Edgefield Hall, Edgefield, Norfolk

An Archaeological Desk Top Assessment

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SUMMARY

This archaeological desk based assessment was commissioned by Ted Clover of Clover Planning on behalf of Buyinfo Ltd to assess the potential impact of a proposed development (centred on TG 0830 3560) at Edgefield Hall. The site is located approximately 2km south of Holt, Norfolk. Archival, aerial and cartographic sources demonstrate that the site is located in an area with known archaeology, including early prehistoric and Medieval and later agricultural features.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Jane Matthews for the illustrations. Emma Beadsmoore was the Project Manager.

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This archaeological desktop assessment was commissioned to assess the known archaeology within a 0.5km radius of a proposed building development at the former pit and landfill site at Edgefield Hall. The proposed development area (PDA) is located approximately 2km south of the Holt and *c*. 1.5km northwest of Edgefield village (centred TG 0830 3560).

1.2 The principal objective of the study is to determine the presence/absence of known archaeological sites within the PDA and study area environs, and to assess the potential for archaeological remains surviving within the PDA.

2. RELEVANT POLICY

2.1 Archaeology is covered by both local and national policy. Nationally the primary policies affecting archaeology are **Planning Policy Guidance Notes 15 and 16 (PPG15, PPG16),** introduced in 1994 and 1991. These have played a crucial role in prompting and guiding the development of local policy. In Feltwell, the relevant policies are the **Norfolk County Structure Plan** and the **Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan**. The relevant sections of these policies are reproduced below.

PPG15

2.2. Section 3.15

"Achieving a proper balance between the special interest of a listed building and proposals for alterations or extensions is demanding and should always be based on specialist expertise; but it is rarely impossible, if reasonable flexibility and imagination are shown by all parties involved. Thus, a better solution may be possible if a local planning authority is prepared to apply normal development control policies flexibly; or if an applicant is willing to exploit unorthodox spaces rather than set a standardized requirement; or if an architect can respect the structural limitations of a building and abandon conventional design solutions in favour of a more imaginative approach."

PPG16

Section 6

2.3 *"Archaeological remains should be seen as a finite and non-renewable resource, in many cases highly fragile and vulnerable to damage and destruction. Appropriate management is therefore essential to ensure that they survive in good condition. In particular care must be taken to ensure that archaeological remains are not needlessly or thoughtlessly destroyed. They can contain irreplaceable information about our past and the potential for an increase in future knowledge. They are part of our national identity and are valuable for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and tourism."*

Section 8

2.4 "*With the many demands of modern society, it is not always feasible to save all archaeological remains. The key question is where and how to strike the right balance. Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Cases involving archaeological remains of lesser importance will not always be so clear cut and planning authorities will need to weigh the relative importance of archaeology against other factors including the need for the proposed development.*

Regardless of the circumstances, taking decisions is much easier if any archaeological aspects of a development site can be considered early on in the planning and development control process."

Section 30

2.5 *"In cases when planning authorities have decided that planning permission may be granted but wish to secure the provision of archaeological excavation and the subsequent recording of the remains, it is open to them to do so by the use of a negative condition i.e. a condition prohibiting the carrying out of development until such time as works or other action, e.g. an excavation, have been carried out by a third party. In such cases the following model is suggested:*

"No development shall take place within the area indicated (this would be the area of archaeological interest) until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority."

(Developers will wish to ensure that in drawing up a scheme, the timetable for the investigation is included within the details of the agreed scheme)."

Norfolk County Council Structure Plan (adopted 1999)

Section 5.38

Policy ENV.13

2.6 (i) Protecting all listed buildings, historic landscapes, sites of archaeological importance, whether scheduled or not, and their settings against demolition, and inappropriate alteration or development.

(iii) Ensuring that agreement is reached for appropriate evaluation, excavation and recording in advance of development on sites of archaeological importance, which do not merit physical preservation, and where it is not feasible to preserve them in situ.

Section 5.40

2.7 It is essential to take account of the impact of development proposals both on the inherent character and composition of settlements, and on their setting in the wider historic landscape.

Section 5.43

2.8 Where demolition or major alteration of an historic building or site of archaeological importance is unavoidable, local authorities will continue to

ensure that adequate arrangements are made for its recording in line with PPGs 15 and 16.

