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## PROPOSED DECKED CAR PARK, CAMPUS WEST CAR PARK, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTFORDSHIRE

### AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

*Hertfordshire HER request No. 38/20*

Authors: Kate Higgs MA (Oxon.)	
NGR: TL 23539 13375	Report No: 6063
District: Welwyn Hatfield	Site Code: n/a
Approved: C Halpin MCIfA	Project No: 8406
	Date: 30 June 2020

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Project name	<i>Proposed decked car park, Campus West car park, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire</i>		
<p><i>In June 2020, Archaeological Solutions Limited carried out an archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. The assessment was undertaken in support of proposals for a new decked car park on an existing surfaced car park at Campus West.</i></p> <p><i>The site is judged to have a consistently low potential for archaeological remains throughout the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. Archaeological remains from the Welwyn Garden City area are relatively limited, despite its proximity to the valley of the River Mimram and the Romano-British settlement at Welwyn. The area surrounding the site did not witness significant development until the early modern period, notably the development of the former Hatfield, Luton and Dunstable Railway line, which was established through Sherrardspark Wood and along the northern boundary of the site.</i></p> <p><i>The most significant potential of the site is for early 20<sup>th</sup> century remains associated with the saw mills, which date to before 1918 and are associated with the WWI German POW camp that formerly stood to the east of the site. Following WWI, the saw mills incorporating the site were purchased by the newly formed Welwyn Garden City Company, together with their machinery, a large stock of timber and some remaining trees. By 1943, the site was labelled as part of a joinery works and the extant car park was formed contemporaneous with the Campus West building in 1973 – 75.</i></p> <p><i>Previous ground disturbance at the site is judged to be moderate, and specifically dating from the modern period. The site likely remained as woodland and agricultural land, specifically part of Sherrardspark Wood until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is proposed to alter the site for a new decked car park. The planning proposal will comprise two further, raised levels of car parking provision over the majority of the site. It will necessitate extensive groundworks, but note the proposed use of piling.</i></p>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>n/a</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work (Y/N/?)	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>8406</i>	Site code	<i>n/a</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment</i>		
Site status	<i>Conservation Area</i>		
Current land use	<i>Car park</i>		
Planned development	<i>Decked car park</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>n/a</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>n/a</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>Welwyn Hatfield</i>	<i>Welwyn Garden City</i>
HER for area	<i>Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER; request No. 38/20)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>n/a</i>		
Area of site	<i>c. 1.2 ha.</i>		
NGR	<i>TL 23539 13375</i>		
Height AOD (min/max)	<i>c. 100m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>-</i>		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>		

Funded by	<i>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council</i>
Full title	<i>Proposed decked car park, Campus West car park, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment</i>
Authors	<i>Higgs, K.</i>
Report no.	<i>6063</i>
Date (of report)	<i>June 2020</i>

# **PROPOSED DECKED CAR PARK, CAMPUS WEST CAR PARK, WELWYN GARDEN CITY, HERTFORDSHIRE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT**

## **SUMMARY**

*In June 2020, Archaeological Solutions Limited carried out an archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire. The assessment was undertaken in support of proposals for a new decked car park on an existing surfaced car park at Campus West.*

*The site is judged to have a consistently low potential for archaeological remains throughout the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. Archaeological remains from the Welwyn Garden City area are relatively limited, despite its proximity to the valley of the River Mimram and the Romano-British settlement at Welwyn. The area surrounding the site did not witness significant development until the early modern period, notably the development of the former Hatfield, Luton and Dunstable Railway line, which was established through Sherrardspark Wood and along the northern boundary of the site.*

*The most significant potential of the site is for early 20<sup>th</sup> century remains associated with the saw mills, which date to before 1918 and are associated with the WWI German POW camp that formerly stood to the east of the site. Following WWI, the saw mills incorporating the site were purchased by the newly formed Welwyn Garden City Company, together with their machinery, a large stock of timber and some remaining trees. By 1943, the site was labelled as part of a joinery works and the extant car park was formed contemporaneous with the Campus West building in 1973 – 75.*

*Previous ground disturbance at the site is judged to be moderate, and specifically dating from the modern period. The site likely remained as woodland and agricultural land, specifically part of Sherrardspark Wood until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is proposed to alter the site for a new decked car park. The planning proposal will comprise two further, raised levels of car parking provision over the majority of the site. It will necessitate extensive groundworks, but note the proposed use of piling.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In June 2020, Archaeological Solutions Limited (AS) carried out an archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 23539 13375; Figs. 1 & 2). The assessment was commissioned by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and was undertaken in support of proposals for a new decked car park on an existing surfaced car park at Campus West.

1.2 The archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey was undertaken according to a specification prepared by Archaeological Solutions (dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020). It followed the procedures outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessments* (revised 2017).

1.3 The objectives of the report were to provide for the identification of areas of archaeological potential within the site, to consider the site within its wider archaeological context and to describe the likely extent, nature, condition, importance and potential state of preservation of the archaeology. The context of future development proposals for the site has been examined and areas of significant previous ground disturbance have been identified.

### *Planning policy*

1.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The NPPF aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. The NPPF requires applications to describe the significance of any heritage asset, including its setting that may be affected in proportion to the asset's importance and the potential impact of the proposal.

1.5 The NPPF aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, with substantial harm to designated heritage assets (i.e. listed buildings, scheduled monuments) only permitted in exceptional circumstances when the public benefit of a proposal outweighs the conservation of the asset. The effect of proposals on non-designated heritage assets must be balanced against the scale of loss and significance of the asset, but non-designated heritage assets of demonstrably equivalent significance may be considered subject to the same policies as those that are designated. The NPPF states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment, to record and advance the understanding of heritage assets and to make this publicly available is a requirement of development management. This opportunity should be taken in a manner proportionate to the significance of a heritage asset and to impact of the proposal, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

2.1 The site is located within the town of Welwyn Garden City, which lies within the district of Welwyn Hatfield and the county of Hertfordshire (Fig. 1). Welwyn Garden City is located 4.5km to the north of Hertford, 5km to the south of the village of Welwyn and 8.5km to the west of the county town of

Hertford. The site lies within the centre of Welwyn Garden City, c.30m to the west of The Campus, which encircles Sharrardspark Wood, and c.700m to the north-west of the town's railway station. Historic landscape characterisation defines the site as built over, and the site also lies within Welwyn Garden City's town centre Conservation Area (CA; Warshaw, Bradbury & Cartell 2007).

2.2 The site comprises a roughly rectangular shaped plot of land, covering an area of approximately 1.2 hectares (Fig. 2). It lies along the north-western frontage of the B195 The Campus, with access via a road into the south-eastern corner of the site. To the immediate east of the site is the council building of Campus West, with residential apartments fronting Bridge Road to the west of the site. The site's northern boundary is formed by a permissive bridleway known as the Ayot Greenway, which follows the course of a former railway line. The site is currently occupied by an existing surfaced car park at Campus West.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

Information was sought from a variety of available sources in order to meet the objectives of the assessment.

