A second moated site is also noted at Shucknall Court, 850m north-west of the Site (HER 6518).

At Stoke Edith, the church (NHLE 1099825), 1.1km south-east of the Site, is noted to have a 14th century tower.

⁶ <https://htt.herefordshire.gov.uk/herefordshires-past/the-anglo-saxon-period/> [accessed 03.04.24]



Medieval agricultural practices are attested to in the study area by an area of lynchets, 875m south of the Site (HER 3762), likely associated with medieval settlement at Dormington, located 1.22km south-west of the Site.

4.6.5 Summary of medieval potential

Given the above, there is considered to be medium to high potential for medieval activity within the boundary of the Site which, if present, would likely reflect agricultural practices within the flood plain. Medieval settlement activity is not anticipated, this was nucleated away from the Site at higher points in the landscape.

4.6.6 Post medieval

The HER illustrates the continued rural character of the study area through the post medieval period with the recording of several farmsteads, some of which date to the 17th century (i.e. Claston Farm, HER 25956).

Growth of the surrounding settlements is noted in the HER by the recording of residential houses and cottages including vicarages and a school.

The HER also records industrial features in the study area including quarries, an engine house (HER 12037) and a mill (HER 18843). Adjacent to the north-east boundary of the Site is the line of the Worcester and Hereford Railway (HER 27035) which was constructed between 1857 and 1881.

4.6.7 Historic Mapping

The Tithe maps for the parishes of Stoke Edith (1839), Weston Beggard (1839) and Yarkhill (1844) were viewed as part of the assessment and shown in **Plate 3** below. The Site comprises seven parcels of land across the three parishes. Table 1 below provides details from the accompanying apportionment. All parcels apart from one (261) were recorded as meadow with 261 recorded as pasture. This probably reflects the location of the Site within an area liable to some flooding. The Foley family, the seat of which is located at Stoke Edith, owned all parcels.

Table 1: Apportionment record

Parcel Number	Name	Usage	Owner	Occupier
Stoke Edith				
259	The Cinders (Part of)	Meadow	Thomas Edward Foley	John Hall
261	Ash Meadow	Pasture		
265	Stoke Meadow	Meadow		John Badham
Weston Beggard				
244	Stokes Meadow	Meadow	Thomas Edward Foley	Walter Morris
245	Part of Meadow	Meadow		John Hall
Yarkhill				
90	Large Meadow	Grass [meadow]	(Lady) Emily Foley	Walter Morris
91	Crossway Meadow	Grass [meadow]		George Hall

The following Ordnance Survey (OS) of 1886 shows the introduction of the Worcester and Hereford Railway (HER 27035) adjacent to the north-east boundary of the Site (**Plate 4**). Apart from this which removed fields to the north-east of the Site, the remainder of the parcels in the Site are shown as unchanged. A foot bridge is marked across the small unnamed stream in the south of the Site.



Ordnance Survey maps were viewed up to 1952 (**Plates 5-7**). No significant changes were observed within the Site boundary. A small area of woodland was noted in the centre of the Site by 1930 (**Plate 6**).

4.6.8 Summary of post medieval potential

There is considered to be a high potential for post-medieval activity to remain within the Site which would reflect agricultural practices.

4.7 Site Inspection

A Site visit was undertaken in March 2024. Photos are within **Appendix A**.

The Site comprised four fields, bounded by a mix of post and wire fence and hedgerows and the railway embankment to the north-east (see Photos 1-4).

The locations of the possible feature observed on the LiDAR (Section 4.4) were viewed (Photos 5 & 6). No above ground remains were noted.

No other above ground features or ground conditions indicative of buried archaeological remains were observed.

4.8 Summary of archaeological potential

Based on an understanding of the baseline provided above, any sequential events which may have affected potential from preceding periods, the potential for remains to survive within the boundary of the Site is as follows.

- Prehistoric – a potential for prehistoric deposits of palaeoenvironmental or geoarchaeological interest within the Site is considered to be medium due to the presence of alluvial deposits across the Site. Evidence for transient activity may be represented in a flint assemblage.
- Iron Age/ Romano-British – due to the paucity of Iron Age and Roman finds within the search area, it is considered that there is a low potential within the Site. Settlement remains are not anticipated within the Site, which would not have been unfavourable due to the Site's location on relatively marginal land.
- Medieval –the evidence suggests that features of this date within the Site would comprise agricultural remains most likely related to pastoral activity. No settlement activity of this date has been identified.
- Post-Medieval –post medieval features will comprise agricultural remains.





Plate 3: Extract from Stoke Edith tithe (1839), Weston Beggard tithe (1839) and Yarkhill tithe (1844)