Section 5.45

2.9 Where development proposals affect archaeological remains, the developer will be required to carry out appropriate survey work and evaluation. In cases where preservation in situ is neither feasible nor merited, conditions or legal agreements will be used to secure satisfactory provision for excavation, recording and publication of the results. In some circumstances conditions will be imposed to ensure that archaeological watching briefs are held while work is in progress.

North Norfolk Local Plan: 1998

Policy 25: Historic Parks and Gardens[1]

2.10 Development proposals that would be detrimental to the appearance or character of Historic Parks or Gardens, or their settings, will not be permitted.

Policy 29: The Reuse and Adaptation of Buildings in the Countryside

2.11 In the Countryside development proposals for the conversion of a building to an alternative use will only be permitted where:

1 in the case of a conversion to residential use (excluding holiday accommodation), the building is adjacent to the boundary of a Growth Town, Small Town, Large Village or Selected Small Village;
2 the building is soundly built and suitable for the proposed use without complete or substantial rebuilding and/or extension (including garages and other outbuildings); the reuse of buildings requiring complete or substantial rebuilding and/or extension (including garages and other outbuildings) will be treated as 'new build' and considered against other policies contained elsewhere in the Local Plan;
3 the building does not have a substantially adverse landscape impact and the building's form, bulk and general design are in keeping with its surroundings; or
4 if the building has a substantially adverse landscape impact but the proposal would represent a significant improvement in its external appearance and setting; or
5 if the building has significant architectural, historical or landscape value, the proposal would not have a detrimental effect on the appearance, character, setting or fabric of the building;
6 there would be no harm to any species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, or its habitat; and
7 the proposal would not prejudice the safety or free flow of traffic on the surrounding highway network.

[1] The policies listed here are preserved schedules, following the direction of the Secretary of State, of the Local Plan during the preparation and adoption of a replacement Local Development Framework.

Policy 45: Archaeology

2.12 In the case of development proposals affecting sites where important archaeological remains may exist, **the Council will require the results of an archaeological field evaluation to be submitted prior to determining any planning application.** Where the physical preservation of remains in situ is not justified, the Council will consider imposing a planning condition on any planning permission granted requiring an agreed programme of archaeological work to be carried out.

2.13 Development proposals that would have a significantly adverse effect on Scheduled Ancient Monuments or other nationally important sites and monuments, or their settings, will not be permitted. **In the case of development proposals affecting other sites of archaeological interest, the Council will seek preservation of remains in situ as first preference.** Where preservation in situ is not feasible, or merited, planning permission may be granted subject to satisfactory provision being made for excavation and recording.

3. BASELINE CONDITIONS

3.1 The PDA is centrally located between the villages of Edgefield, Hunworth and Holt, 2km to the north, within a small river valley. The area is characterised by undulating farmland and extensive woodland to the north. The study area and PDA are located within the administrative district of North Norfolk District Council.

Layout of Study Data

3.2 This report encompasses a study area extending for a 0.5km radius from the PDA. Appendix 1 lists Gazetteer points, shown on figure 2, and referenced in the text in bold e.g. **(1)**.

Topography and Geology

3.3 The underlying solid geology is chalk, overlain by Devensian Glacial Fluvial Deposits (Soil Survery of England and Wales 1983), the latter exploited for mineral aggregates within and immediately adjacent to the PDA. The former pit and PDA are situated at 55 to 60m AOD on a small spur on the eastern valley side of Hempstead Beck.

Historical Background

3.4 The historic origins and development of Edgefield are detailed elsewhere and not repeated here. Nonetheless, the village is recorded as a large settlement at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1066, although lacking a church. The origin of the name for the settlement, *Edisfelda*, implies an 'open land by enclosure or park' (Mills 1998 [2003]), and the layout of the village suggests it developed around open commons that were later enclosed. Elements of the earlier Medieval landscape survive within the wider environs, with evidence of ancient woodland (Little Wood), banks, hollow-ways, and tofts. The remainder of the parish was enclosed following the Edgefield Inclosure Act of 1812. The B1149 is clearly present on Faden's map of 1797.