#### **3.1 Archaeological Databases**

The standard collation of all known archaeological sites and find spots are derived from the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER; request No. 38/20). Significant entries within an approximate 600m radius of the site are listed in Appendix 1 and plotted in Fig. 3. Where relevant, these sites and finds have been discussed in Section 4.2.

#### **3.2 Historical and Cartographic Sources**

It was not possible to visit the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), based in Hertford, due to the coronavirus pandemic, so the principal source for this type of evidence was the internet. Relevant documents are listed in Appendix 2 and reproduced in Figs. 4 – 13.

#### **3.3 Secondary Sources**

It was not possible to visit the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS), based in Hertford, due to the coronavirus pandemic, so the principal source for this type of evidence was the internet, as well as AS's own in-house library. Unpublished sources regarding the assessment area, such as previous field evaluation reports, have also been consulted. All sources are listed in the bibliography.



### 3.4 Geological/Geotechnical Information

A description of the superficial and solid geology of the local and surrounding area was compiled in order to assess the likely presence and potential condition of any archaeological remains on the site. This information was drawn from appropriate maps published by the Geological Survey of Great Britain (BGS 2015) and the Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW 1983).

### 3.5 Site Inspection

In the course of the archaeological desk-based assessment/walkover survey, a physical walkover of the site was undertaken on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The inspection had the following purposes:

- to examine the areas of archaeological potential identified during the desk-based assessment; in particular, with a view to gauging the likely survival and condition of archaeological remains; and
- to consider the significance of any above ground structures, historic buildings, and historic landscape features, and their potential impact on the proposed development.

## 4 THE EVIDENCE

### 4.1 Topography, Geology and Soils

4.1.1 The site lies at the centre of Welwyn Garden City and thus has a predominantly urban topography. The immediate area is dominated by a series of thoroughfares such as The Campus to the south, Bridge Road to the south-west and Digswell Road, which runs northwards from Sherrardspark Wood. Nevertheless, the town of Welwyn Garden City is situated on the southern side of the River Mimram, which flows roughly south-eastwards c.1.8km to the north of the site (Fig. 1). The site is situated on a sloping relief at c. 100m AOD with the land sloping slightly down to the south.

4.1.2 The solid geology of the Welwyn Garden City area comprises Cretaceous Upper Chalk overlain by glacial till (BGS 2015). The local soils are of the Hornbeam 3 Association, which are described as deep fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils and calcareous subsoils in places (SSEW 1983).

### 4.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

#### *Prehistoric*

4.2.1 The valley of the River Mimram has produced numerous flint artefacts dating from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic periods, including an isolated pear-shaped arrowhead found c.250m to the south-west of the site (HER 2113; Fig. 3). However, no evidence for any Neolithic settlement has been

recorded in or around Welwyn Garden City (Thompson 2002, 2). In contrast, Welwyn Garden City has revealed an extensive landscape of Iron Age and Roman occupation, including a late Iron Age 'Belgic' occupation site at Salisbury Gardens further south-eastwards. Such late Iron Age occupation is characterised by scattered settlements, probably single farmsteads with 1<sup>st</sup> century BC origins, many of which are known on the higher ground now occupied by Welwyn Garden City. Within the vicinity of the site, Belgic-Roman pottery sherds were found along Church Road and c.600m to the south (HER 199).

### *Romano-British*

4.2.2 The Romano-British settlement of Welwyn, including the Lockleys/Dickett Mead villa, is situated c.5km to the north of the site. A Roman road (Viatores 1964: route 214) is known to have passed through what is now Welwyn Garden City c.1.5km to the south-west. Extensive areas of Iron Age/Roman occupation are known to the south and south-east of Welwyn Garden City, specifically in the areas of Church Road, Salisbury Gardens and Shotlands Green, including the previously mentioned Belgic-Roman pottery sherds found along Church Road and c.600m to the south of the site (HER 199). A Roman coin was also found in Dellcott Close, which is c.500m to the west-south-west (HER 1574).

### *Anglo-Saxon & medieval*

4.2.3 Following the collapse of Roman rule, the Romano-British settlement at Welwyn fell into decline, eventually re-emerging as a small village with no less than 42 households at the time of the Domesday Book (Morris 1976). Few Anglo-Saxon sites are recorded in Hertfordshire, and no Anglo-Saxon or medieval remains are recorded in the vicinity of the site. The area likely formed part of the wider Sherrardspark Wood to the north-west, which has possible medieval origins (HER 9598; Page 1912). In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it was also observed that much of the arable land around Welwyn remained unploughed even before the Black Death in 1348 (Thompson 2002, 9).

### *Post-medieval and early modern*

4.2.4 The fortunes of Welwyn improved in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with the establishment of the Great North Road leading to a significant increase in commercial and coach traffic through the town. The site, however, lies c.5km to the south of the smaller town of Welwyn and to the east of the Great North Road in what appears to have been an agricultural landscape. Sherrardspark Wood, which remains c.200m to the north-west of the site, is a post-medieval park with possible medieval origins, and was undoubtedly larger in the past (HER 9598). The post-medieval period is also represented by the Grade II listed The Old Cottage, which is at No. 39 Bridge Road c.140m to the south-west of the site, and comprises a 17<sup>th</sup> century cottage, thought to date from 1604 (HER 10873).

4.2.5 The early modern period witnessed significant development of the area now occupied by Welwyn Garden City. To the immediate north of the site lies the former course of the *Hatfield, Luton and Dunstable Railway* line, which began as an independent company, the *Hertford and Welwyn Junction Railway* (HER 9822). It underwent complex changes before it opened to traffic in 1860 between Welwyn Junction and Luton, with trains starting at Hatfield Station. In 1861, it was absorbed by the Great Northern, and was closed to passengers in 1965.

4.2.6 The former course of the *Great Northern Railway, Hertford branch*, which opened in 1858, also lies c.575m to the east of the site and ran northward until its closure in 1951 (HER 30405). At the junction of the two former railway lines is Hunters Road bridge, which stands 580m to the south-south-east of the site and was built in 1850 but reconstructed in 1963 (HER 5108). White Bridge on Digswell Road and c.250m to the north-east of the site is a bridge built in concrete and stone, with an ornate stone parapet (HER 7152). It crossed the *Hatfield, Luton & Dunstable* branch railway, which opened in 1860 and closed in 1967.