Plate 4: 6inch OS Map, 1886





Plate 5: 6inch OS Map, 1905

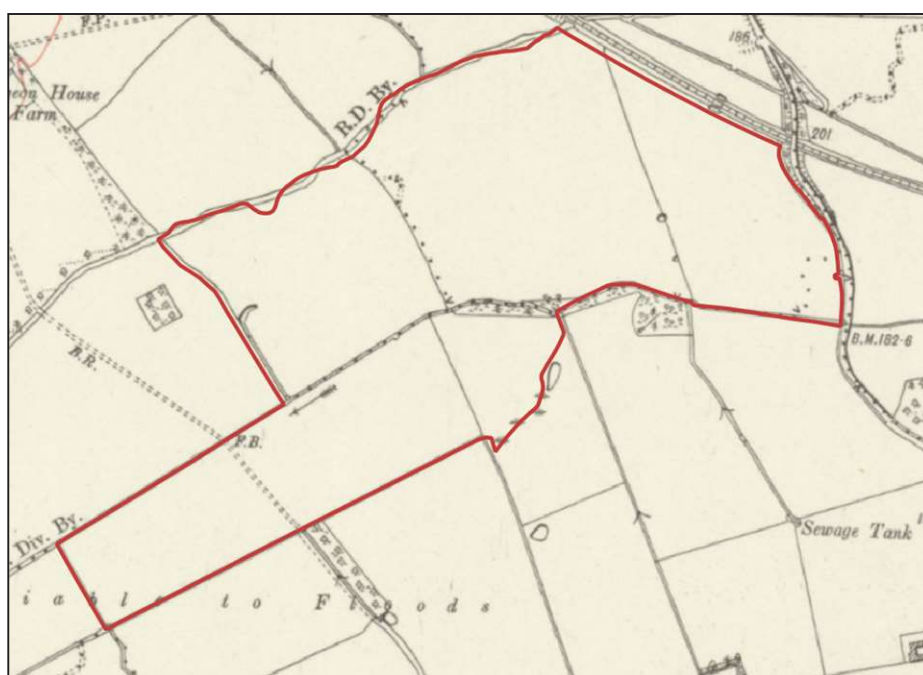


Plate 6: 6inch OS Map, 1930



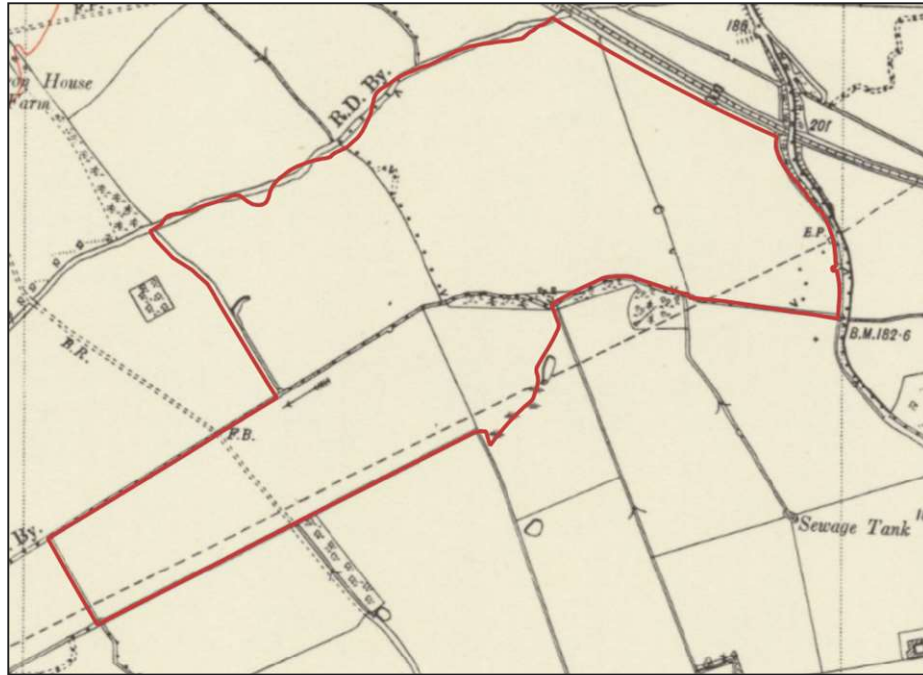


Plate 7: 6inch OS Map, 1952



5.0 Archaeology: Statement of Significance & Effects

5.1 Potential Remains

This assessment has identified that the following archaeological remains may be affected by the proposals:

- Potential prehistoric deposits and/ or land surfaces, associated with alluvial sediments underlying the Site – potential palaeoenvironmental/geoarchaeological interest.
- Potential prehistoric flint assemblage.
- Agricultural remains of medieval and / or post medieval date within the Site.

5.2 Significance

5.2.1 Remains of palaeoenvironmental/geoarchaeological interest and potential flint

Deposits would hold geo/palaeoarchaeological interest informing on the geography of the flood plain, environmental conditions and the human exploitation of the wider landscape. A flint assemblage may inform on the seasonal/marginal hunter gatherer activity upon the landscape. Whilst an indicator of activity, such remains would be unlikely to be considered heritage assets of the highest significance under the terms of the NPPF and not anticipated to require preservation in situ.

5.2.2 Medieval and post medieval agricultural activity

The Site may contain evidence for previous agricultural activity from the medieval through to post medieval period, including potential former field boundaries.

Remains of any field systems of medieval date would be regarded as being of relatively low importance.

Post medieval field systems would inform on the post medieval agglomeration of earlier field systems. These would be anticipated to be of negligible archaeological interest.

5.3 Development Effects

Ground disturbance associated with works may comprise:

- Soil stripping (for access tracks, site compound, and buildings [e.g., substations, monitoring room]).
- Construction of foundations for buildings.
- Service trenches.
- Piling.

The proposed development is likely to require groundworks, particularly for any buildings (including substations, DNO building, switchgear building, monitoring room, site compound), such that any archaeological remains within these areas may be truncated, if not removed in their entirety. However, with reference to the baseline assessment and significance assessment of this report the Site is assessed as having a limited potential for remains of archaeological interest which would preclude development.

Furthermore, the nature of the proposed development is such that below ground impacts are unlikely to be significant over a large area, with areas of greatest impact relating to any service corridors or buildings. For example, where the solar arrays are proposed, the impact of isolated piles (if used to support PV tables) upon the significance of any archaeological remains (if present) would be



negligible, in that the greater extent, legibility, and archaeological interest of any such remains would be preserved.

Typically, displacement piles are used to support solar array tables, which typically result in minimal sediment displacement and can be removed with limited removal of soil (e.g., Historic England 2019: 23 – 24); the typical methodology for removal involves vibrating the pile free of the soil, which ensures minimal soil displacement or removal. While localised contamination of archaeological features might be introduced by piling, it is highly probable that extensive sections of uncontaminated deposits will survive, where present, thus allowing future scientific analysis (palaeoenvironmental assessment, scientific dating, etc.).

While harm to smaller isolated features (cremations, small pits, flint assemblages etc.), if present, would be greater, the probability of a pile encountering such a feature is very low. Such an assessment is supported by government's National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), 2024, publication which allows that archaeological impacts from solar farms are generally limited (Paragraph 2.10.109).

In determining whether intrusive archaeological evaluation is required for the Site, a balanced view is needed which accounts to the potential to cause greater, and potentially unnecessary, harm to archaeological remains within the Site area through archaeological investigation, versus the likely extent of any impact stemming from construction of the solar arrays. A targeted approach, informed by the proposed site layout (e.g., targeting areas of greater impact) and a scheme of geophysical survey is likely to be most appropriate, ensuring a proportionate approach that avoids any unnecessary harm to buried remains within the Site area. As referenced above, it is anticipated that there is a limited potential for remains of archaeological interest which would preclude development. Further work could therefore be undertaken as a condition to consent.



6.0 Heritage Baseline – Asset Selection

This assessment includes assets selected as per the search parameters set out in Section 2.1.2. These are listed in Table 2 and shown on Drawing 1.