Past and Current Land Use

3.5 Past and current land use is characterised by the small valley of Hempstead Beck, possibly canalised in the past to form a mill leet, stands of woodland and heathland. A warren and heath is recorded on Faden's map of 1797 to the north of the study area, now designated a country park. The area is divided into areas of agricultural land and small stands of woodland. The PDA is located on the site of a former pit; a pit is first recorded on the 1 1:10,560 scale Ordnance Survey map of 1890-91 (fig. 4).

The Archaeological Assessment

3.6 The objective of this study is to collate and assess existing information relating

to the archaeology and history of the study area within and immediately surrounding the PDA. This will be used to assess both areas of archaeological potential and determine the likely survival of such remains.

Sources

3.7 Principal sources consulted for this study were:

- Norfolk Historical Environment Record (HER)
- Aerial photographic evidence
- Historic map sequence 1797 – 1900
- Ordnance Survey (OS) maps – 1884/85 First edition to present

Aerial Photography

3.8 An aerial photographic assessment was conducted by Roger Palmer, Air Photo Services Ltd. The absence of summer-time observer-targeted oblique photographs in the area can either mean that the local soils/crops have been considered to be poor respondents to subsurface features so the area has not been surveyed much, or that it has been overflown but with no positive results in the immediate environs of the PDA. Judging by some of the vertical photographs and Google Earth, the local soils can produce good and clear crop responses over natural and recent features. So the absence of archaeological features could be due to the lack of systematic survey by observers, the lack of photographs taken on critical dates, or the absence of past uses that would leave traces that can now be identified from the air or on aerial photographs.

Cambridge University Collection/Unit for Landscape Modelling

Oblique photographs in the area had been taken only of castle earthworks at Hunworth but they also recorded some natural soil differences. Vertical photographs taken on 15 May 1997 covered the Development site and its environs. They showed no archaeological features but, in the area around the Site, there were some differences in the crops indicating natural features and former field or woodland boundaries.

NMRC, Swindon

A cover search for the area (NMRC ref: 34616) identified only vertical photographs and these were examined on 14 January 2009. They had been taken on 6 different dates between 1944 and 1996 and most were of fairly-poor quality and showed no archaeological information within or close to the Development Site. Over the years, the Development Site had mixed use – mainly it was arable, but occasionally (?or seasonally) it was in pasture. There was a suggestion, when stereoscopically viewing photographs taken in 1969, that the field may have a slight accumulation of deeper soil that has been eroded from the slope on its east side.

Internet Sources (accessed 3 February 2009)

Flash Earth. No archaeological features were visible within or adjacent to the Site but there were slight traces of geological features just beyond its northwest boundary. Little is visible in the summer crops (probably June or early July) in fields around the Development Site.

Google Earth. Photographs were taken in July 2006 and show the PDA in what looks like set-aside with tracks and cleared areas. Crops in the field west of the Site show a few changes where they are growing thinly over a local high area. Those crop-marked features seem likely to indicate vehicle tracks as the width of parallel ones is similar to tractor lines in the field. Many of the crops around the Development Site are very responsive to sub-surface features, and recent boundaries and a range of geological features are clearly visible. However, no archaeological features were identified among these.

Prehistoric and Romano-British (to AD 450)

3.9 The PDA is located within a landscape of known prehistoric and Romano-British activity. Within the study area, however, this is confined to the southern margin of a scheduled site on Edgefield Heath (**1**), where burnt mounds have been identified during excavation and field survey, and flint implements have been found. Located outside of the study area is a Bronze Age bowl barrow (HER ref: 6502), and several flint tools have also been recovered within the parish. These include a flint macehead, Neolithic axes, flakes and a possible Beaker vessel found in the 19th century (HER refs: 6501, 6533-6535, 34499, 35861, 39950). Iron Age and Romano-British activity is absent within the study area, although a single Roman pottery sherd and coins have been found in the parish (HER refs: 6503, 33041, 35861, 35970), the latter by metal detecting.

Medieval to present (450 – 2008)

3.10 Evidence for Medieval and later activity within the study area, and wider landscape, includes the site of the moated site and house at Edgefield Hall (**2**), less than 300m northwest of the PDA. The current house dates to the 17th century, but is most likely to be the site of an earlier manor house; permission to crenellate the manor was granted in 1334. Medieval tofts[2] and hollow-way (**4**), located to the southwest of the PDA, attest to a Medieval settlement that was situated on the Edgefield/Stody parish boundary and provides evidence of the later contraction of some Medieval sites. A post-Medievel pound (**3**) is recorded to the west of the PDA and is possibly related to the former plantation that existed in the field north of the site until the post-war period.

4. CARTOGRAPHIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

4.1 The cartographic evidence for the study area dates from the early 17th century; however, these early maps provide insufficient detail of the study area and PDA and were consequently not considered any further. The earliest detailed

[2] 'Plot of land to rear of a building, often bounded at the rear by a back lane. The regularity of tofts in some Medieval villages suggests a planned settlement'. Hey 1996: 441

cartographic evidence is William Faden's map of 1797, which shows both the study area and the PDA (fig. 3). Although the Ordnance Survey (OS) First Edition, Old Series (1824) denotes the study area and PDA, it is the later series of OS maps, dating from the late 19th century, that show the PDA in detail. These maps show the study area and PDA, field boundaries, field sizes (including acreage) and topography. This sequence of historical maps also records the presence of a gravel pit on the site pre-dating 1890. This pit is shown as a 'sand pit on the 1951 revision of the 1:10,560 scale map. Revisions to the OS map sequence show the pit as 'closed' from at least 1973. There has been little alteration to the road configuration and field boundaries since the early 19th century and reflect those recorded on Burcham's 1845 tithe map (fig. 3)

Date	Description
1797	William Faden's map of Norfolk
1814	John Cary's map of Norfolk
1824	Ordnance Survey (OS) 1st edition, Old Series
1835	Robert Creighton's map of Norfolk
1845	Burcham's Edgefield Tithe Map (DN/TA 912)
1861	John Dower's map of Norfolk
1886-9	OS 1:2,500 scale map, 1st edition
1890-91	OS 1:10,560 scale map, 1st edition
1951-52	OS 1:10,560 scale map, 3rd revision (sand pit)
1958	OS 1:10,560 scale map, 1st Imperial edition
1973	OS 1:2,500 scale map, National Surveyst edition (pit closed)
1980	OS 1:10,000 scale map, 1st metric edition
2005	OS 1:25,000 scale map, Explorer sheet 251: Norfolk Coast Central. Wells-next-the-Sea & Fakenham

Table 1: Ordnance Survey reference series

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The Neolithic flints found in Edgefield are instructive as they provide possible evidence of the use of river and stream valleys to move through the landscape, especially in heavily wooded areas. The underlying geology of the area would have provided raw material for the preparation of flint tools and artefacts; a resource that would have continued to be exploited into the Early Iron Age. Later prehistoric settlement is essentially absent within the study area, with the exception of the burnt mound features at Edgefield Heath and the barrow to the northeast of the PDA, which indicates that the wider area was occupied. The location of the discovery of the Beaker vessel in the 19th century is too imprecise but identifies the small potential for discovering prehistoric activity within the study area and undisturbed areas of the PDA (potentially the western margin only).

5.2 The almost total lack of Romano-British archaeology or finds from the area is intriguing as the pottery sherd and coins discovered in and around Edgefield attest to Romano-British activity within the landscape, but the focus for this remains elusive. The road-network for this area during the Roman period is unclear. Running straight for much of its length, the B1149, may represent an earlier Roman road alignment, but this must remain speculative and the

nearest positively identified route is Margary's road 39 from Toftrees to Holkham (Margary 1955: 242 & fig. 9).

5.3 In terms of the moated sites and manors within the area, several are recorded within Edgefield and the surrounding parishes. Some moated sites may have been occupied for only a short period, or later used for farmhouses, such as at Edgefield Hall. Here, the manor house was located within a moated site (see also Section 3.8 and Section 3.10). Within Cambridgeshire, *c*. 330 moated sites have been identified, and where datable, date principally from the 11th to 14th centuries (James 2000). The function and purpose of these sites is unclear, with defence, display of wealth and/or as a means to keep out vermin and animals have all been suggested as possible reasons for their construction. In East Anglia the high density of these sites may reflect a 'woodland' village settlement pattern, or possible 'multi-manor villages, possessing two or more capital messuages, or indeed the even more fragmented tenurial situations found in East Anglia' (Le Patourel & Roberts 1978: 50). There is thus a distinct possibility of encountering features related to the house and moated site, especially beside the roadway, and also small finds such as pottery, metalwork and rubbish pits.