### *Modern*

4.2.7 In 1919, following World War I, the Earl and Countess Cowper's estates at Digswell were sold to pay death duties. 1,688 acres of land in the Digswell, Welwyn, and Hatfield parishes were purchased by Ebenezer Howard (Munby 1977). In 1920 Welwyn Garden City Ltd was formed (HER 9599), and Louis de Soissons appointed town planner and architect. Welwyn Garden City thus became the world's second Garden City. Archaeological evidence for the construction of the new garden city is evident throughout the surrounding landscape, including a temporary railway station on the Hatfield, Luton & Dunstable branch of the *Great Northern Railway*, which stood at the eastern end of the *Hatfield, Luton and Dunstable Railway* line and c.560m to the east of the site (HER 9824).

4.2.8 Further evidence for the development of Welwyn Garden City comprises the site 1920s brickworks which made bricks for the new Garden City and was formerly located only c.100m to the north-west of the site (HER 10933). Only c.60m to the west-south-west of the site is the location of WWI sawmills adapted in the 1920s to provide materials for the new Garden City (HER 10934). The site of a workmen's camp/temporary accommodation for men building the Garden City is also recorded at The Campus and only c.90m to the east of the site (HER 10935).

4.2.9 As Welwyn Garden City was completed, the site was established at the centre of the town, within its campus area, which included council offices and civic buildings. The Grade II listed No. 26 Pentley Park, which stands further northwards in a residential area, is a 1936 - 37 Modernist house designed by Paul V. E. Mauger for himself (HERs 13705 - MHT13705 & DHT9883). Similarly, c.600m to the north, is the Grade II\* listed Templewood School, which was built in 1950 for Hertfordshire County Council and is a primary

school of architectural importance, built using the post-war Hills prefabricated system (HERs 30830 - MHT30830 & DHT9621).

4.2.10 The thriving industry and location of Welwyn Garden City, situated on the Great North Road (A1(M)) to the north of London, meant that it was strategically defended during World War II. Defence features include anti-tank obstacles and road blocks on the White Bridge in Digswell Road and c.250m to the north-east of the site (HER 6631). A WWII loopholed parapet also formerly stood on the roof of the John Lewis department store, originally the Welwyn Stores, to the south-east, but removed in 1995 (HER 6632). In 1946, Welwyn Garden City was designated a New Town, and between 1948 and 1988 many areas within the town centre were gradually infilled and existing industries extensively redeveloped (de Soissons 1988).

### *The site*

4.2.11 The site lies within Welwyn Garden City's town centre Conservation Area (CA). The *Welwyn Garden City Conservation Area Appraisal* reveals that the site forms part of the Civic area around The Campus, and refers to the site as lying towards the northern boundary of the town centre area, which follows the curve of the dismantled railway line between the Campus West car park and the Campus East car parks (Warshaw, Bradbury & Cartell 2007). The Campus is dominated by civic buildings, including the Modernist Campus West building, which stands to the immediate east of the site and dates to 1973 – 75 (*ibid.*).

4.2.12 Relatively little is known of the site prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and no pre-modern documents concerning the site are known. Historic cartographic sources (Section 4.3; Fig. 4) depict Sherrardspark Wood from 1766 onwards, thus confirming its post-medieval and likely medieval origins (HER 9598). Such cartographic evidence also indicate that the wood was much larger, particularly towards its south-eastern corner and likely formerly incorporated the site. Sherrardspark Wood likely formed part of the woodland mentioned in the manor of Digswell as Domesday (Morris 1975). In 1284 Lawrence of Digswell, lord of the manor, stopped up a public way through his wood of 'Sherigg' (Hughes 1936). Subsequently from 1700 onwards, Sherrardspark Wood formed part of the Panshanger estate held by Earl Cowper and Lord Desborough (*ibid.*).

4.2.13 The northern boundary of the site was established through Sherrardspark Wood during the construction of the *Hatfield, Luton and Dunstable Railway* line, which began as an independent company, the *Hertford and Welwyn Junction Railway* founded in 1853 (HER 9822). It underwent complex changes before it opened to traffic in 1860 between Welwyn Junction and Luton, and thus to the immediate north of the site, with trains starting at Hatfield Station. In 1861, it was absorbed by the Great Northern, but was closed to passengers in 1965 (Woodward & Woodward 1994). The HER database also reveals that the length of former railway track to the north of the site was lifted in 1971 and survives as the Ayot Greenway; a path for cyclists and pedestrians (HER 9822).

4.2.14 No heritage designations are recorded within the site, but both local history and historic cartographic sources reveal that the site was developed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and thus played a significant role in the development of Welwyn Garden City. Historic cartographic evidence (Section 4.3; Fig. 9) reveal that the site remained as woodland in 1898, forming the south-eastern section of Sherrardspark Wood. However, by 1923, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 12) clearly reveals that the site formed part of ‘Saw Mills’ located along the course of the railway line and with its own sidings. The site is therefore also connected with the WWI German Prisoner of War (POW) camp, which formerly stood to the east of the site (Hughes 1936).

4.2.15 Relatively little is known about the saw mills located within the site and no relevant documents could be found at the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Library (HALS). However, it has been suggested that the German POW camp was established to the east of the site during the latter stages of WWI (Hughes 1936), in order to provide labour at the saw mills and to clear sections of Sherrardspark Wood, thus suggesting a pre-1918 date for the saw mills. Following WWI, the camp was used as a ‘*Workmen’s Camp*’ for those building Welwyn Garden City and the saw mills were purchased by the newly formed Welwyn Garden City Company, together with their machinery, a large stock of timber and some remaining trees (Plate 1; Gill 2014). By 1943, the revised edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 13) labelled the site as part of a ‘*Joinery Works*’.

### 4.3 Cartographic Evidence

#### *Dury & Andrews’s map of Hertfordshire, 1766*

4.3.1 The earliest cartographic source to depict the site comprises Dury and Andrews’s map of Hertfordshire, which dates to 1766 (Fig. 4). At the beginning of the early modern period, the site clearly lay in an overwhelmingly rural and agricultural area. To the west of the site in 1766 lay the small hamlet of *Hanside*, while further west-north-west was Lemsford Mills. Digswell stood some distance to the north, and the enclosed estate of *Wood Hall* lay to the south. In 1766, the site was within an agricultural field to the south-east of a large woodland covert, Sherrardspark Wood.

#### *Ordnance Survey surveyors’ drawings, 1805*

4.3.2 The Ordnance Survey surveyors’ drawings, which date to 1805 (Fig. 5), are consistent with the previous cartographic evidence. By 1805, however, the area was dominated by *Sherrards Wood*, which had clearly been extended further south-eastwards and into the site.

#### *Map of Upper Handside Farm*

4.3.3 The map of Upper Handside Farm, which dates to 1810 (Fig. 6), is consistent with the previous cartographic evidence. The 1810 map indicates

that the site did not form part of Upper Handside Farm, but it is unclear whether the site consisted of woodland or agricultural land.