Table 2: Heritage Assets

Reference	Description	Status	Distance from Site
1005344	Moated site	Scheduled Monument	1.13km north-east
1016123	Churchyard cross in St John the Baptist's churchyard		625m west
1099825	Church of St Mary	Grade I Listed Building	1.1km south-east
1099882	Church of St Peter	Grade II* Listed Building	1.25km south-west
1179796	Hereford Lodge, gate piers to west and flanking brick wall to east		770m south
1301761	Hill End Farmhouse with adjoining hop kilns		1.17km west
1348736	Church of St John Baptist		645m west
1000897	Stoke Edith	Grade II Registered Park & Graden	235m south
1099826	Pier with ball finial approximately 15 metres north-east of east end of Church of St Mary	Grade II Listed Building	980m south
1099829	Church House		640m west
1099830	Group of three chest tombs approximately 5 metres south of nave of Church of St John the Baptist		640m west
1099831	Pair of Hankins memorials 1 metre south of nave of Church of St John Baptist		650m west
1099832	Pigeon Farmhouse		350m north-west
1179805	Milepost At SO593246		560m south
1179812	Perton Croft		935m south
1179825	55 and 56		955m south
1179827	Stoke Edith House and garden wall to north and west		960m south
1179840	Church Farmhouse		655m west
1179844	Base of churchyard cross		625m west
1179847	Pedestal tomb approximately 10 metres south of nave of Church of St John the Baptist		650m west
1301764	Pigeon house approximately 15 metres south-east of Pigeon Farmhouse		315m north-west
1348732	Milepost At SO608409		1km south-east
1348734	The Smithy		905m south

Of the assets listed in **Table 2** it is anticipated that the asset types listed below would not be affected by the proposals (significance is sustained). This is due to their significance lying wholly/predominantly within their fabric and/or the lack of change which the proposals would cause in respect to elements of setting which contribute towards their significance. These types of assets would not therefore be taken



forward within the assessment i.e. the types of assets listed below are considered scoped out of further assessment:

- scheduled buried remains and/or earthworks which do not hold topographically advantageous views of the Site or the area in which the Site is located such that the Site could be said to be significant in an understanding/appreciation of the monument;
- churches where views of their spire or tower from the Site do not contribute to their significance;⁷
- assets in built up areas for which cones of view to/from are not significant;
- distant farmhouses with no historic links to the land within the footprint of the Site;
- memorials or features within/bounding graveyards where the principal setting element of importance is the churchyard and/or the church;
- ornamental garden features set within private gardens;
- ancillary farm buildings to which an understanding and a perception of is restricted to the principal farmhouse and/or the immediate rural backdrop which would be unaffected;
- distant cottages and houses to which rural setting is restricted with no historic link to the land within the footprint of the Site;
- estate buildings where their historic interest and setting elements are associated with the estate and the land within the Site does not contribute to an understanding of this;
- industrial assets for where significance lies principally within fabric relating to function and where setting elements relate to functional topographical elements not affected by the proposals; and
- milestones whose setting is restricted to the road and roadside verge.

Other assets located outside of the specified study area, including non-designated assets, but included for further consideration at discretion due to potential associations with the land within the Site or landmark status comprise:

- Ethelbert's Camp (NHLE 1003534, Scheduled Monument) located 2.2km south-west of the Site
- Garford (NHLE 1157130, Grade II listed building) located 1.55km north-east of the Site.
- Perton Farm (HER 46981, non-designated) located 915m south of the Site.
- Shucknall Court (HER 46985, non-designated) located 875m north-west of the Site.

These and the remaining assets from Table 2 listed below will be subject to field observation to determine the necessity for assessment of their significance in accordance with the Historic England Good Practice in Planning Advice Note 3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (2017) and Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance' (2019):

- Ethelbert's Camp (NHLE 1003534, Scheduled Monument);
- Church of St Mary (NHLE 1099825, Grade I listed building);

⁷ Being tall structures, church towers and spires are often widely visible across land- and townscapes but, where development does not impact on the significance of heritage assets visible in a wider setting or where not allowing significance to be appreciated, they are unlikely to be affected by small-scale development, unless that development competes with them, as tower blocks and wind turbines may. Even then, such an impact is more likely to be on the landscape values of the tower or spire rather than the heritage values, unless the development impacts on its significance, for instance by impacting on a designed or associative view. (Historic England 2017:7)



- Stoke Edith Registered Park & Garden (NHLE 1000897, Grade II RPG);
- Hereford Lodge, gate piers to west and flanking brick wall to east (NHLE 1179796, Grade II* listed building);
- Church of St John Baptist (NHLE1348736, Grade II* listed building);
- Pigeon Farmhouse (NHLE 1099832, Grade II listed building);
- Garford (NHLE 1157130, Grade II listed building);
- Perton Farm (HER 46981, non-designated); and
- Shucknall Court (HER 46985, non-designated).

These assets were assessed in the field in March 2024, to ascertain the necessity of providing a full statement of significance to assess the potential impact of the proposals.

In the field it was established that the following assets would not require further assessment within this report due to there being no potential effect upon important elements of their setting.

- Hereford Lodge (NHLE 1179796, Grade II* listed building) located 770m south of the Site.
 - The significance of the lodge is primarily derived from its architectural and historic interests. It was built in c.1792 by William Wilkins and formerly the entrance of the west drive to Stoke Edith, which was removed in the 20th century. It therefore has historic association with Stoke Edith estate. The lodge (finished 1796) is a miniature temple, octagonal in plan, under a copper dome, with a long ground-floor window flanked by columns which looked west along Hereford Road (**Appendix A** photo 7). Hereford Lodge was intended by Repton to be the focus of the new model village of Stoke Edith, which never happened.
 - The lodge is situated on the north-east corner of the junction of the A438 (Hereford Road) and the former driveway to Stoke Edith House. Its principal elevation faces west with views along Hereford Road (the Site is located to the north). Setting elements important to its significance comprise its location marking a former driveway into Stoke Edith and its relationship with the estate and RPG. The land within the Site does not contribute to these setting elements.
 - Views of the lodge were possible from the Site (**Appendix A** photo 8). It is seen against a backdrop of agricultural land and woodland which is associated with Stoke Edith RPG. From the house, the Site is visible as part of the wider agricultural landscape. There is no historic association between the lodge and the land within the Site. There would be no impact to the asset from the proposed development due to the lack of impact to the understanding of the asset and its relationship with Stoke Edith estate and Hereford Road.
- Church of St John Baptist (NHLE1348736, Grade II* listed building) located 645m west of the Site.
 - The significance of the church is predominantly within its fabric and buried remains which illustrate its historic and architectural interests. Part of its fabric dates back to the 12th and 14th centuries. The church lies within its associated graveyard which provides the immediate historic setting to the church.
 - Setting elements of importance to its significance comprise the interior of the church which provides an enclosed setting from which to enjoy and appreciate the function and designed elements of the church which facilitate worship, be they in fabric or layout and its associated graveyard which provides for a defined enclosure within which the church sits.



