# Land South of A507 and West of A10, Buntingford

## Heritage Statement

June 2024

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**Report**
Heritage Statement

**Site**
Land South of A507 and West of A10, Buntingford

**Client**
Hallam Land Management Ltd (South Midlands)

**Planning Authority**
East Herts District Council

**Grid reference**
TL 35152 29319

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## Contents

Executive Summary
1.0 Introduction
2.0 Planning Background & Development Plan Framework
3.0 Historical Context & Location of Heritage Assets
4.0 Proposed Development & Potential Impact on Heritage Assets
5.0 Summary & Conclusions
Sources Consulted
Appendix A: List of Illustrations

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Site Location
Figure 2 Location of Designated Assets in the vicinity
Figure 3 1800 Ordnance Survey Drawing
Figure 4 1842 Throcking Tithe Map & 1843 Aspenden Tithe Map
Figure 5 Ordnance Survey Map 1883-1888 (1:10,560)
Figure 6 Ordnance Survey Map 1899 (1:10,560
Figure 7 Ordnance Survey Map 1948-1950 (1:10,560)
Figure 8 Ordnance Survey Map 1960 (1:10,000)
Figure 9 Ordnance Survey Map 1999 (1:10,000)
Figure 10 Ordnance Survey Map 2023 1:10,000)

## List of Plates

Plate 1 Aspenden Hall
Plate 2 St Mary's Church

## Executive Summary

This heritage statement considers land south of the A507 and west of the A10, Buntingford (the site) and the potential impact of the proposed development for employment land with associated landscaping and infrastructure.

In accordance with Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Plan policy, this report first identifies and describes the historical development of the subject site and outlines the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets before going on to consider the impact of the masterplan proposals on that significance.

There are 99 listed buildings within a 1km radius of the site boundaries. The vast majority of these listed buildings are contained within Buntingford Conservation Area located c. 750 metres east of the site boundary. There are also several non-designated heritage assets within the study area. However, most assets identified have been scoped out of the report, on account of their distance from the site, the local topography, intervening built form and no meaningful historical association between them and the subject site.

This heritage statement assesses the potential impact of the proposed development on the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, where there is potential for impact on their setting.

The outline proposals, subject to siting, design and layout of built form, are likely to result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Aspenden Conservation Area, the Grade II listed Aspenden Hall (NHLE 1101364) and the Grade I St Mary's Church (NHLE 1347966), engaging paragraph 208 of the NPPF.

# 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This heritage statement considers land south of the A507 and west of the A10, Buntingford (Figure 1), hereinafter referred to as the 'site'.

1.2 In accordance with the Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the requirement for applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets including contribution to setting, the report draws together available information on designated and non-designated heritage assets. The assessment includes the results of a site survey, an examination of published and unpublished records, charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise and considers relevant local and national policy and guidance.

1.3 The Historic Environment Record has been consulted (online) and the relevant designated and non-designated heritage assets located in the immediate vicinity are identified in Figure 2. A site visit was undertaken on 20th November 2023 when the conditions were cold, bright, sunny and visibility was good.

1.4 The report enables relevant parties to assess the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets within and in the vicinity of the site, thus enabling potential impacts on these assets to be identified along with the need for design solutions.

## Location & Description

1.5 The site is located to the west of existing settlement in Buntingford and east of Thistley Vale Brook. The site includes a section of Baldock Road to the north, is bound by agricultural land to the north, west and south, and is bound by the A10 to the east.

1.6 There are scattered farmstead/former farmstead buildings within the wider area. The town of Buntingford lies to the east of the A10. The site is shown on Figure 1.

# 2.0 Planning Background & Development Plan Framework

## Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

2.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out broad policies and obligations relevant to the protection of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas and their settings.

2.2 Section 66(1) states:

*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.*

2.3 Section 69 of the Act requires local authorities to define as conservation areas any *areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance* and Section 72 gives local authorities a general duty to pay special attention *to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area* in exercising their planning functions. These duties are taken to apply only within a Conservation Area. The Act does not make specific provision with regard to the setting of a Conservation Area, that is provided by the policy framework outlined below.

## National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

2.4 Government policy in relation to the historic environment is outlined in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF), entitled *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*. This provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:

- Delivery of sustainable development;
- understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;
- conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
- recognition of the contribution that heritage assets make to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

2.5 Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term.

2.6 Paragraph 200 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset, and that the level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.

2.7 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

2.8 *Designated Heritage Assets* comprise: World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas.

2.9 *Significance* is defined as: the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

2.10 *Setting* is defined as: the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

2.11 The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). In relation to the historic environment, paragraph 18a-001 states that:

*Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of the National Planning Policy Framework's drive to achieve sustainable development (as defined in Paragraphs 6-10). The appropriate conservation of heritage assets forms one of the 'Core Planning Principles'.*

2.12 Paragraph 18a-002 makes a clear statement that any decisions relating to Listed Buildings and their settings and Conservation Areas must address the statutory considerations of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.

2.13 Paragraph 18a-013 outlines that the assessment of the impact of a proposed development on the setting of a heritage asset needs to take into account and be proportionate to the significance of the asset being considered, and the degree to which the proposed development enhances or detracts from the significance of the asset and the ability to appreciate the significance.

2.14 The NPPG outlines that although the extent and importance of setting is often expressed in visual terms, it can also be influenced by other factors such as noise, dust and vibration. Historic relationships between places can also be an important factor stressing ties between places that may have limited or no intervisibility with each other. This may be historic as well as aesthetic connections that contribute or enhance the significance of one or more of the heritage assets.

2.15 Paragraph 18a-013 concludes:

*The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting. This will vary over time and according to circumstance. When assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its on-going conservation.*

2.16 The key test in NPPF paragraphs 205-208 is whether a proposed development will result in substantial harm or less than substantial harm. However, substantial harm is not defined in the NPPF. Paragraph 18a-017 of the NPPG provides additional guidance on substantial harm. It states:

*What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.*

2.17 Paragraph 208 of the NPPF outlines that where a proposed development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm arising should be weighed against the public benefits accruing from the proposed development. Paragraph 18a-020 of the NPPG outlines what is meant by public benefits:

*Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the*

*National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 7). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.*

2.18 Paragraph 209 states:

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

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

## Local Planning Policy

2.20 The East Hertfordshire District Plan was adopted in 2018. It contains the following relevant design and heritage policies:

***Policy DES1 Masterplanning***

*All 'significant' development proposals will be required to prepare a Masterplan setting out the quantum and distribution of land uses; access; sustainable high quality design and layout principles; necessary infrastructure; the relationship between the site and other adjacent and nearby land uses; landscape and heritage assets; and other relevant matters.*

*II. The Masterplan will be collaboratively prepared, involving site promoters, land owners, East Herts Council, town and parish councils and other relevant key stakeholders. The Masterplan will be further informed by public participation.*

*III. In order to ensure that sites are planned and delivered comprehensively, any application for development on part of the site will be assessed against its contribution to the Masterplan as a whole.*

***Policy HA1 Designated Heritage Assets***

*I. Development proposals should preserve and where appropriate enhance the historic environment of East Herts.*

*II. Development proposals that would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.*

*III. Where there is evidence of neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset will not be taken into account in any decision.*

*IV. The Council will, as part of a positive strategy, pursue opportunities for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment recognising its role and contribution in achieving sustainable development.*

***Policy HA2 Non-Designated Heritage Assets***

*I. The Council will engage with key stakeholders and local communities to identify non-designated heritage assets that contribute to local distinctiveness and refer to existing information in the historic environment record.*

*II. Where a proposal would adversely affect a non-designated heritage asset, regard will be had to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