5.4 Post-Medieval remains within the study area are confined to the 'pound' located to the west of the PDA the later buildings at Edgefield Hall. As such, there is a low probability of encountering archaeology of this period within the PDA, with the possible exception of stray finds and agricultural implements. Of note, however, is the recorded gravel and sand extraction in the historic map sequence which suggests any potential archaeology within the PDA may have been partially or severely truncated, if not completely.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The proposed development area and study area lie within a rich archaeological and historical environment with evidence of activity from the Neolithic period to the present date. The known historical land use would indicate a very low probability of encountering archaeological features or finds due to the truncated nature of the site following earlier quarrying activity. The identification of earlier Medieval settlement evidence southwest of the PDA cannot exclude the possibility of surviving archaeological features being encountered dating from this period close to the PDA. Although the probability of encountering archaeology cannot be entirely discounted, this probability is very low.

7. REFERENCES

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Norfolk County Council Structure Plan (adopted 1999)

North Norfolk Local Plan: 1998

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Planning Policy Guidance Note 16. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

8. ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Location map

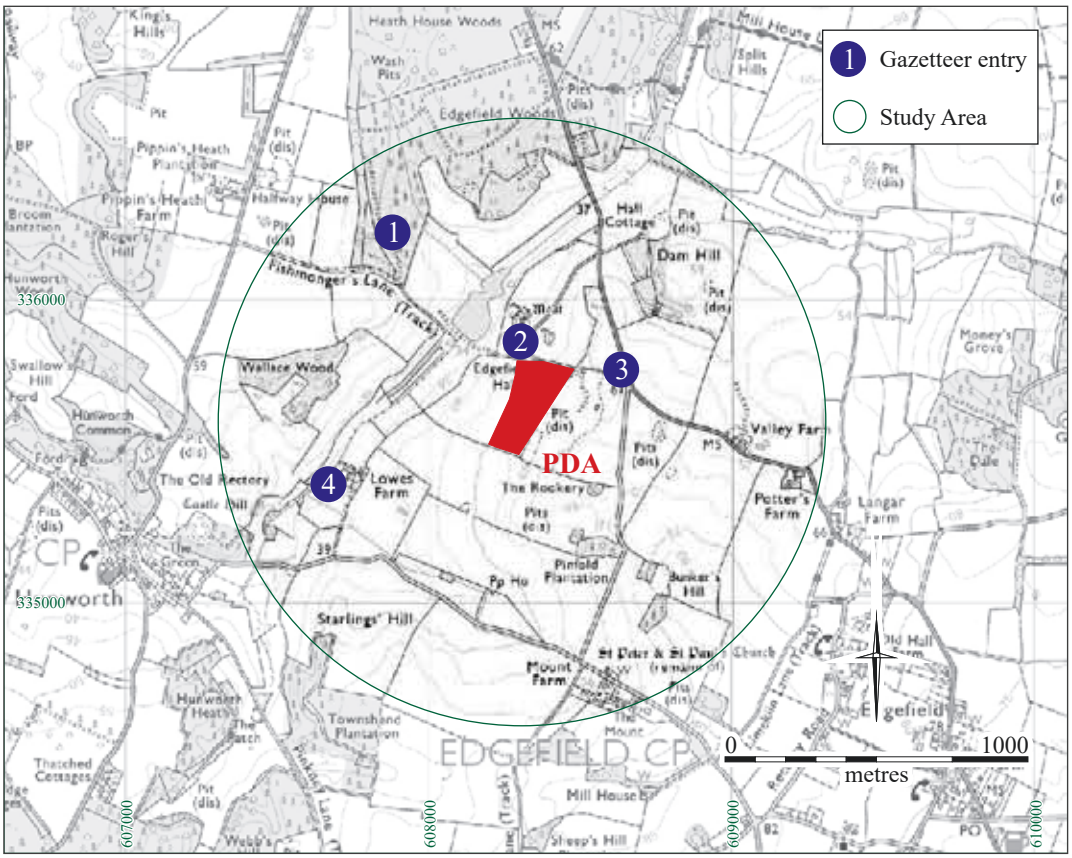
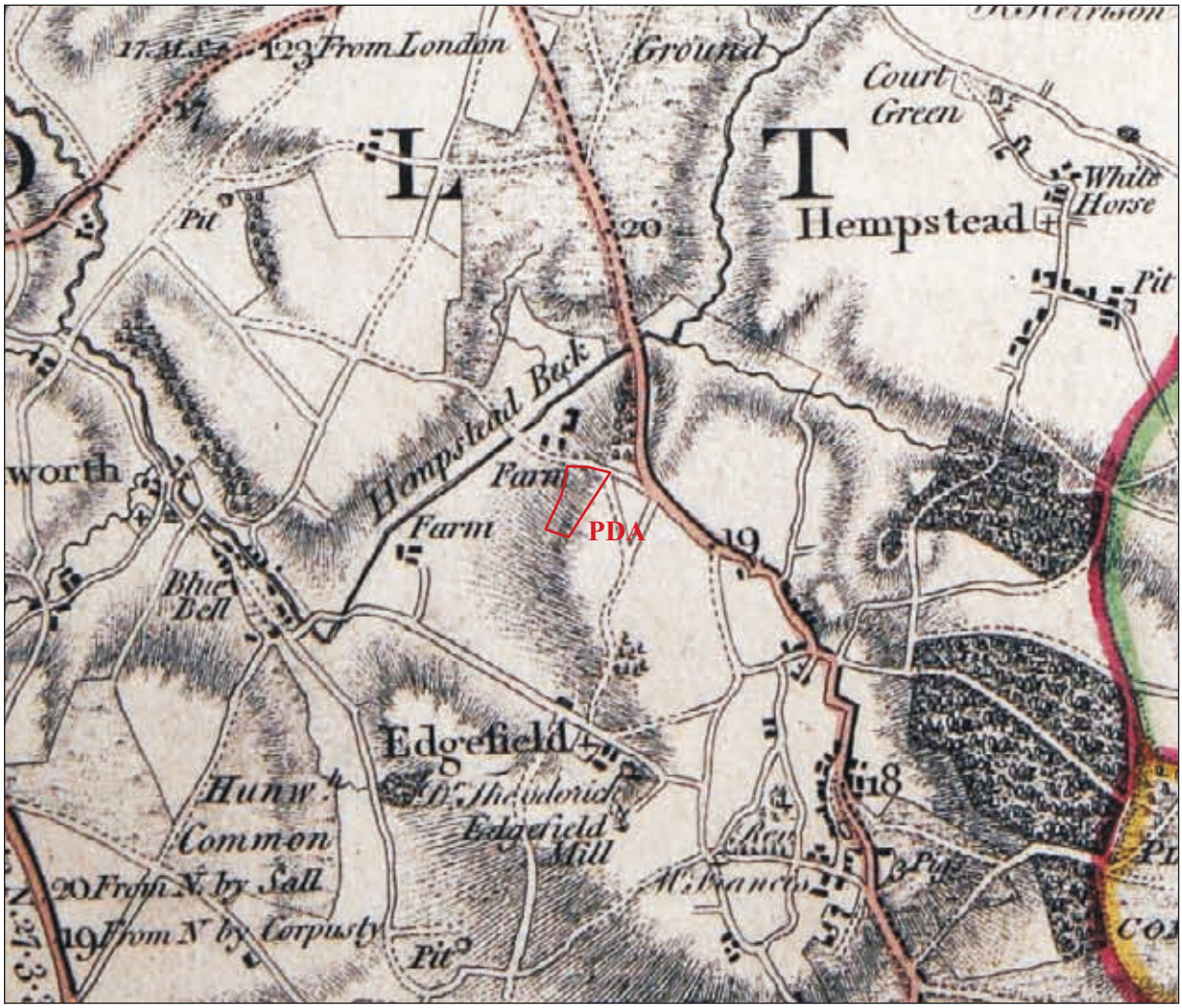
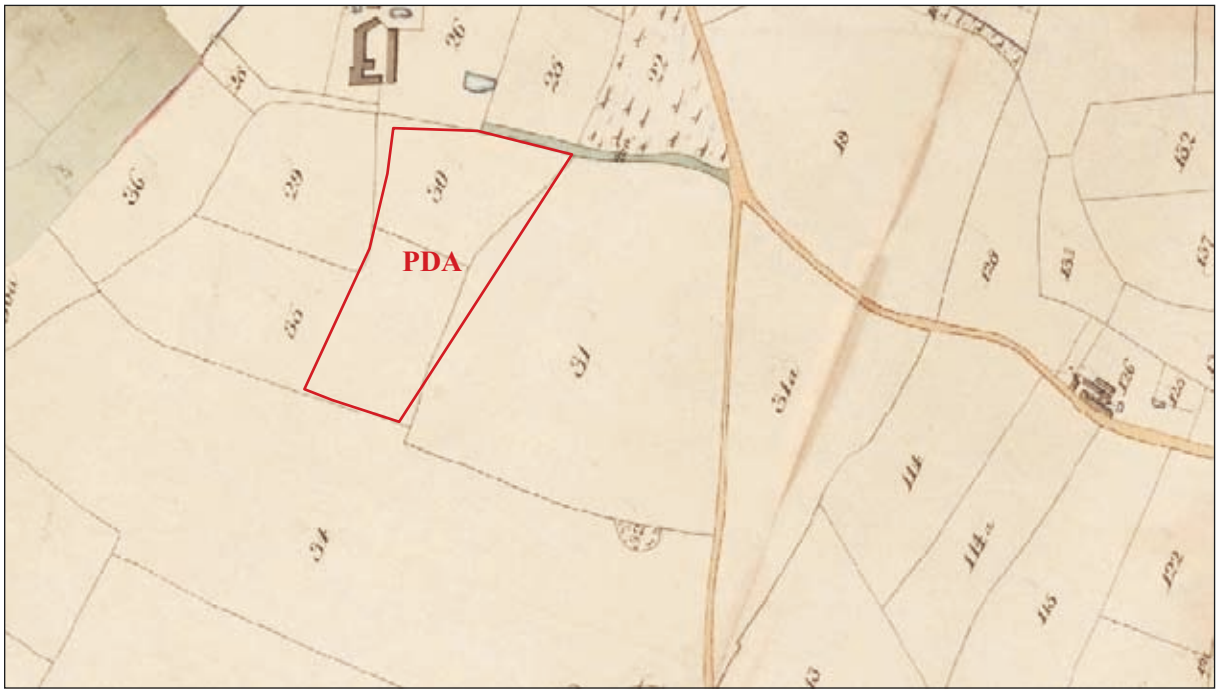