- No views of the church were possible from the Site due to the intervening screening (**Appendix A** photo 1). The Site does not contribute to any elements of significance of the church and the proposed development would not cause any harm to the asset.
- Pigeon Farmhouse (NHLE 1099832, Grade II listed building) located 345m north-west of the Site.
 - The significance of the farmhouse is primarily derived from its architectural and historic interests, as a late 16th century or early 17th century timber-framed core building with some wattle-and-daub infill. These interests are best appreciated from close proximity to the building and from within its interior spaces from where its physical fabric, built form, original plan form and phasing is most apparent and can contribute to an understanding of the building's use and adaption over time. It has group value with its associated farm buildings including the Grade II listed pigeon house (NHLE reference 1301764) and non-designated engine house (HER 12037).
 - The farmhouse is situated within an enclosed farmstead, with several associated barns. It is situated on the northern side of the River Frome valley and is screened from public views by extensive tree cover. The surrounding landscape is arable primarily.
 - No views of the farmhouse were possible from the Site due to intervening vegetation (**Appendix A** photo 9). There is no historic association between the farm and the land within the Site. There would be no impact to the asset from the proposed development due to the lack of impact to the understanding of the asset against an agricultural backdrop in association with its ancillary farm buildings.
 - No important setting elements would be affected. Significance would be conserved.
- Garford (NHLE 1157130, Grade II listed building) located 1.55km north-east of the Site.
 - The significance of the farmhouse is primarily derived from its architectural and historic interests, as a 17th century timber-framed core building with rendered infill. These interests are best appreciated from close proximity to the building and from within its interior spaces from where its physical fabric, built form, original plan form and phasing is most apparent and can contribute to an understanding of the building's use and adaption over time.
 - The farmhouse is situated within a farmstead, with several associated outbuildings and barns surrounding the asset. It is situated on the northern side of the River Frome valley. The surrounding landscape is arable primarily.
 - No views of the farmhouse were possible from the Site due to the railway embankment which blocks any views north-east from the Site (**Appendix A** photo 10).
 - Whilst historically part of the Site was located within the landholding to the farm, today this is no longer the case. The distance and the presence of the railway embankment precludes visibility of the asset from the Site and prohibits a tangible understanding of the Site as a former part of the asset's landholding. The Site does not contribute to its significance as part of its setting. The historical ownership and functional associations between the Site and farm are a matter of historical fact and are not reflected in the existing 20th century amalgamated character of the Site.
 - No important setting elements would be affected. Significance would be conserved.
- Perton Farm (HER 46981, non-designated) located 915m south of the Site.
 - The significance of the farm is primarily derived from its historic interests as a post medieval farmstead illustrating the network of farms during this period and the division of the landscape.



- The farm comprises a complex of farmhouse, outbuildings and barns. It is situated on the southern side of the River Frome valley. The surrounding landscape is arable primarily.
- Views of the farm were imperceptible from the Site due to intervening vegetation (**Appendix A** photo 11). Whilst historically part of the Site was located within the landholding to the farm, today this is no longer the case. The distance and the presence of intervening vegetation including that along the northern property boundary of the farm precludes visibility of the asset from the Site and prohibits a tangible understanding of the Site as a former part of the asset's landholding. The Site does not contribute to its significance as part of its setting. The historical ownership and functional associations between the Site and farm are a matter of historical fact and are not reflected in the existing 20th century amalgamated character of the Site.
- No important setting elements would be affected. Significance would be conserved.
- Shucknall Court (HER 46985, non-designated) located 875m north-west of the Site.
 - The significance of the farm is primarily derived from its historic interests as a post medieval farmstead illustrating the network of farms during this period and the division of the landscape.
 - The farm comprises a complex of farmhouse, outbuildings and barns. The surrounding landscape is arable primarily.
 - No views of the farm were possible from the Site due to intervening modern agricultural sheds and vegetation (**Appendix A** photo 9). Whilst historically part of the Site was located within the landholding to the farm, today this is no longer the case. The distance and the presence of intervening vegetation buildings precludes visibility of the asset from the Site and prohibits a tangible understanding of the Site as a former part of the asset's landholding. The Site does not contribute to its significance as part of its setting. The historical ownership and functional associations between the Site and farm are a matter of historical fact and are not reflected in the existing 20th century amalgamated character of the Site.
 - No important setting elements would be affected. Significance would be conserved.



7.0 Statements of Significance

7.1 Introduction

The heritage interests pertaining to the assets identified in Section 6.0, and the contribution of those interests to the assets' significance, are described below.

The following assessment is proportionate, in line with the requirements of Paragraph 200 of the NPPF, with the significance of any identified heritage assets and the likely impact of the proposed development.

In Statements of Heritage Significance, Historic England confirm that it is '*important that the level of detail given in a statement of heritage significance is proportionate to the impact of the proposal*' (Historic England 2019: 11), and that '*an analysis of the setting of the heritage asset is only needed where changes to the setting by the proposal would affect the significance of the heritage asset or how that significance is appreciated*' (ibid. 15).

Baseline assessment has identified that the significance of the following assets may be susceptible to harm as a result of change to their setting under the proposals:

- Ethelbert's Camp (NHLE 1003534, Scheduled Monument);
- Church of St Mary (NHLE 1099825, Grade I listed building); and
- Stoke Edith Registered Park & Garden (NHLE 1000897, Grade II RPG).

7.2 Ethelbert's Camp (NHLE 1003534)

The monument is located 2.2km south-west of the Site, on the eastern side of the River Frome valley.

7.2.1 Archaeological Interest

The monument holds archaeological interest as a fairly well-preserved small multivallate hillfort, despite partial quarrying and the construction of pathways and wire and post fences. It dates to the Iron Age period.

Buried remains including material culture and paleoenvironmental evidence have the potential to contribute to the understanding of the later prehistoric landscape, informing on environmental, social and economic factors. The monument is particularly representative of its period, often being the only visible permanent feature within the Iron Age landscape. Small multivallate hillforts are rare with around 100 examples recorded nationally. They have importance in understanding the nature of settlement and social organisation within the Iron Age period. The monument is one of several small multivallate hillforts in the Welsh Marshes, illustrating a long period of construction of defensive structures which inform on our understanding of the societal and economic pressures during the prehistoric period.

7.2.2 Contribution of Setting to Significance

The monument is sited at the summit of Backberry Hill, a large and prominent hilltop (situated at 225m aOD) located on the eastern slopes of the River Frome valley. Given its size and elevation, the hill is highly visible across the area, providing an understanding of the siting of the monument during the prehistoric period, as the hillfort would have originally been designed to command extensive views across the surrounding landscape, as well as being a visible feature in themselves, as a powerful place within the landscape. As such, the primary setting elements contributing to significance can be defined as the hill itself which provided for topographic advantage and visibility.



The following aspects of the asset's setting are considered to make a positive contribution to its significance and the ability to appreciate that significance.