***Policy HA4 Conservation Areas***

*I. New development, extensions and alterations to existing buildings in Conservation Areas will be permitted provided that they preserve or enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the area. Development proposals outside a Conservation Area which affect its setting will be considered likewise. Proposals will be expected to:*

*(a) Respect established building lines, layouts and patterns;*
*(b) Use materials and adopt design details which reinforce local character and are traditional to the area;*
*(c) Be of a scale, proportion, form, height, design and overall character that accords with and complements the surrounding area;*
*(d) In the case of alterations and extensions, be complementary and sympathetic to the parent building; and*
*(e) Have regard to any 'Conservation Area Character Appraisals' prepared by the District Council and safeguard all aspects which contribute to the area's special interest and significance, including important views and green spaces.*
*(f) Where development proposals relate to Conservation Area Management Proposals the duty to preserve or enhance will be applied. Development proposals, including minor development under an Article 4 direction, will be expected to 'preserve' surviving architectural features identified as being significant to the character or appearance of the area or, where previously*

*lost, to 'enhance' that character and appearance through the authentic restoration of those lost features,*

*II. Permission for the demolition of buildings or structures within a Conservation Area will only be granted if it makes no positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and the replacement is of good design and satisfies the above requirements of this policy.*

***Policy HA7 Listed Buildings***

*I. The Council will actively seek opportunities to sustain and enhance the significance*
*of Listed Buildings and ensure that they are in viable uses consistent with their conservation.*

*II. In considering applications the Council will ensure that proposals involving the alteration, extension, or change of use of a Listed Building will only be permitted where:*

*(a) The proposal would not have any adverse effect on the architectural and historic character or appearance of the interior or exterior of the building or its setting; and*
*(b) The proposal respects the scale, design, materials and finishes of the existing building(s), and preserves its historic fabric.*

*III. Proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will only be permitted where the setting of the building is preserved.*

### Neighbourhood Planning

2.21 A Neighbourhood Plan was adopted for Buntingford in 2017, covering the plan period 2014-2031. In addition to a general thrust towards landscape led development for new housing, Appendix 4 contains a Design Code for new housing development.

### Other Guidance

*Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015)*

2.22 The purpose of this document is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the NPPF and NPPG. It outlines a six-stage process to the assembly and analysis of relevant information relating to heritage assets potentially affected by a proposed development:

- Understand the significance of the affected assets;
- Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance;
- Avoid, minimise and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF;
- Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance;
- Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change; and
- Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

*Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2017)*

2.23 Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 provides guidance on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets.

2.24 The document restates the definition of setting as outlined in Annex 2 of the NPPF. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context; while it is largely a visual term, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by noise, vibration, odour and other factors. The document makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset, nor is it a heritage designation, though land within a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of a heritage asset.

2.25 The Good Practice Advice Note sets out a five-stage process for assessing the implications of proposed developments on setting:

1. Identification of heritage assets which are likely to be affected by proposals;
2. Assessment of whether and what contribution the setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset;
3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset;
4. Maximising enhancement and reduction of harm on the setting of heritage assets; and
5. Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes

2.26 The guidance reiterates the NPPF in stating that where developments affecting the setting of heritage assets results in a level of harm to significance, this harm, whether substantial or less than substantial, should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

# 3.0 Historical Context & Location of Heritage Assets

## Introduction

3.1 The following section presents a historical development of the site and wider area through the results of a map regression exercise and review of relevant background documentation.

3.2 The location of designated and non-designated heritage assets within and surrounding the site are also discussed below; these are shown on Figure 2.

## Historical Background

### *Summary: Buntingford*

3.3 Buntingford was not recorded as a settlement by the 1086 Domesday survey. The nearest settlements to the site that were recorded by the survey were Aspenden, c. 500m to the south of the site, and Corneybury, c. 200m to the east of the site. Aspenden was listed in the hundred of Edwinstree with a recorded population of 10 households and an annual value of 4 pounds by 1086. Eudo the Steward held Aspenden at this time, having assumed land that previously belonged to King Edward the Confessor. Corneybury was also listed in the hundred of Edwinstree, with a recorded population of 10 households and an annual value of 13 shillings 2 pence. Count Eustace of Boulogne held Corneybury at this time, having assumed land that previously belonged to King Edward the Confessor and Harold Godwinson, Earl of Wessex (Open Domesday).

3.4 The following historical summary of the area is taken from the Buntingford Conservation Area Appraisal:

*Buntingford is not documented until the 13th century and in 1288 was described as a hamlet with a chapel on the highway and church some distance away. The chapel referred to is assumed to have stood 9 on the site of present day St Peter's built by the Rev Alexander Strange in the early 1600's 'for the benefit of the Inhabitants, who are at a great distance from the church', (the latter is now in the process of an imaginative conversion to a house). In 1338 the Lord of the Manor received license to transfer her market to the highway with the grant of a fair...*

*Prior to the late 19th century Buntingford as we know it today consisted of an accumulation of land falling in the parishes of Layston, Wyddial, Throcking and Aspendon.*

3.5 The 1848 publication of A Topographical Dictionary of England has the following entry for Buntingford:

*BUNTINGFORD, a chapelry, and formerly a market-town, in the parishes of Aspenden, Layston, Throcking, and Wyddiall, union of Royston and Buntingford, hundred of Edwinstree, county of Hertford, 12 miles (N. N. E.) from Hertford; containing 581 inhabitants.*

*This place takes its name from a ford on the river Rib, near which a blacksmith, named Bunt or Bunting, had a forge. It is pleasantly situated on a gentle ascent between two hills, and consists of one street, half a mile in length: the houses are in general well built, and of respectable appearance; and the inhabitants are amply supplied with water.*

*The trade is principally in leather and malt: the fairs, formerly on June 29th and November 30th, and each for four days, are now irregularly held.*

*The county magistrates hold petty-sessions here for the division, and a septennial court leet is held for the hundred.*

*The living is a perpetual curacy, annexed to the vicarage of Layston. The chapel, dedicated to St. Peter, is a commodious brick building, erected by subscription, in 1626, through the exertions of the Rev. Alexander Strange, vicar of Layston, who lies interred in it: from its convenient situation, it is appropriated to the general use of the parishioners of Layston, the parish church, half a mile distant, being resorted to only for marriages.*

*There are places of worship for the Society of Friends and Independents.*

*The free grammar school was endowed in 1630, by Eliz. Freeman, with lands producing £10. 10. per annum; which endowment was augmented with a moiety of the produce of land left by Seth Ward, Bishop of Salisbury, to Christ's College, Cambridge, the other being applied to the endowment in that college of four scholarships, of £12 per annum each, for boys on this foundation.*

*Eight almshouses, for four aged men and four women, were founded in 1668, and endowed with land by Bishop Ward; and the bishop also gave £600 to purchase land, the rental of which is applied to the apprenticing of children: he was a native of the town, and received the rudiments of his education in the grammar school.*

**3.6** Aspenden is a medieval settlement, lying at the gate of the original Aspenden Hall. The Church of St Mary dates to the 11th century. In 1874 Kelly's Directory refers to it as a parish and village, with the church in the grounds of Aspenden Hall. As stated in the Aspenden Conservation Area Appraisal, the name may be a derivation of 'aespe denu', meaning aspen tree valley. Ashington Hall was rebuilt in 1856 for Sir Henry Lushington, replacing a former Jacobean Hall.

## Map Regression

3.7 The 1800 Buntingford OS Drawing (Figure 3) shows the site across land to the west of settlement in Buntingford. Baldock Road runs through the site along the northern site boundary.