#### *Bryant's map of Hertfordshire, 1822*

4.3.4 Bryant's map of Hertfordshire, which dates to 1822 (Fig. 7), is also consistent with the previous cartographic source. As previously, by 1822 the site clearly lay towards the south-eastern extent of *Sherrards Park Wood*, which extended to the north-west.

#### *1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1878*

4.3.5 The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, which dates to 1878 (Fig. 8), is also consistent with the previous cartographic source. By 1878, the course of the *Hatfield, Luton and Dunstable Railway* line had clearly been established along the northern boundary of the site, and evidently cut through Sherrardspark Wood. In 1878 the site remained as woodland.

#### *2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1898*

4.3.6 The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, which dates for 1898 (Fig. 9), is consistent with the previous cartographic source. The site remained as woodland, forming part of the south-eastern extent of Sherrardspark Wood and divided from the main area of woodland by the railway line.

#### *Proposed plans of Welwyn Garden City, 1920 - 21*

4.3.7 Louis de Soissons' plan of Welwyn Garden City, which dates to 1920 (Fig. 10) was drawn during the planning and establishment of the new garden city. It clearly shows the site to the north of Brockwood Lane, south of the railway line, and to the immediate west of the proposed The Campus. In 1921, the site therefore remained as woodland, forming part of the south-eastern extent of Sherrardspark Wood. In contrast, the council plan of Welwyn Garden City, which dates to 1921 (Fig. 11), records that the western section was clearly demarcated for development during 1967 – 72.

#### *3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, 1923*

4.3.8 The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map, which dates to 1923 (Fig. 12), is the earliest cartographic source to depict significant development within the site. By 1923, the site clearly former part of 'Saw Mills' which extended further westwards and were located along the course of the railway line and with its own sidings. The site therefore consisted of the eastern section of the saw mills and incorporated a large, rectangular shaped building at its centre, likely a timber or metal framed industrial structure. A small building also stood in the site's southern section, and its northern section was traversed by the railway sidings. Two drains were also labelled within the northern section of the site, and to the east of the site stood the 'Workmen's Camp', formerly the WWI German POW camp.

### *Revised edition Ordnance Survey map, 1943*

4.3.9 The final historic cartographic source to depict the site comprises the revised edition Ordnance Survey map, which dates to 1943 (Fig. 13). The 1943 map is consistent with the previous cartographic source. During WWII the former saw mills within the site had clearly expanded to become a 'Joinery Works'. The site contained buildings forming the joinery works in 1943, including two large structures at its centre, and what appeared to be small-gauge waggon tracks.

## **4.4 Constraints**

**Listed Buildings** – The site does not incorporate any listed buildings, although a moderate amount is recorded in the surrounding area.

**Registered Park and Gardens** – The site does not lie within a registered park and garden, and none are recorded in the vicinity.

**Area of Archaeological Significance** – The site does not lie within an Area of Archaeological Significance, and none are recorded in the surrounding area.

**Scheduled Ancient Monuments** – The site does not lie within a Scheduled Ancient Monument and none are recorded in the vicinity.

**Conservation Areas** – The site lies within Welwyn Garden City's town centre Conservation Area (CA).

## **4 SITE VISIT**

5.1 A physical walkover of the site was conducted on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The main access into the site is from the B195 The Campus, with access via a road into the south-eastern corner of the site (DPs 1 & 2).

5.2 The site is separated from the roads by a privet hedge and narrow area of open grass (DP 3). The site's northern boundary is formed by established trees lining the Ayot Greenway, which follows the course of the former railway line (DPs 4 & 5). The western boundary of the site is also demarcated by established trees, with residential apartments beyond (DP 6). The site is currently occupied by the existing surfaced car park at Campus West (DPs 7 – 11).

## **6 DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 The Impact of the Proposed Development**

6.1.1 The archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover survey of the site was undertaken in support of proposals for a new decked car park on

an existing surface car park at Campus West. The planning proposal will comprise two further, raised levels of car parking provision over the majority of the site. The access will remain unaltered.

6.1.2 The proposed new decked car park would necessitate extensive groundworks, but note the proposed use of piling.

## **6.2 Previous Ground Disturbance**

6.2.1 Previous ground disturbance at the site is judged to be moderate, and specifically dating from the modern period. The site was woodland or agricultural land, specifically part of Sherrardspark Wood until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ordnance Survey maps dating from 1924 onwards record that the site was developed as part of the saw mills prior to 1918, and which were developed by 1943 into a joinery works following their purchase by the newly formed Welwyn Garden City Company c.1920.

6.2.2 Previous ground disturbance associated with the construction of the saw mills in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is not judged to be significant, particularly as the pictorial evidence of the saw mill suggests that the buildings within the site are likely to have been timber structures.

6.2.3 Of greater significance will be the ground preparation for the existing car park, and this may have caused truncation of archaeological remains, if present.

## **6.4 Archaeological Potential**

6.4.1 Based on the known archaeology the potential of the site may be judged as follows:

**Prehistoric – Low.** Prehistoric evidence in the vicinity is limited to an isolated pear-shaped arrowhead, and Belgo-Roman pottery sherds.

**Romano-British – Low.** Despite the Romano-British settlement at Welwyn, Roman evidence in the vicinity is limited to the previously mentioned Belgo-Roman pottery sherds, and a Roman coin found to the west-south-west.

**Anglo-Saxon – Low.** No Anglo-Saxon remains are recorded in the vicinity of the site.

**Medieval –Low.** No medieval remains are recorded in the vicinity of the site, and the area likely formed part of Sherrardspark Wood, located to the north-west, and which has possible medieval origins.

**Post-Medieval – Low.** The site is judged to have formed part of Sherrardspark Wood and consisted of woodland until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



## 7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The site is judged to have a consistently low potential for archaeological remains throughout the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. Archaeological remains from the Welwyn Garden City area are relatively limited, despite its proximity to the valley of the River Mimram and the Romano-British settlement at Welwyn. The area surrounding the site did not witness significant development until the early modern period, notably the development of the former Hatfield, Luton and Dunstable Railway line, which was established through Sherrardspark Wood and along the northern boundary of the site.

7.2 The most significant potential of the site is for early 20<sup>th</sup> century remains associated with the saw mills, which date to before 1918 and are associated with the WWI German POW camp that formerly stood to the east of the site. Following WWI, the saw mills incorporating the site were purchased by the newly formed Welwyn Garden City Company, together with their machinery, a large stock of timber and some remaining trees. By 1943, the site was labelled as part of a joinery works and the extant car park was formed contemporaneous with the Campus West building in 1973 – 75.