- Its elevated and highly prominent position within the landscape, which naturally provides wide-ranging views across the surrounding landscape and provides an understanding of its intended siting and possible territorial control over the wider area under an emerging agricultural regime.
- Its position overlooking the River Frome valley to the west, contributes to an understanding of its siting and significance as a hillfort holding visibility and potential control over routeways.
- Its appreciation alongside other hillforts in the area, the other hillforts reinforcing the topographical and territorial elements of the landscape which triggered the establishment of this asset.

The Site does not contribute to its primary setting elements specified above.

7.3 Church of St Mary (NHLE 1099825)

The church is located 1.1km south-east of the Site.

7.3.1 Historic Interest

The earliest remaining fabric within the church comprises a 14th century tower. Situated on the tower, is a 17th century needle spire. The main body of the church was rebuilt in 1740 to designs by Henry Flitcroft, Clerk of Works to the Crown, for the Foley family.

The building holds historic interest as a church in continued use throughout the medieval and post medieval period, surviving turbulent religious change. Its presence as well as any contemporary documents are illustrative of the land division and management of the church during this period. Its remaining fabric as well as any buried remains would contribute to an understanding of the ecclesiastical influence on the local population.

7.3.2 Architectural Interest

The tower comprises dressed and coursed sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings. The 17th century needle spire is set behind a parapet recess which was capped in 1940. The main body of the church comprises stuccoed brick with a slate roof. To the interior, the church comprises five bay arcades ended by large Tuscan columns. The contemporary box pews remain intact, and there are several monuments commemorating the previous owners.

The building holds architectural interest for the quality of its built fabric and detailing.

7.3.3 Contribution of Setting to Significance

The church lies just outwith the boundary of Stoke Edith RPG at the base of the climb to Seager Hill. It is set back from a narrow lane which winds south from the A438 and is situated behind (east) of Stoke Edith House (NHLE 1179827, former rectory, now house, built c.1740). Its associated graveyard lies directly south of the church.

The significance of the church lies predominantly within its fabric and buried remains which illustrate its historic and architectural interests. The church lies within its associated graveyard which provides the immediate historic setting to the church.

The following aspects of the asset's setting are considered to make a contribution to its significance and the ability to appreciate that significance:

- The interior of the church which provides an enclosed setting from which to enjoy and appreciate the function and designed elements of the church which facilitate worship, be they in fabric or layout.



- Its associated graveyard provides for a defined enclosure within which the church sits.

The Site does not contribute to its primary setting elements specified above.

7.4 Stoke Edith Registered Park & Garden (NHLE 1000897)

The northern boundary of Stoke Edith RPG is located 235m south of the Site.

7.4.1 Historic Interest

Stoke Edith estate was bought by Thomas Foley of Great Witley, the head of the greatest iron-founding family in the West Midlands, for his second son, Paul. Under Paul, the estate was enlarged, and Stoke Edith House rebuilt. Standing east of the church, it was a large, double-pile house with shaped gables of brick with stone details. George London, then the leading garden designer, visited Stoke Edith in 1692. London's designs, which combined amenity and ornament with the conservation of woodlands, were especially suited to the Stoke Edith estate with its emphasis on timber production for the family's iron-making interests. By 1693 an elm avenue had been set out, and a walk with coniferous trees was in the making. The formal terraced gardens set out at this time, rivalled those of Hampton Court, Chatsworth and Blenheim.

The estate was inherited in 1737 by Thomas Lord Foley, who three years later rebuilt the church adjoining the house. Later it passed to the Hon Edward Foley, who in 1790 set about improving Stoke Edith, employing, and introducing for the first time, the landscape architect Humphry Repton (1752-1818) and the architect John Nash (1752-1835), who were later to work in partnership. All remaining traces of London's earlier layout were removed, and the main focus of the outlook from the house turned from the south, where London's schemes had converged, to the gently sloping ground towards the Frome meadows to the north. The public road which until then had run south of Stoke Edith, passing within 30m of the house, was moved c.500m north to its present line. The view from the house was channelled between newly planted coppices and groups of trees towards Shucknall Hill, to the north-west. Other plantings were made elsewhere in the new belted park, and a new pool made towards Tarrington. William Wilkins' cottages were an important part of the estate improvements, and as well as the two lodges Wilkins designed a cottage, intended as a blacksmith's shop, which still stands at the crossroads north of the Hall site.

A formal scheme was reinstated, after 1854 when E T Foley's widow, Lady Emily, commissioned W A Nesfield (1793-1881) to create the geometrical parterre. As part of Nesfield's scheme, plantations were thinned to open up the views from the house and to create a vista to Tarrington to the west.

By the late 19th century, the park extended north to the railway line 1km from the house.

In 1927, Stoke Edith House burnt down and has since remained in ruins. The estate remains in the Foley family.

The estate holds historic interest derived from its association with a renowned family and architects employed to undertake successive landscape and building schemes. Its remaining historic features and buildings as well as any contemporary documents are illustrative of the consecutive landscaping schemes through the post medieval period.

7.4.2 Architectural and Aesthetic Interest

Whilst the principal building was lost to fire in 1927, a number of buildings remain within the RPG which hold architectural interest. These include Grade II and II* listed buildings set out above in **Table 2** which include estate service buildings. This includes the Grade II* lodge houses which sit at entrance points to the parkland, designed by the architect William Wilkins. The architectural interest of the nearest lodge to the Site, Hereford Lodge, is described separately above.

The listing describes that (in 1997) the mid-19th century terrace to the west of the former house survived as a feature albeit overgrown, with fragments of garden ornaments appearing in the



undergrowth. This was part of the formal scheme reinstated after 1854 by W A Nesfield, to create the geometrical parterre. Photographs show the full intricacy of his design, the centrepiece of which was a great curving parterre (the Great Compartment) before the south front, while south-west of the house was a terrace with flower beds and gravel walks.

Also notable in the RPG is the remaining parkland, installed by Repton, which channel views from the house. The remaining avenues are also visible with the avenue east and north-east still in use as access to Tarrington and the A438. The former avenue west, marked by Hereford Lodge, has been lost.

The park holds architectural and aesthetic interest evidenced by the remaining elements of the designed landscape and garden features which where intact, interact internally and connect to aspects of the surrounding landscape, as well as the remaining estate buildings, where their fabric, form and arrangement can be appreciated.

7.4.3 Contribution of Setting to Significance

Stoke Edith RPG lies on the ground rising from the floodplain of the south bank of the River Frome. Passing the asset is the main A438 from Hereford, c.9km to the west, and Ledbury, c.10km to the east. This forms part of the northern boundary of the RPG. Minor roads south off the A438 to Perton and to Tarrington mark the west and east sides of the park, which otherwise is defined by few definite topographical features.

The northern half of the park is fairly flat where it reaches the railway line in the north, and largely under arable cultivation. The southern half of the park, which climbs steeply, is mainly pasture and commercial, largely coniferous, woodland.