3.8 The 1843 Aspenden tithe map (Figure 4) lists the site across the following plots of land:

| Plot No. | Plot Name | Owner | Occupier | Landuse |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 250 | In Rowdell Field | Sir Henry Lushington | John Sibley | Arable |
| 251 | In Rowdell Field | William Butt | James Porter | Arable |
| 252 | In Rowdell Field | Charles Green & Daniel Green | John Akers | Arable |
| 253 | In Rowdell Field | Sir Henry Lushington | John Sibley | Arable |
| 254 | In Rowdell Field | William Butt | James Porter | Arable |
| 255 | In Rowdell Field | Sir Henry Lushington | John Sibley | Arable |
| 256 | In Rowdell Field | William Butt | James Porter | Arable |
| 257 | In Rowdell Field | Elizabeth Font | John Sibley | Arable |
| 258 | In Rowdell Field | Charles Green & Daniel Green | John Akers | Arable |
| 259 | In Rowdell Field | William Butt | James Porter | Arable |
| 260 | In Rowdell Field | Sir Henry Lushington | John Sibley | Arable |
| 264 | Tansey Pightle | William Eling | William Eling | Pasture |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 329 | Three Cornered Close | Charles James Dimsdale | Stephen Archer | Arable |
| 330 | Part of Six Acres | George Coleman | George Coleman | Arable |
| 331 | Part of Six Acres | George Coleman | George Coleman | Arable |
| 333 | Tyre Hill & Rowdell | Sir Henry Lushington | Robert Clarke | Arable |

3.9 The 1883-1884 OS map (Figure 5) shows the site across land to the west of settlement in Buntingford. Thistley Vale Brook is shown to flow southwards to the west of the site. The Thicket woodland borders the site to the south. Parkland associated with Aspenden Hall extends across the landscape to the south of the site. A footpath or track bisects the site from north-east to south-west, and another footpath or track extends from the centre of the site to the eastern site boundary. Tire Hill is marked along the northern site boundary. Milky Lane borders the south-eastern corner of the site.

3.10 The 1899 OS map (Figure 6) shows that the area of parkland associated with Aspenden Hall has been much reduced. Milky Lane is no longer marked; a separate road is shown bordering the site to the south. There are no footpaths or tracks marked within the site.

3.11 A track or footpath is shown to bisect the site from north to south by the time of the 1948-1950 OS map (Figure 7). The road no longer borders the southern site boundary. A water works is marked adjacent to the north-eastern corner of the site.

3.12 The 1960 OS map (Figure 8) appears to show the path of an infrastructural development bisecting the site from south-west to north-east.

3.13 The 1999 OS map (Figure 9) no longer shows this infrastructural development, or the footpaths or tracks within the site. The A10 has been constructed to the east of the site by the time of this mapping. A covered reservoir has been constructed to the north of the site, north of Baldock Road. Residential development in Buntingford has expanded westwards.

3.14 There is little change within the site by the time of the 2023 OS map (Figure 10). Buntingford Industrial Park is shown to the north of the site, west of the A10. Residential development in Buntingford has continued to expand westwards and northwards.

## Heritage Assets

### *Listed Buildings*

3.15 There are six listed buildings located in the immediate vicinity of the site, including:

- Farmhouse of How Green Farm, Grade II (NHLE 1347965)
- Barn at How Green Farm, Grade II (NHLE 1101363)
- White Cottage and Buttermilk Farm, Grade II (NHLE 1101362)
- 66, Baldock Road, Grade II (NHLE 1347971)
- Aspenden Hall, Grade II (NHLE 1101364)
- St Mary's Church, Grade I (NHLE 1347966)

3.16 The abovementioned listed buildings, shown at Figure 2, will be assessed for their potential to be impacted by the proposed development. The area beyond this immediate vicinity has been reviewed and no other sensitive heritage assets have been identified as meriting further assessment in relation to the proposed development.

### *Conservation Areas*

3.17 The site is within approximately 525m of the boundary of the Aspenden Conservation Area and within approximately 500m of the Buntingford Conservation Area. The Buntingford Conservation Area is physically distanced from the site with no intervisibility. As such it has been scoped out of this report. There are no other Conservation Areas which merit further assessment in relation to the proposed development.

### *Registered Parks and Gardens*

3.18 The nearest registered park and garden is The Garden House, Cottered (Grade II*, NHLE 1000558), located approximately 3.1km to the west of the site. This park and garden is considered to be sufficiently distant from the site with no intervisibility. As such, it has been scoped out of this report. There are no other registered parks and gardens which merit further assessment in relation to the proposed development.

### *Conservation Areas*

3.19 Scheduled monuments will be considered for their potential to be impacted by the proposed development in a separate archaeological desk-based assessment.

3.20 There are non-designated heritage assets in the wider area, particularly within the two conservation areas, however none that are likely to be affected by the proposals and they have been scoped out of this report.

# 4.0 Proposed Development & Potential Impact on Heritage Assets

## Background

4.1 This section identifies and assesses the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage assets located within and in the vicinity of the subject site. In assessing the heritage impacts of the proposal, the relevant policies cited in section 2.0 have been referenced.

## The Proposed Development

4.2 The site is currently in use as agricultural fields.

4.3 The site is proposed for employment development with associated landscaping and infrastructure.

## Potential Impacts on Heritage Assets

4.4 There are several listed buildings, two conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets, located in the immediate and wider vicinity of the site. The proposed development, therefore, has the potential to impact on the settings and significance of the heritage assets identified. The vast majority of listed buildings within the study area are located within the Buntingford Conservation Area. There is no intervisibility or known historic association between the site and the Buntingford Conservation Area and as such development within the site will not result in harm to the listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets there, or the conservation area itself.

## Assessment of Significance and Potential Impact on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

4.5 In order to understand how any new development could affect the significance of these heritage assets, it is important to understand the specific heritage values which combine to inform that significance. An understanding of the contribution setting makes to its significance is also considered.

4.6 A site visit has been undertaken to assess the relationship between listed buildings in the vicinity of the site. There is no intervisibility between the site and the following assets, therefore they have been scoped out of this report:

- White cottage and Buttermilk Hall Farm, Grade II (NHLE 1101362), due to intervening buildings and vegetation
- Farmhouse of How Green Farm, Grade II (NHLE 1347965), due to intervening land, buildings and road infrastructure

- Barn at How Green Farm, Grade II (NHLE 1101363), due to intervening land, buildings and road infrastructure
- 66, Baldock Road, Grade II (NHLE 1347971), due to intervening land, buildings and road infrastructure

4.7 The listed buildings in the following sections have been assessed at a high level for possible generalised impacts. These assets will be assessed in more detail beyond the master planning stage.

**Aspenden Hall**

4.8 The listed building is located c. 700m to the south of the site; the list description states:

*Country house, now housing grain dryers. 1856 replacing Jacobean house, for the 2nd Sir Henry Lushington. Gutted c1963 for farm use. Stuccoed brick, low pitched roof concealed by parapets. A large rectangular 2 storeys, 7 windows classical house facing E in Doric style with channelled pilasters and pedimented central feature to E front, where there is a pedimented porch supported by twinned Doric columns. Plate glass sash windows generally, but French windows to ground floor on W (garden) front. Moulded base, string course and eaves to parapet breaking forward round pilasters on all sides of house. Single storey pedimented conservatory in middle of S end. Service wing at N demolished. Important landscape feature and part of setting of parish church. (VCH (1914) 17: RCHM Typescript: RCHM Monuments Threatened or Destroyed (1963) 42).*



Plate 1 Aspenden Hall

4.9 The significance of the building is primarily derived from the historic and architectural special interest of its built fabric which is manifest in the materials, methods of construction and typology of the building, together with its level of intactness and associative value with the village of Aspenden and St Mary's Church. It is noted the building was gutted in the 1960s for farm use and there are several modern additions and buildings to the north, which detract from significance. The internal state is not known. The immediate

setting has therefore altered over time with several modern outbuildings framing the building to the north.