7.3 Previous ground disturbance at the site is judged to be moderate, and specifically dating from the modern period. The site likely remained as woodland and agricultural land, specifically part of Sherrardspark Wood until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ground disturbance associated with the construction of the saw mills in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is not judged to be significant, particularly as the pictorial evidence of the saw mill suggests that the buildings within the site are likely to have been timber structures. Of greater significance will be the ground preparation for the existing car park, and this will likely have caused truncation of archaeological remains, if present.

7.4 It is proposed to alter the site for a new decked car park. The planning proposal will comprise two further, raised levels of car parking provision over the majority of the site. It will necessitate extensive groundworks, but note the proposed use of piling.

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Solutions would like to thank Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, in particular Ms. Barbara Sharman, for commissioning funding the archaeological desk-based assessment/walkover survey.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the staff of the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER), in particular Ms. Rebekah Hart, for the provision of HER data and mapping. AS would also like to thank the staff of the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Library (HALS).

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## WEB RESOURCES

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[www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/>

## APPENDIX 1 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER) DATA

The following sites are those that lie within a 600m radius of the site. The table has been compiled from data held by the Hertfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER).

HER	NGR TL	Description
<b>Prehistoric</b>		
199 - MHT199	2364 1279	'Belgo-Roman pot-sherds were found during the digging of a sewer trench for the Free Church Hall, Church Road, Welwyn Garden City in 1928. Excavations revealed a trench c.15yds long containing fragments of some 100 coarse 1st/2nd century domestic ware, charcoal, animal bones and teeth and a bronze fibula
2113 - MHT2113	234 132	Small pear-shaped flint arrowhead found near the Quadrangle
<b>Romano-British</b>		
1574 - MHT1574	2310 1319	Roman coin found in Dellcott Close
<b>Post-medieval &amp; early modern</b>		
5108 - MHT5108	24033 13117	Hunters Road bridge, built in 1850 but reconstructed in 1963. Reinforced concrete piers and a prestressed concrete deck
7152 - MHT7152	2374 1348	White Bridge on Digswell Road is a bridge built in concrete and stone, with an ornate stone parapet. It crossed the Hatfield, Luton & Dunstable branch railway, which opened in 1860 and closed in 1967
9598 - MHT9598	230 140	Sherrardspark Wood is a post-medieval park with possible medieval origins
9822 - MHT9822	1796 1580	The Hatfield, Luton and Dunstable Railway line began as an independent company, the Hertford & Welwyn Junction Railway, and underwent complex changes before it opened to traffic in 1860 between Welwyn Junction and Luton, with trains starting at Hatfield Station [5525]. In 1861 it was absorbed by the Great Northern. In Hertfordshire it follows the river Lea; it was closed to passengers in 1951. The track west of Blackbridge was lifted in 1966-7, and that between Blackbridge and Welwyn Garden City in 1971 <1>. Part of its route survives as a path for cyclists and pedestrians (The Ayot Greenway). The line was closed to passengers in 1965, not 1951. It was closed to freight in 1967
9824 - MHT9824	2402 1314	Original site of the platform for the Hatfield, Luton & Dunstable branch of the Great Northern Railway, just where it left the main line. This was a halt primarily intended for workmen on the site of the new Garden City, and it opened in 1920. It was closed in 1926 on completion of the first phase of building, and a new station opened on the main line 250m to the south
10873 - MHT10873	2342 1327	Grade II listed The Old Cottage at No. 39 Bridge Road comprises a 17th century cottage, said to date from 1604; two storeys with gable end to road, brick chimney stack and tiled roof. It has been altered
30405 -	28803 12239	Course of the Great Northern Railway, Hertford branch,

MHT30405		which opened in 1858, running from Hatfield along the Lea valley to Hertford North and crossing the river Lea at the main line viaduct. It then ran round a sharp curve across the Beane to Hartham Common and linked with the GER tracks beyond the site of the original Hertford East station [10136] <1>. It ran north of, not through, Hertford East. Since the line's closure in 1951 some of it has disappeared, but much is now the Cole Green Way
<b>Modern</b>		
6631 - MHT6631	2374 1348	WWII anti-tank obstacles once stood on the White Bridge in Digswell Road. All that remains is one square base of concrete about 2'6" x 2'6"
6632 - MHT6632	2370 1320	WWII loopholed parapet around the roof of the John Lewis department store, originally the Welwyn Stores, but removed in 1995
9599 - MHT9599	235 126	Welwyn Garden City was the world's second Garden City, founded in 1920 by a private company under the guidance of Ebenezer Howard, the man responsible for the first at Letchworth. The architects and planners were Louis de Soissons and Frederic Osborn. Distinct commercial, civic and industrial zones were laid out surrounded by housing. Long straight vistas - The Parkway and Howardsgate - incorporate ornamental open spaces in the middle of the town
10933 - MHT10933	2342 1348	Site of 1920s brickworks making bricks for the new Garden City
10934 - MHT10934	2345 1335	WWI sawmills adapted in the 1920s to provide materials for the new Garden City
10935 - MHT10935	2368 1336	Site of a workman's camp/temporary accommodation for men building the Garden City at The Campus
13705 - MHT13705 & DHT9883	23637 13906	Grade II listed No. 26 Pentley Park is a 1936-7 Modernist house designed by Paul V E Mauger for himself
30830 - MHT30830 & DHT9621	23560 13886	Grade II* listed Templewood School was built in 1950 for Hertfordshire County Council and is a primary school of architectural importance, built using the post-war Hills prefabricated system

## APPENDIX 2      CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Date	Description	Fig. No.	Scale	Location
1766	Dury & Andrews's map of Hertfordshire	4	1 mile : 1.95 inches	AS
1805	Welwyn; Ordnance Survey surveyors' drawings by William Hyett	5	2" : 1 mile	BL
1810	Map of Upper Handside Farm	6	-	HALS
1822	Bryant's map of Hertfordshire	7	7/8 mile : 1 inch	AS
1878	Hertfordshire sheet XXVIII.11; 1 <sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	8	25" : 1 mile	NLS
1898	Hertfordshire sheet XXVIII.11; 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	9	25" : 1 mile	NLS
1920	Louis de Soissons plan	10	-	XX
1921	Council plan of Welwyn Garden City	11	-	XX
1923	Hertfordshire sheet XXVIII.11; 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map	12	25" : 1 mile	NLS
1943	Hertfordshire sheet XXVIII.11; revised edition Ordnance Survey map	13	25" : 1 mile	NLS

## PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1  
*Existing access into the site from the B195 The Campus with Campus West beyond, view south-east*



2  
*Existing access into the site from the B195 The Campus with Campus West beyond, view south-east*



3  
*Southern boundary of the site comprising a privet hedge and open grass, with Bridge Road and The Campus beyond, view south*



4  
*Norther boundary of the site formed by established trees lining the Ayot Greenway and former railway line, view south*



5  
*Norther boundary of the site formed by established trees lining the Ayot Greenway and former railway line, view west*