The RPG does not include the hamlet of Stoke Edith nor the minor access road to the hamlet, which is surrounded by the RPG boundary on either side.

Internally, some of the remaining landscape elements to the park interact with each other such that some understanding of the design intentions can be observed. Some landscaping elements such as the thinning out of some of the plantations to open up vistas has largely been lost. In addition, the parkland in the east of the RPG is now used for livestock, specifically pigs.

Beyond the boundaries of the parkland, the RPG sits within a predominantly agricultural landscape, albeit modern inclusions comprise the railway line, powerlines and large agricultural sheds within views.

Access roads marked by lodge houses afforded connectivity to the outside to the west, north-east and east.

The following aspects of the asset's setting are considered to make a positive contribution to its significance and the ability to appreciate that significance:

- Where remaining, the individual built and landscaped assets within the parkland which as a whole create a group of assets referencing a clear design intention.
- The parkland and fields within the RPG which grounds the estate within an agricultural setting.
- Channelled views of Shucknall Hill to the north.
- Vista towards Tarrington in the east.



8.0 Impact Assessment

Potential harm to the significance of heritage assets as a result of change to setting under the proposals is discussed below.

8.1 Ethelbert's Camp (NHLE 1003534)

8.1.1 Change

The Site is located 2.2km north-east of the monument. The proposals would introduce visual change within views from the monument of its wider setting. This visual change would be limited to a small area of the panoramic view.

8.1.2 Effect

Setting elements illustrating interest and which would be unaffected, are set out below.

- Its elevated and highly prominent position within the landscape, which naturally provides wide-ranging views across the surrounding landscape and provides an understanding of its intended siting and possible territorial control over the wider area under an emerging agricultural regime.
- Its position overlooking the River Frome valley to the west, contributes to an understanding of its siting and significance as a hillfort holding visibility and potential control over routeways.
- Its appreciation alongside other hillforts in the area, the other hillforts reinforcing the topographical and territorial elements of the landscape which triggered the establishment of this asset.

In this context no impact to important setting elements is predicted. The significance of the asset would be sustained. **No impact** is predicted.

8.2 Church of St Mary (NHLE 1099825)

8.2.1 Change

The Site is located 1.1km north-west of the asset. The proposals would not be able to be viewed from the church or from its surrounding churchyard due to screening. Views are possible of the spire of the church from within the Site (**Appendix A** photo 12), however these views are not a designed view or contribute to an understanding of the historic and architectural interests of the church, such interests best appreciated from close proximity to the building.

8.2.2 Effect

Setting elements illustrating interest and which would be unaffected, are set out below.

- The interior of the church which provides an enclosed setting from which to enjoy and appreciate the function and designed elements of the church which facilitate worship, be they in fabric or layout.
- Its associated graveyard provides for a defined enclosure within which the church sits.

In this context no impact to important setting elements is predicted.

Whilst the proposed development would have views of the spire, this would not alter an understanding or significance of the church.⁸ The proposed development would not compete with views of the spire

⁸ Being tall structures, church towers and spires are often widely visible across land- and townscapes but, where development does not impact on the significance of heritage assets visible in a wider setting or where not allowing



from within the landscape nor block views of the church spire from publicly accessible areas for example kinetic views from the road to the east of the Site.

The significance of the asset would be sustained. **No impact** is predicted.

8.3 Stoke Edith Registered Park & Garden (NHLE 1000897)

8.3.1 Change

The Site is located 235m north of the asset. The proposals would introduce visual change within the wider setting of the asset which would be visible in views from the RPG.

8.3.2 Effect

Setting elements illustrating interest and which would be unaffected, are set out below.

- Where remaining, the individual built and landscaped assets within the parkland which as a whole create a group of assets referencing a clear design intention.
- The parkland and fields within the RPG which grounds the estate within an agricultural setting.
- Vista towards Tarrington in the east.

Whilst the channelled views of Shucknall Hill, which is to the north of the Site (the Site sits between the RPG and the hill) would not be blocked by the proposed solar array, the proposals would be seen within views to the north and from areas within the RPG. These views would show the solar array as a small part of the wider area which includes modern intrusions including a railway line, powerlines and modern agricultural sheds.

Therefore, overall, it is considered that there will be **less than substantial harm** to the significance of Stoke Edith RPG. The harm within this bracket would be minimal. This acknowledges the visibility that would equate to a change within the wider setting of the asset but reflects a lack of impact to identified and specific important setting elements.

This harm should be weighed in accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF. The public benefits around a secure electricity supply should be considered within this balance.

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significance to be appreciated, they are unlikely to be affected by small-scale development, unless that development competes with them, as tower blocks and wind turbines may. Even then, such an impact is more likely to be on the landscape values of the tower or spire rather than the heritage values, unless the development impacts on its significance, for instance by impacting on a designed or associative view. (Historic England 2017:7)



9.0 Conclusion

This assessment, undertaken with due regard to the guidance published by Historic England and in full accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, has identified those heritage assets located within the Site and its vicinity and has described their significance.

Overall, **less than substantial harm** has been identified to one designated heritage asset, Stoke Edith Registered Park and Garden. This harm should be weighed in accordance with paragraph 208 of the NPPF (2023). No other harm has been identified to the other designated heritage assets.

This assessment has identified known and anticipated archaeological remains within the Site and has discussed their significance in accordance with the NPPF (2023) paragraph 200. Potential remains within the Site relate possible deposits of palaeoenvironmental/geoarchaeological interest and findspots relating to prehistoric activity of a transient nature and medieval or post medieval agricultural activity. The identified archaeological potential of the Site has not referenced a potential for the presence of remains of high importance. Therefore, it is unlikely that any archaeological remains within the Site would be of such significance as to preclude development.

In determining whether intrusive archaeological evaluation is required for the Site, a balanced view is needed which with reference to the potential to cause greater, and potentially unnecessary, harm to archaeological remains within the Site area through archaeological investigation, versus the likely extent of any impact stemming from construction of the solar arrays. A targeted approach, informed by the proposed site layout (e.g., targeting areas of greater impact) and a scheme of geophysical survey is likely to be most appropriate, ensuring a proportionate approach that avoids any unnecessary harm to buried remains within the Site area. It is anticipated that any such work could be undertaken as a condition to planning consent.