4.10 The immediate setting of the asset relates to the historic buildings which form part of the complex of (mainly modern) buildings surrounding the asset, and the locally listed formally planned landscape in which it sits. The sweeping grounds, including a large pond in the valley bottom, are an important open landscape feature. The East Hertfordshire Council Historic Parks and Gardens SDP (2007) lists the grounds as a locally important Historic Park and Garden. The surrounding landscape contributes to the setting of the hall, as does the village of Aspenden to the south, including the Grade I listed St Mary's Church, located on the sweeping approach to the Hall.

4.11 The setting of the asset relates primarily to the landscaped gardens (including a large pond within what is clearly a planned landscape). The asset is best experienced in the context of the neighbouring Grade I listed St Mary's Church and several non-designated heritage assets within the village (albeit it visually separated) all of which generate illustrative and architectural value to the setting. The primary frontage of the asset faces north-west, towards Buntingford.

4.12 The site lies to the north of the house and is some distance away, however historical research has found that parts of the site were once owned by Sir Henry Lushington, the owner of Aspenden Hall and associated land. By the time of the 1899 OS map this relationship appears to have been severed with the site no longer appearing to lie adjacent to parkland in Aspenden. In modern times the land is clearly arable and does not have the landscape characteristics of the parkland to the south.

4.13 It is known that the site was once in the same ownership as Aspenden Hall, therefore there is some historical association between the two (since severed). However, actual visual connection is limited to glimpsed intervisibility.

*Impact of Development Proposal*

4.14 The modern outbuildings and glimpses of the Hall may be possible from within the site, as indicated by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) produced within the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). However, part of the site is proposed for structural planting and public open space, with a dense wooded area (the Thicket) between it and built form. As such, subject to the height, scale and siting of development, intervisibility is likely to be limited. Historic mapping and research indicates historic links, therefore the site contributes to the setting of Aspenden Hall, and this historical association needs to be considered. On balance, due to some visibility and the historical association of the land, subject to further analysis, it is concluded there would

be a degree of harm to setting (less than substantial harm, at the lower end of the scale).

4.15 The set-back of the new-build and potential tree screening to the southern boundary of the site would effectively minimise the presence of built form, restricting it to very glimpsed views within the treeline. An alternative approach is to keep the boundary open to allow views towards the heritage asset and therefore widen the experience of the heritage views on publicly accessible land, with this heritage benefit potentially mitigating any potential harm to the setting of the asset from built form further within the site.

### St Mary's Church

4.16 Located c. 800m to the south of the site, this Grade I listed building is described as follows in the introduction to its full listing:

*Parish church. CII chancel on different alignment from late CII nave; chancel part-rebuilt and lengthened to E in C13. S aisle c1340; W tower c1390; in late C15 SE chapel added, S aisle altered, nave heightened, new roofs to nave and aisle, and E wall of nave removed for a rood-screen; S porch built c1525 for widow of Sir Robert Clifford; SE Chapel altered 1622 for Ralph Freman of Aspenden Hall. Restored 1873 by Sir Arthur Blomfield who added a steep red tiled pitched roof over the old roof of the SE Chapel, and 3 gabled dormers on S with quatrefoil clear storey lights to the nave*

4.17 The significance of the building is primarily derived from the historic and architectural special interest of its built fabric which is manifest in its construction methods and materials, together with its decorative elements and retention of original internal fixtures. The asset gains a measure of associative value with Aspenden Hall.

4.18 The setting of the asset relates primarily to its churchyard plot and in a secondary sense to Aspenden Hall, which can be seen when standing outside the church and looking north (although the entrance to the Hall itself is gated). Its landmark character is quite limited beyond its immediate environs as the churchyard is enclosed by dense woodland to the east and a tree belt to the north.

4.19 The church is best experienced primarily from within the churchyard and surrounding streets and other vantage points on the approach to Aspenden Hall. The site does not form an important or positive element of its setting.



Plate 2 St Mary's Church

*Impact of Development Proposal*

4.20 Given tree cover and distance, it is likely that from within the site the upper elements of the asset would only be experienced in glimpsed views, and return views from the church to the site are likely to be very limited, as indicated by the ZTV. The set-back of the proposed built form and the location of the proposed open space on the southern side of the site would effectively minimise the presence of built form on views from the church outward, restricting it to very glimpsed views across the land. As such, the proposals may give rise to a low level of harm, engaging paragraph 208 of the NPPF, at the lower end of the scale.

**Aspenden Conservation Area**

4.21 The Aspenden Conservation Area is located c. 525m to the south of the site. A Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted by East Hertfordshire Council in 2018.

4.22 The Conservation Area includes the historic core of the settlement, centred along one street and to the grounds of Aspenden Hall. An assessment of its character and appearance is contained within the Conservation Area Appraisal; in summary it is characterised by its landscaped setting; historic

buildings dating from the 15th century period onwards along the Street; two streams and a pond and the Grade I listed St Mary's Church is a focal point (dating from the 11th century). Historic buildings within the Conservation Area, many of which are listed buildings, dating from a broad date range, contribute to the character, appearance and understanding of the development of the area.

4.23 With the exception of Aspenden Hall, built form is on a domestic scale, primarily consisting of two-storey dwellings, with buildings set back from the road within spacious plots. A focal building, the Grade I listed St Mary's Church is located within the northern section of the Conservation Area on the road that leads up to Aspenden Hall. The character of the townscape is intimate, with a small-scale pattern of development. St Mary's Church is relatively enclosed by vegetation and the church yard, providing a degree of separation from the village.

4.24 In overall terms, the significance of the Conservation Area is derived from its origins and character as a long-established rural settlement. The well-preserved historic core has a focus of vernacular buildings, many of which are statutorily listed, and a layout based on one street that has remained intact. On all sides of the core the boundary of the Conservation Area takes in tracts of open land extending across the High Rib Valley.

4.25 The primary significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset derives from the built form of the core. There is a close relationship between agricultural land and settlement, which contributes positively to its significance by reinforcing the legibility of the settlement as a small rural village linked with the surrounding agricultural landscape. The setting of the Conservation Area, with the surrounding parkland of Aspenden Hall and farmland, continues this relationship, with views into and out of the designated area, which contributes positively to the significance of the Conservation Area.

*Impact of Proposals*

4.26 The ZTV indicates that the majority of the conservation area is screened from view in relation to the site, and vice versa. While there is potential for intervisibility between the site and the northern extent of the conservation area around Aspenden Hall, the presence of the high levels of tree screening, including the Thicket, would restrict visibility.

4.27 Open space is proposed in the southern section of the site, therefore this provides a sizable green buffer between proposed built form and the heritage asset. Subject to further analysis, it is concluded there would be a degree of harm to setting of the Conservation Area, engaging paragraph 208 of the NPPF (resulting in less than substantial harm, at the lower end of the scale). If the land is to be in public use with increased public access, a greater

appreciation of the heritage assets would be a direct heritage benefit (and therefore is a public benefit to be weighed in the planning balance).

## 5.0 Summary & Conclusions

5.1 In summary, the emerging proposals have been assessed in the context of surrounding heritage assets in terms of generalised impacts of the proposed development of land south of the A507 and west of the A10, Buntingford (the site) and the potential impact of the proposed development for employment land and associated landscaping and infrastructure.

5.2 In accordance with Paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) and Local Plan policy, this report first identifies and describes the historical development of the subject site and outlines the significance of the designated and non-designated heritage assets before going on to consider the impact of the masterplan proposals on that significance.