6  
*Western section of the site demarcated by established trees, with residential apartments beyond, view south*





7  
*South-western section of the site, which is bound by established trees, comprising the existing surface car park at Campus West, view south-west*



8  
*Centre of the site, which is bound by established trees, comprising the existing surface car park at Campus West, view west*



9  
*Northern section of the site, which is bound by established trees, comprising the existing surface car park at Campus West, view north*



10  
*Centre of the site, which is bound by established trees, comprising the existing surface car park at Campus West, view south*



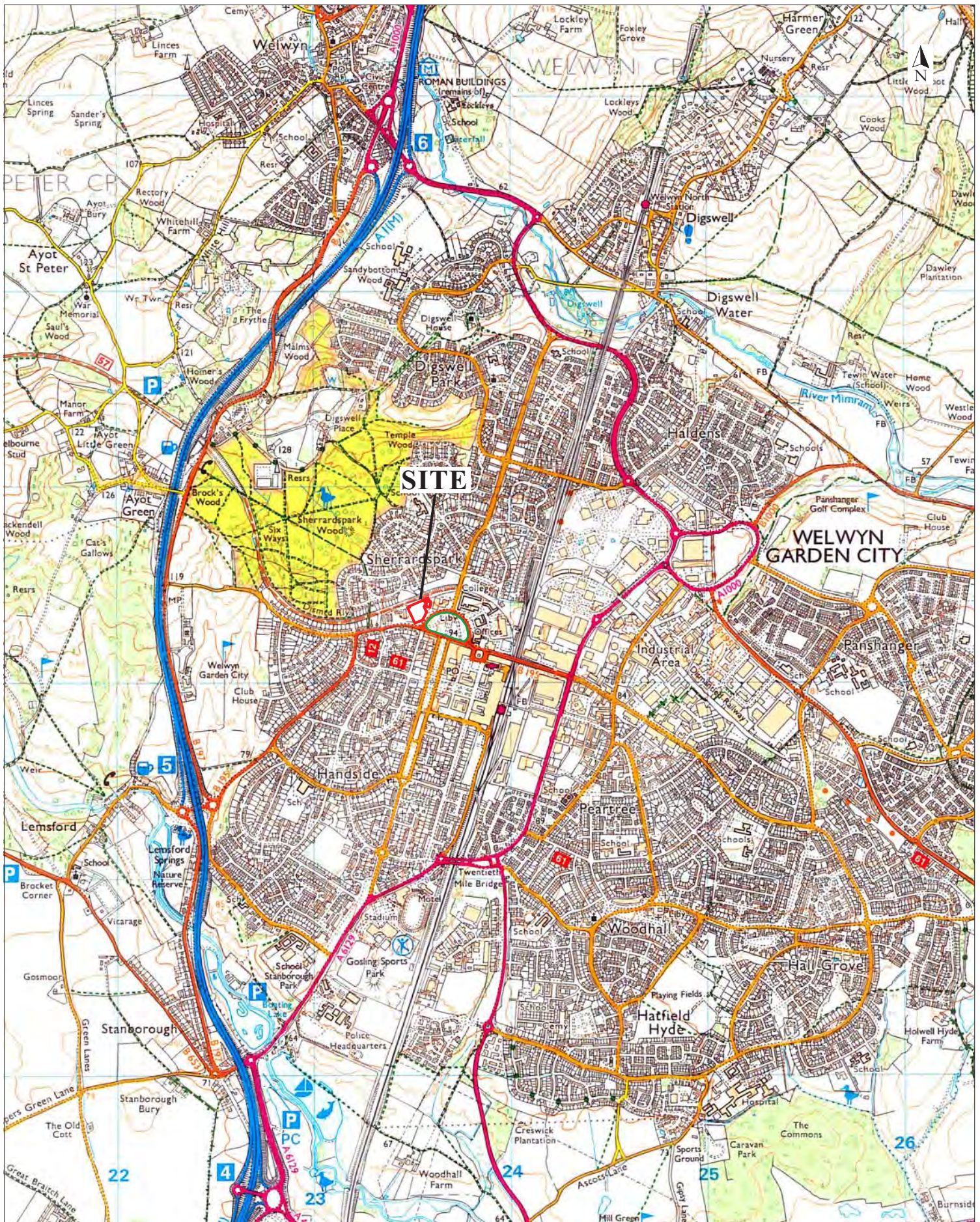
11  
*Centre of the site, which is bound by established trees, comprising the existing surface car park at Campus West, view east*





Plate 1 Saw mill in Sherrardswood, 1919





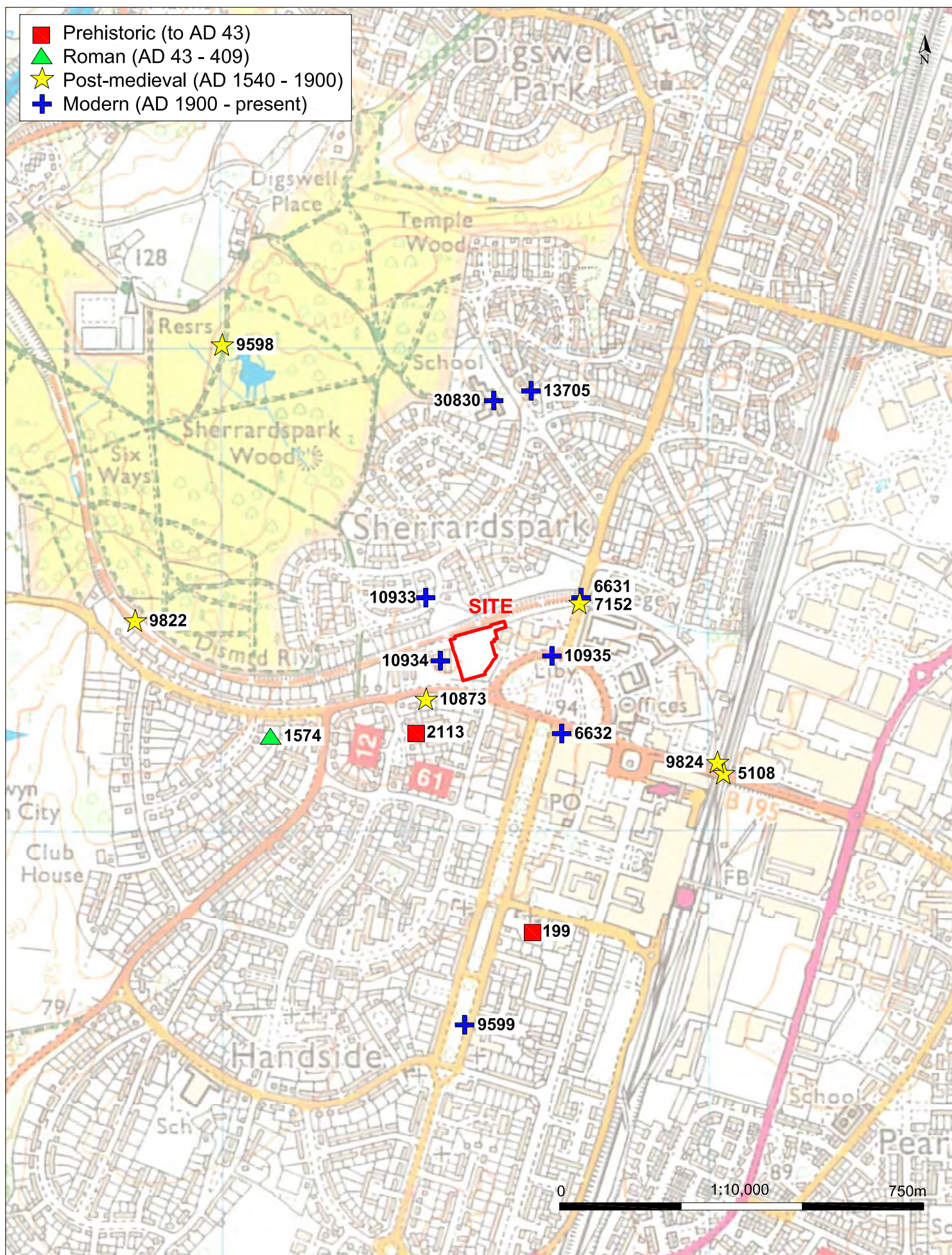
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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4  
 Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)