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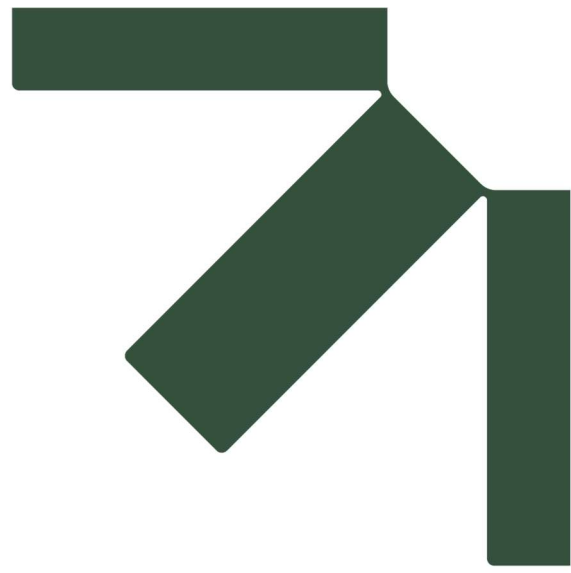
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Appendix A Site Inspection Photos



Photo 1: General view of Site, looking west.



Photo 2: General view of Site, looking north, railway embankment on right.



Photo 3: View of southern fields in the Site, looking south.





Photo 4: View of south-west field in the Site and unnamed stream through centre of the Site, looking west.



Photo 5: Location of potential LiDAR feature of sub-circular enclosure, no earthworks visible.



Photo 6: Location of potential LiDAR feature of sub-circular enclosure, no earthworks visible.





Photo 7: Hereford Lodge, view from Hereford Road.



Photo 8: Views of Hereford Lodge (marked by red arrow) possible from the Site.



Photo 9: View from the Site looking north, no views of Pigeon Farmhouse (NHLE 1099832) or Shucknall Court (HER 46985) possible due to intervening vegetation and buildings.





Photo 10: View from the Site looking north-east, no views of Garford Farm (NHLE 1157130) possible due to the railway embankment that blocks views.

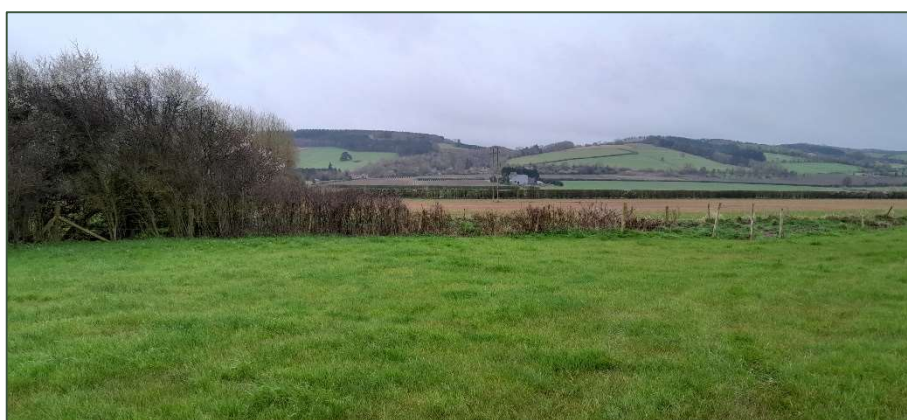


Photo 11: View from the Site looking south, no views of Perton Farm (HER 46981) imperceptible due to distance and intervening vegetation.

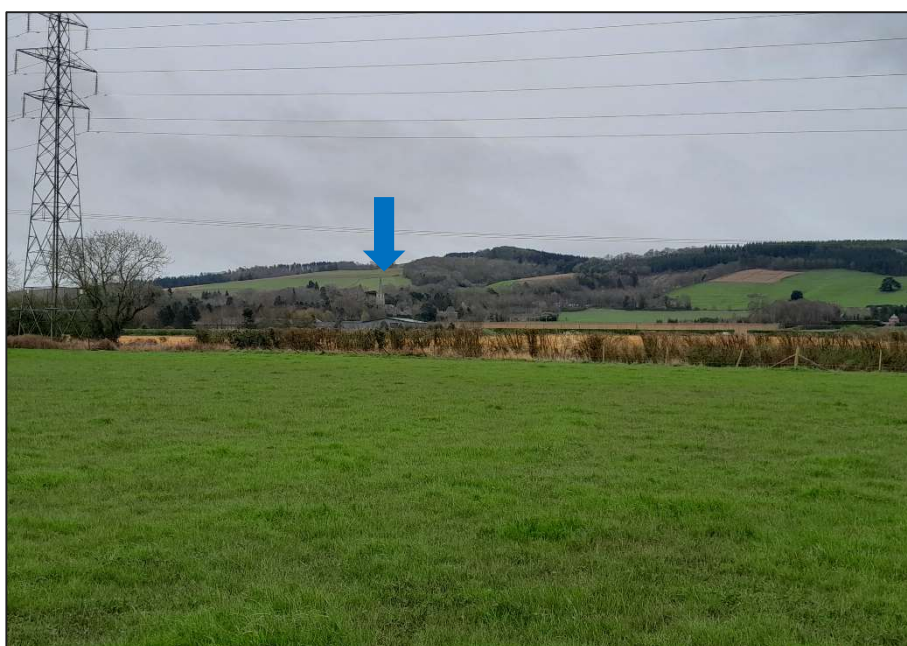
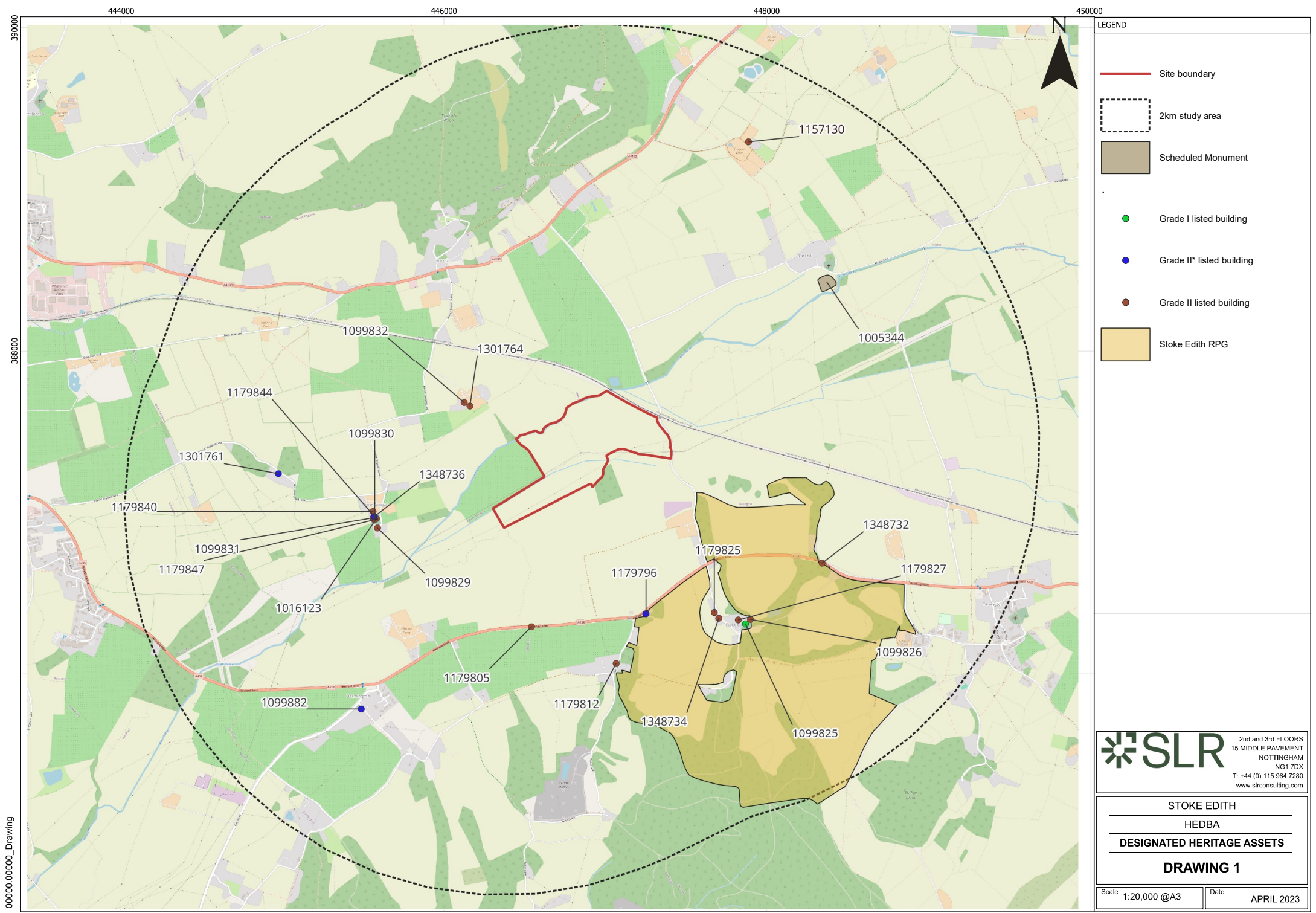