Figure 2. Gazetteer map



Fadden 1794



Burcham 1845

Figure 3. Historic maps

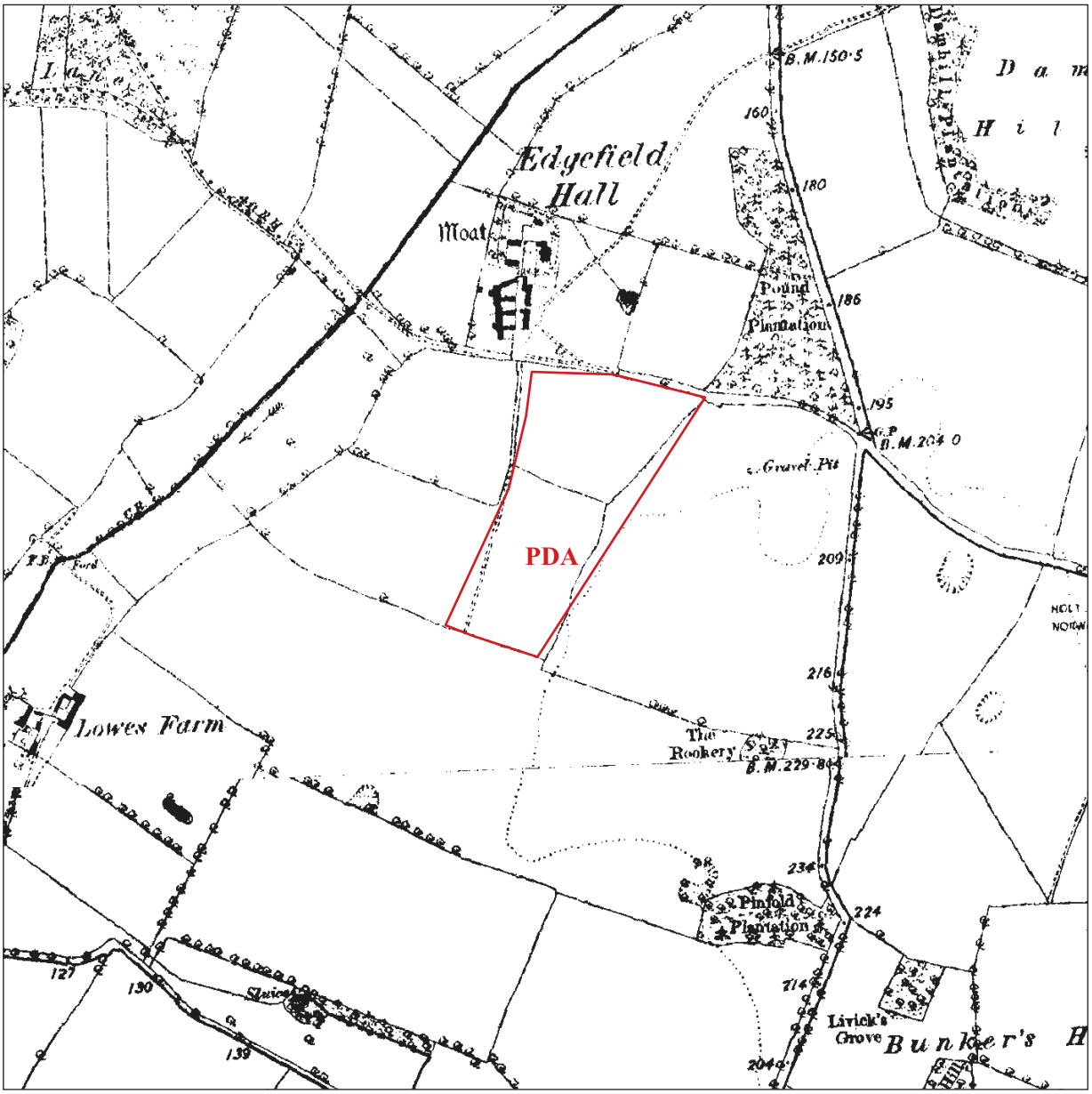


Figure 4. OS First Edition 1:10560, 1890-91

9. APPENDICIES

Appendix 1 Site and Finds Gazetteer

HB = Historic Building

Gaz. No	Grid Ref:	Period	Description	Ref:	HER Ref:
1	TG 0785 3641	Prehistoric	A series of prehistoric burnt mounds excavated on this site in the late 1950s suggest that this was a habitation site in the prehistoric period. More mounds were discovered during a survey by English Heritage in 1999. Prehistoric flint implements and pot boilers have been found on the site. The English Heritage survey identified another three mounds, two immediately south of the context 1, which are marked by wooden posts although not scheduled: context 1 at TG 0789 3660, context 2 at TG 0789 3640, context 3 at TG 0789 3635, context 4 at TG 0783 3630, context 5 at TG 0786 3631, context 6 at TG 0789 3622, context 7 at TG 0798 3628.	HER record and scheduling report	6508
2	TF 0828 3593	Medieval	Farmhouse built in *c.* 1600 with later alterations, with a moat to south. Two ranges, 2 storeys; west range 17th/18th, flint with brick dressings, pantile roof. Large projecting 3 storeyed gabled porch on bay 4, about 1600, remnant of former house; clasping polygonal buttresses ending in tall octagonal shafts with over sailing caps; similar gable finial. Moulded brick buttress plinths capped with lead bearing 18th century graffiti; 4 centred arch, blank plaque above; first floor has modern window and blocked window, 2nd floor also blocked. Right hand gable of about 1880 and short east range of four bays, with single storey porch. North arm of the moat is about 75m long about 5 to 6m wide (max) and the south arm about 30m long about 2 to 3m wide.	HER HB record, English Heritage listed building register	6517
3	TG 0863 3575	Post-Medieval	Pound recorded on first edition ordnance survey map.	HER record	6540
4	TF 6373 2010	Medieval, post-Medieval	Noted from RAF air photograph and visited during RCHM survey. Approximately 100m of hollow way/terraced trackway extending northeast from garden, with the southeast boundary a likely headland feature about 9m wide and 0.4m deep. Some mainly banked enclosures to the northwest, up to 0.5m high, with suggestion of platforms, up to 0.2m representing two or three tofts. Medieval pottery has been found on the site.	"	29583