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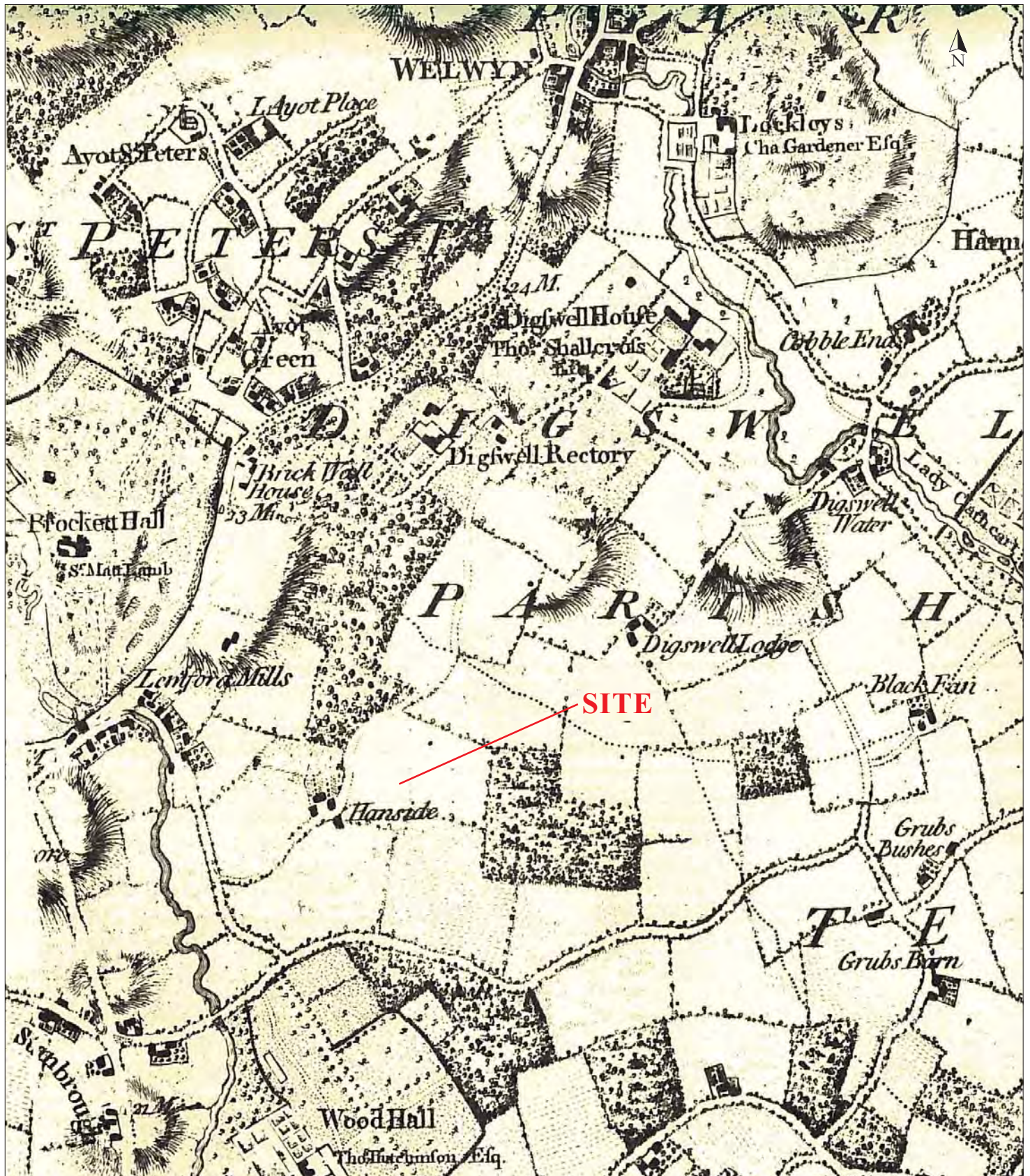
Archaeological Solutions Ltd

### Fig. 3 HER Data

Scale 1:10,000 at A4

Welwyn West Campus, Hertfordshire (P8406)