5.3 The outline proposals, subject to siting, design and layout of built form, are likely to result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Aspenden Conservation Area, the Grade II listed Aspenden Hall (NHLE 1101364) and the Grade I St Mary's Church (NHLE 1347966), engaging paragraph 208 of the NPPF.

# Sources

## Archive

The National Archive
Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

## Cartographic

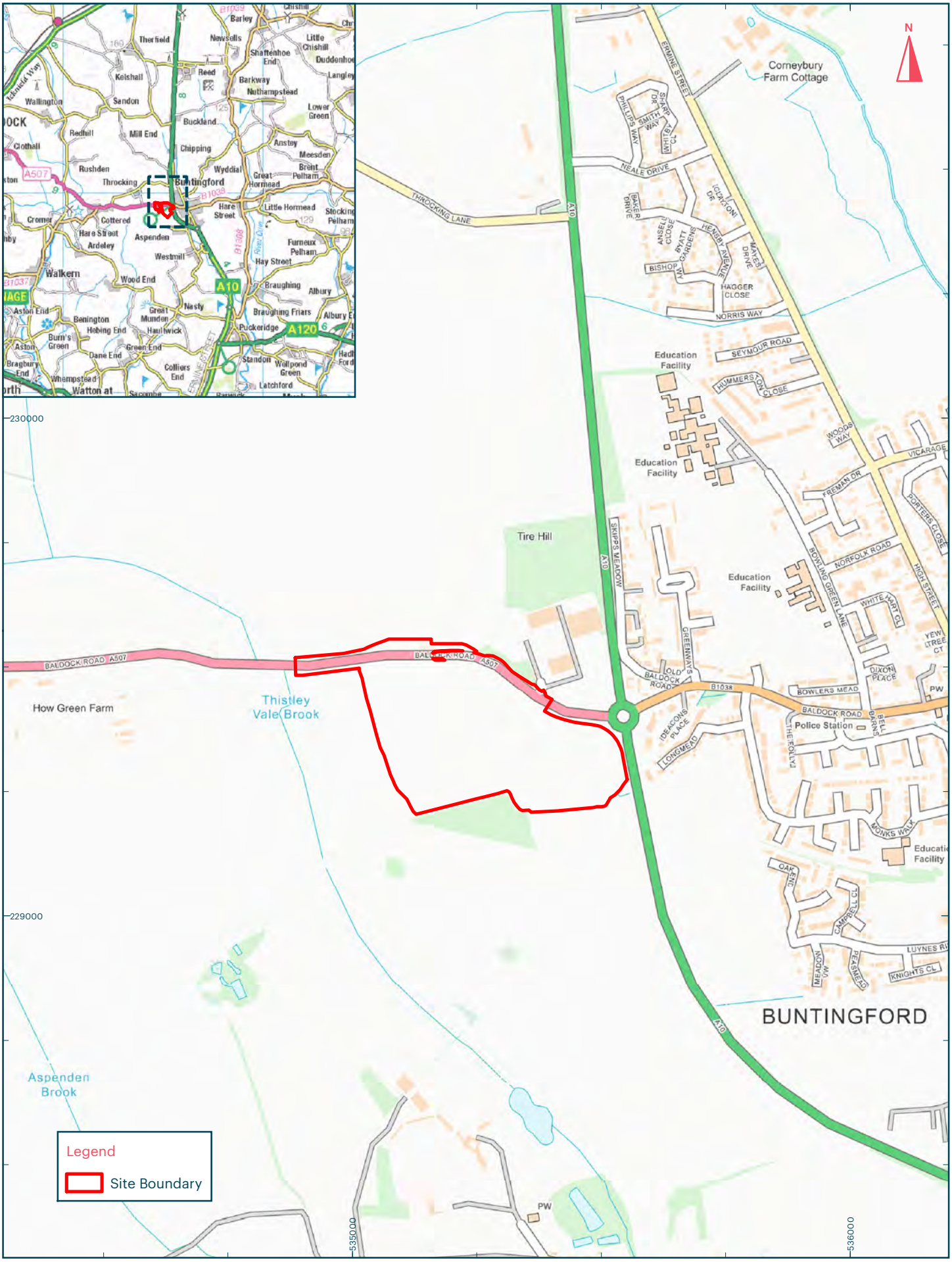
1800 Ordnance Survey Drawing
1843 Aspenden Tithe Map
Ordnance Survey Map 1885 (1:2500)
Ordnance Survey Map 1924 (1: 2500)
Ordnance Survey Map 1937 (1:2500)
Ordnance Survey Map 1957 (1:2500)
Ordnance Survey Map 1961-70 (1: 2500)
Ordnance Survey Map 1966 (1: 10,560)
Ordnance Survey Map 1988-89 (1: 10,560)
Ordnance Survey Map 2000 (1: 10,000)
Ordnance Survey Map 2022 (1: 10,000)

## Websites

Heritage Gateway - www.heritagegateway.org.uk
Historic England - The National Heritage List for England - historicengland.org.uk/listing/the list
Open Domesday – www.opendomesday.org
The Genealogist – www.thegenealogist.co.uk

## Bibliographic

Buntingford Town Council. 2017. Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031
East Hertfordshire District Council. 2016. Buntingford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
East Hertfordshire District Council. 2018. East Hertfordshire District Plan
Lewis, S. 1848. 'Buntingford' in A Topographical Dictionary of England and Wales




Title:
Figure 1: Site Location
Address:
Land South of A507, Buntingford

Scale at A4: 1:10,000
0 400m

orion.

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Legend

- Site Boundary
- Search Buffer 1km

Designated Heritage Assets

Listed Building

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

- Conservation Area

1175183
1295415
1101301
1101362
1347965
1101363
1174198
1101310
1347971
1101350
1348000
1101323
1101361
1347966
Buntingford CA
Aspenden CA

Middle Farm
Moles Mead
How Green Farm
Thistley Vate Brook
Haymead Hill
Oakmead Lodge
Tire Hill
Fairview
Gooseacre
Newtown
BUNTINGFORD
Aspenden Brook
Aspenden
Haley Hill
Tannis Court

230500
230000
229500
229000
228500

533500
534000
534500
535000
535500
536000
536500
537000

Title:
Figure 2: Designated Heritage Assets
Address:
Land South of A507, Buntingford