Photo 12: Photo 13: Views of Church of St Mary (marked by blue arrow) possible from the Site.





LEGEND

- Site boundary
- 2km study area
- Scheduled Monument
- Grade I listed building
- Grade II* listed building
- Grade II listed building
- Stoke Edith RPG

SLR

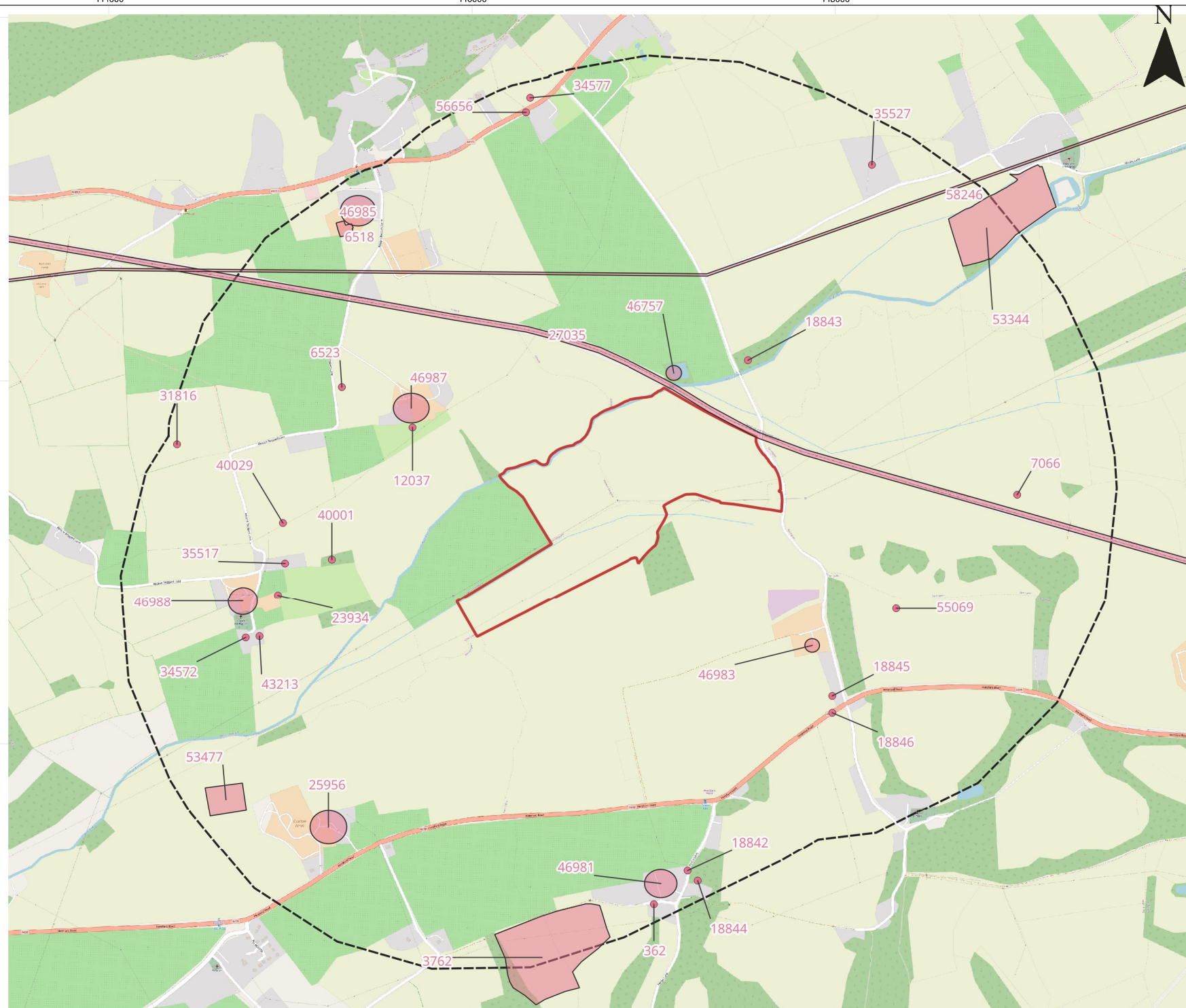
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STOKE EDITH
HEDBA
DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS
DRAWING 1

Scale 1:20,000 @A3

Date **APRIL 2023**

00000.00000_Drawing



LEGEND

Site boundary

1km study area

HER asset



STOKE EDITH
 HEDBA
 NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS
 DRAWING 2

Scale 1:20,000 @A3	Date APRIL 2023
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