Scale at A3: 1:10,500
0 400m

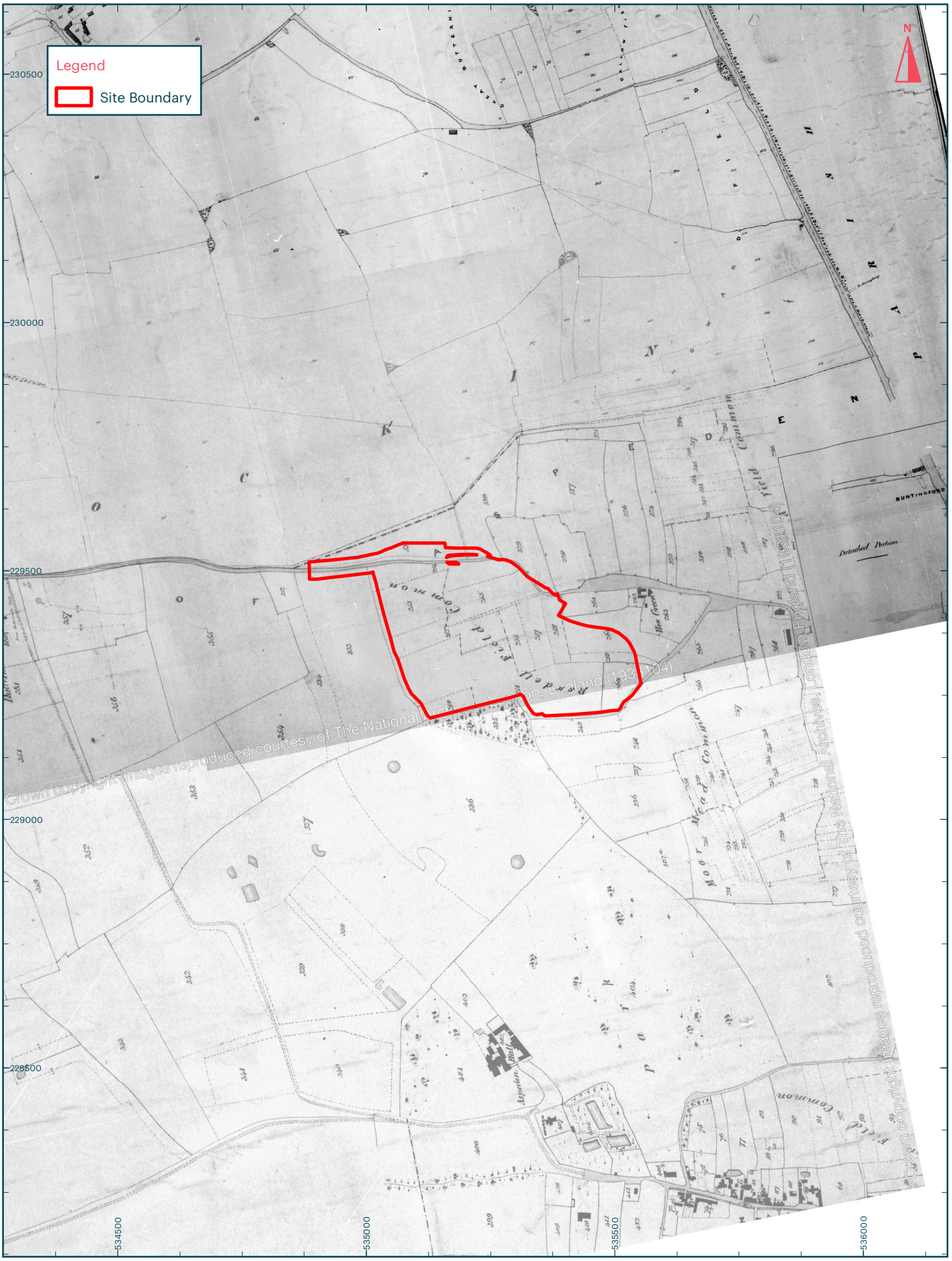
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Title:
Figure 3: 1800 Buntingford Ordnance Survey Drawing
Address:
Land South of A507, Buntingford

Scale at A4: 1:20,000
0 500m

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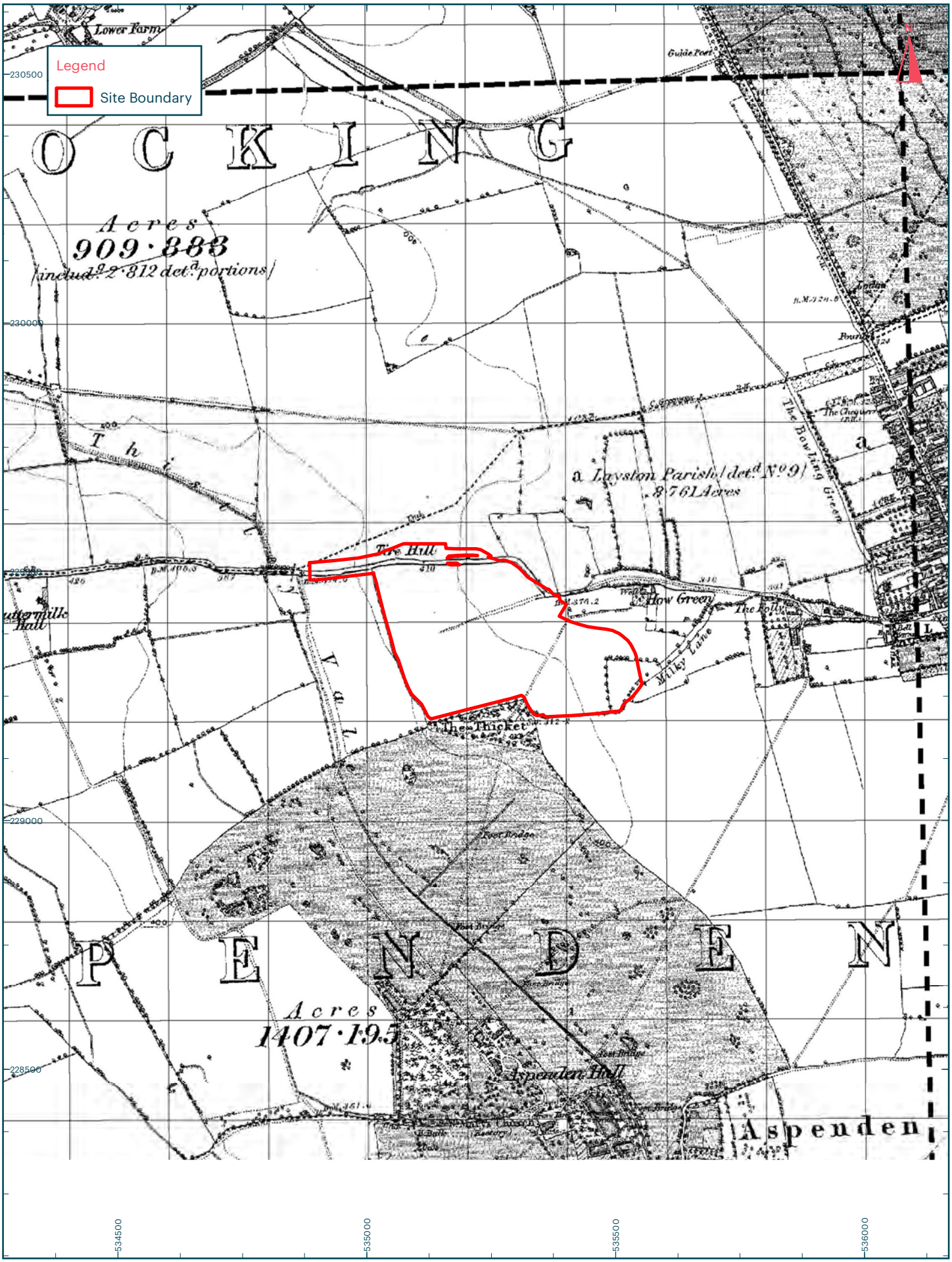



Title:
Figure 4: 1842 Throcking Tithe Map & 1843 Aspenden Tithe Map
Address:
Land South of A507, Buntingford

Scale at A4: 1:10,000
0 250m

orion.

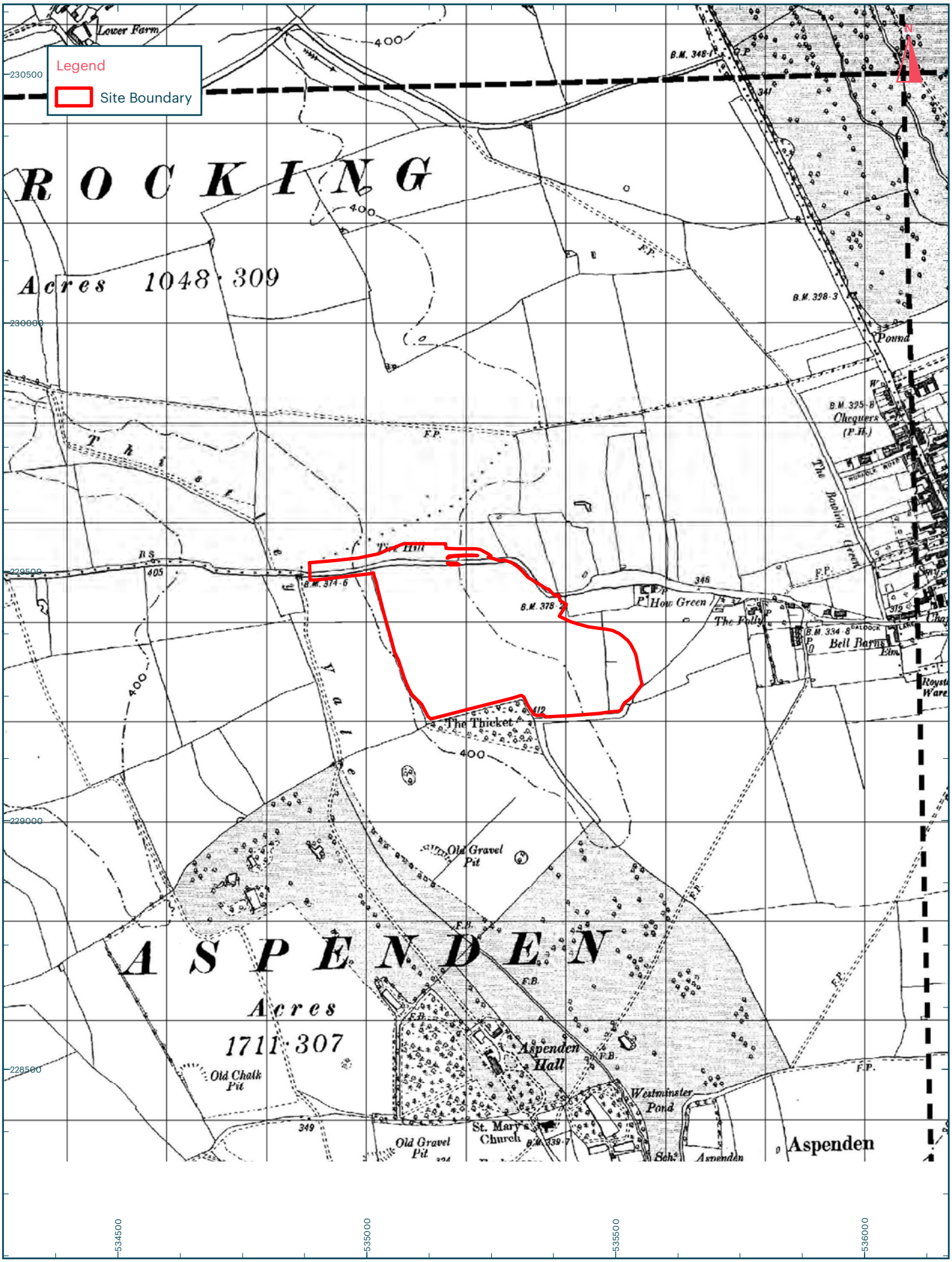
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Title:
Figure 5: 1883-1884 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey Map
Address:
Land South of A507, Buntingford

Scale at A4: 1:10,000
0 250m

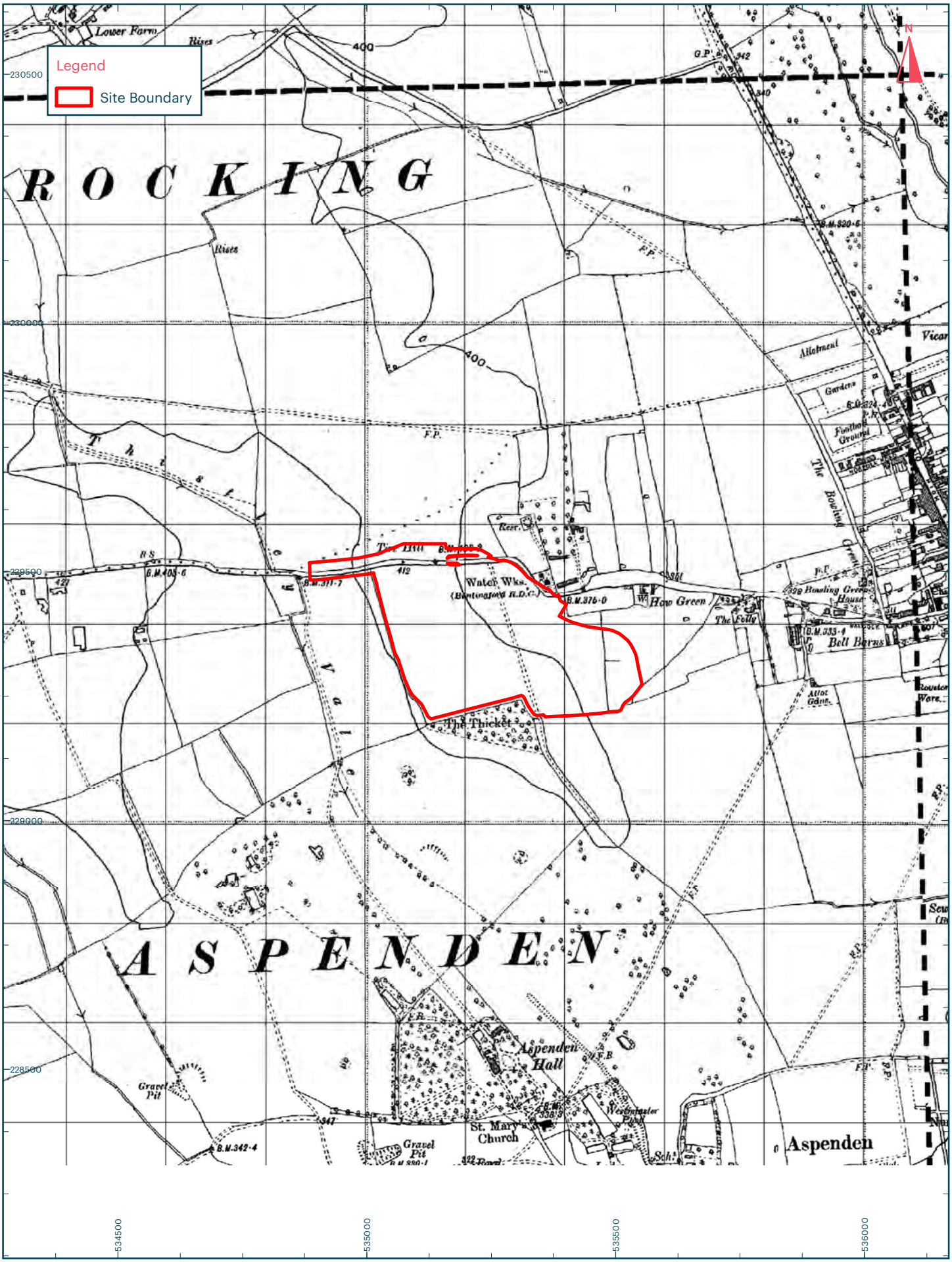
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Title:
Figure 6: 1899 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey Map
Address:
Land South of A507, Buntingford

Scale at A4: 1:10,000
0 250m

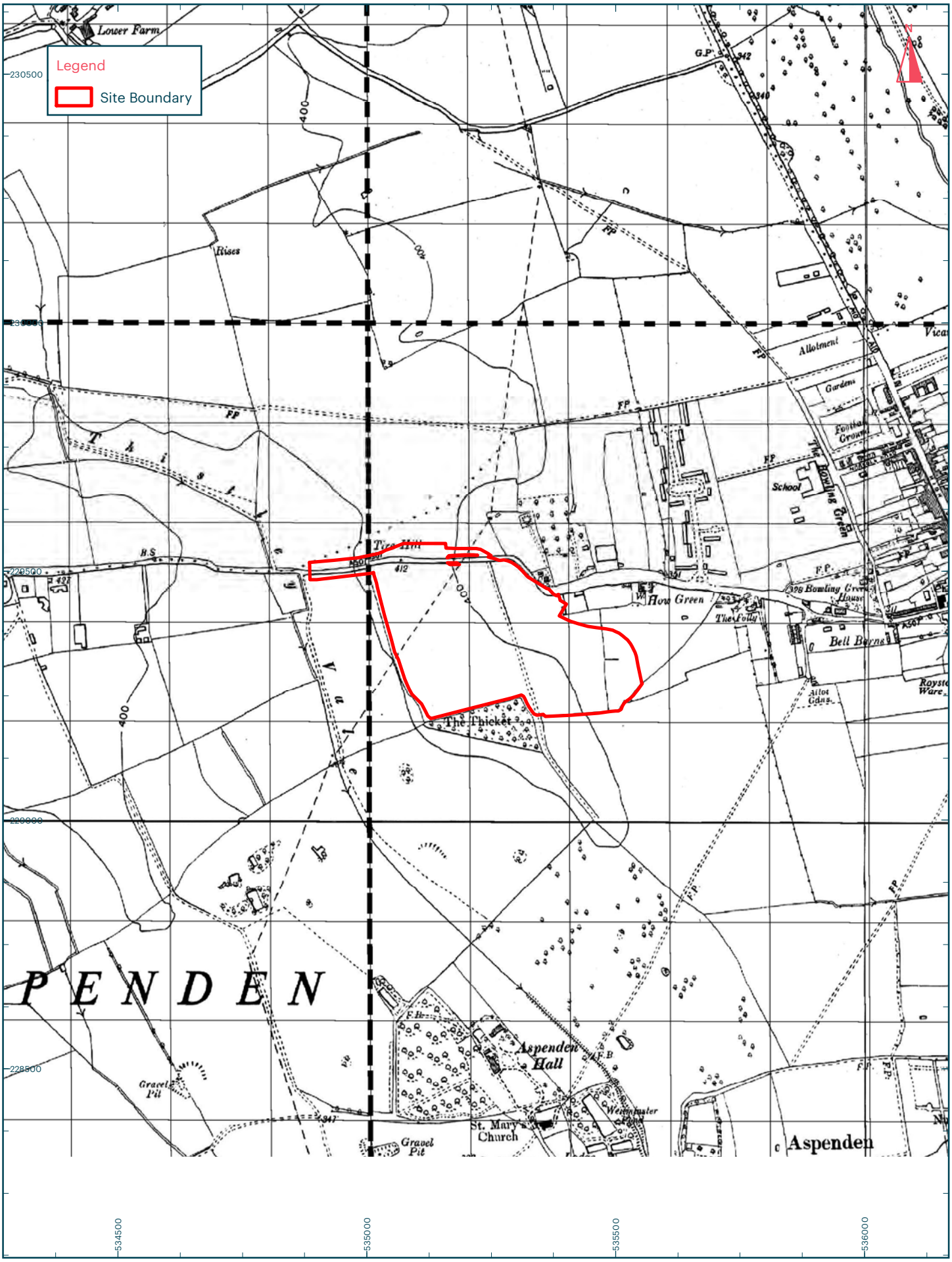
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Title:
Figure 7: 1948-1950 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey Map
Address:
Land South of A507, Buntingford

Scale at A4: 1:10,000
0 250m

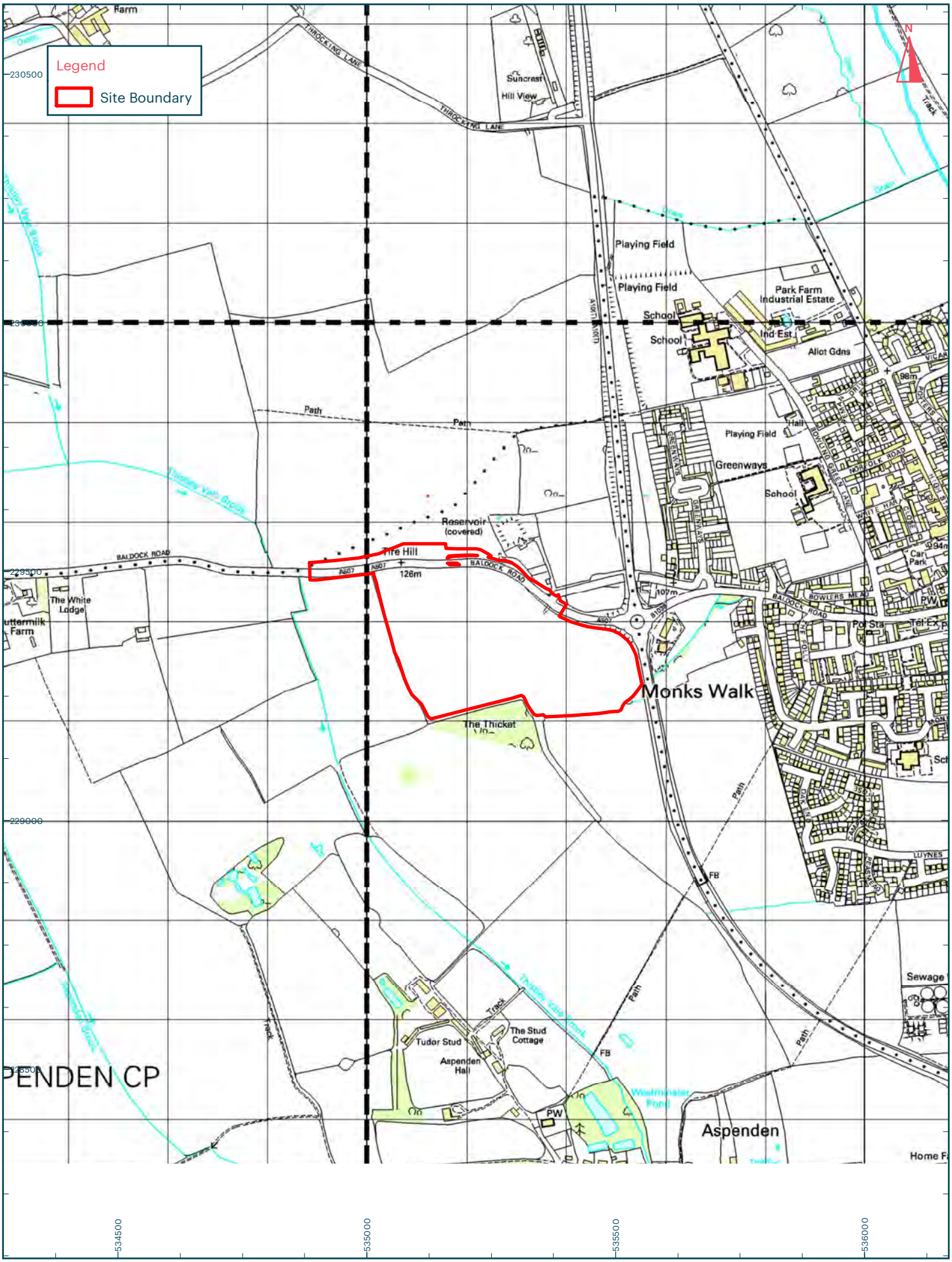
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Title:
Figure 8: 1960 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey Map
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Land South of A507, Buntingford

Scale at A4: 1:10,000
0 250m

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Title:
Figure 9: 1999 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey Map
Address:
Land South of A507, Buntingford

Scale at A4: 1:10,000
0 250m

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Title:
Figure 10: 2023 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey Map
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Scale at A4: 1:10,000
0 250m

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