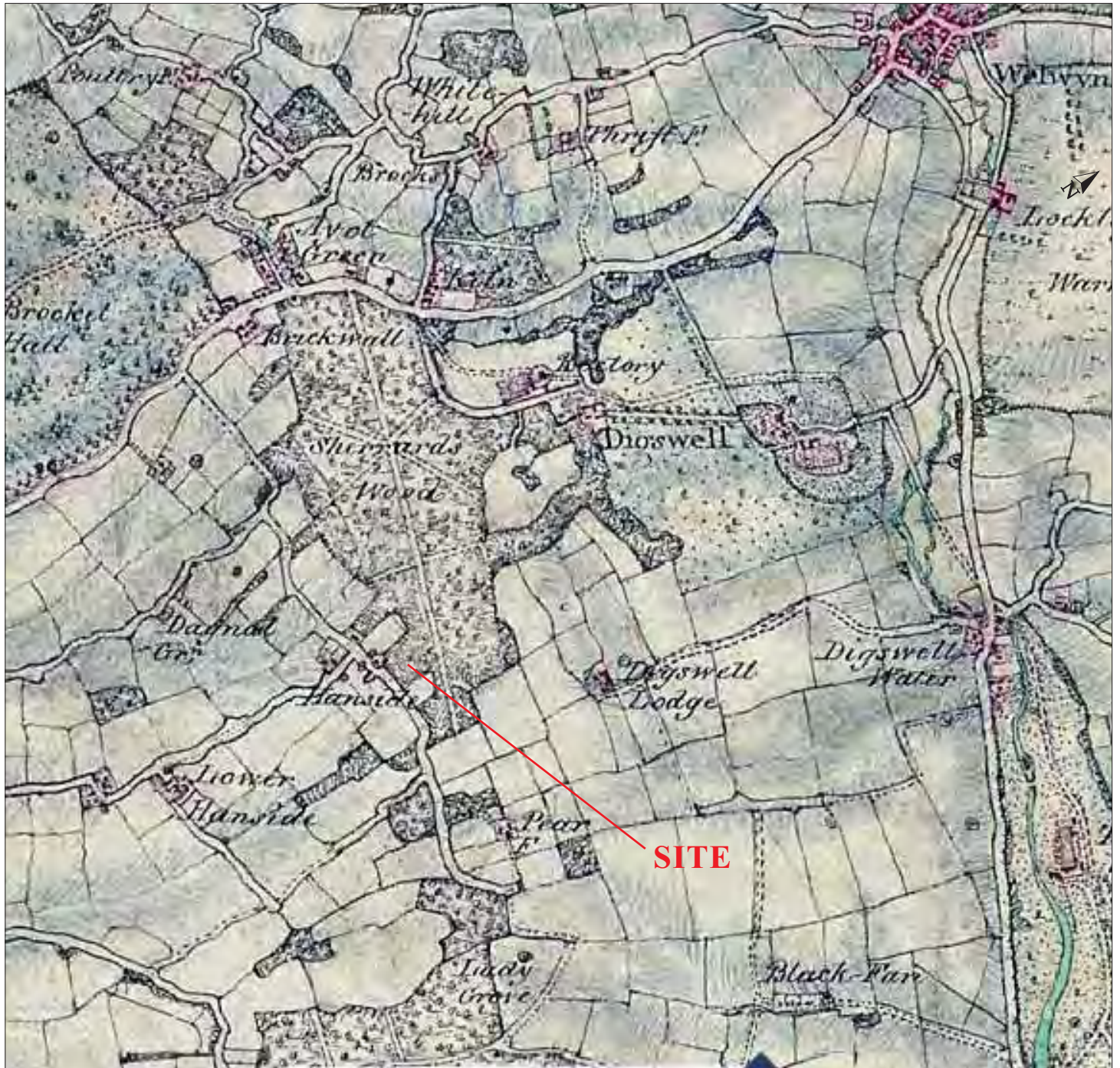
Archaeological Solutions Ltd

Fig. 4 Dury & Andrews' map, 1766

Not to scale

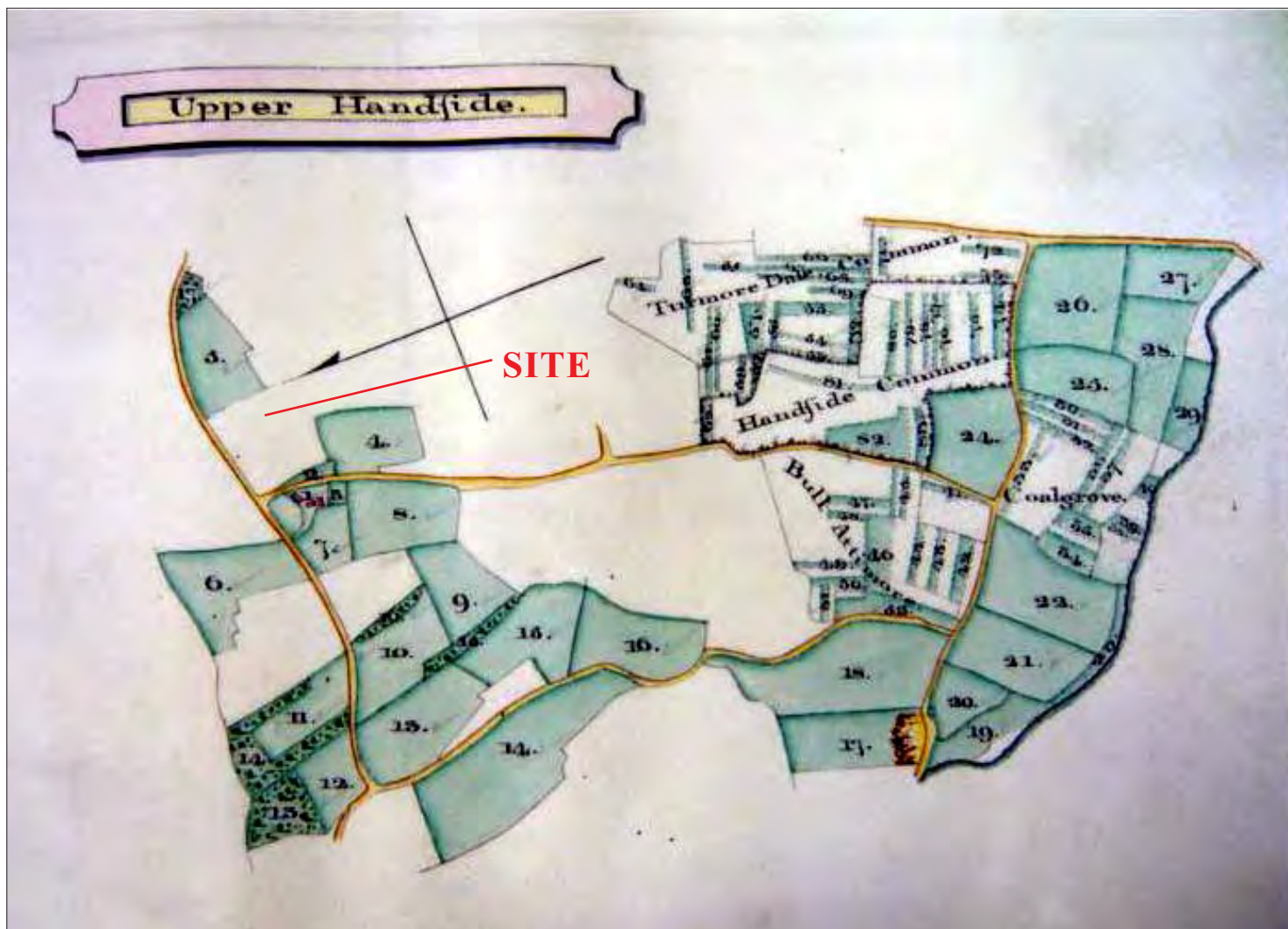
Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)





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<b>Fig. 5 OS surveyor's map, 1805</b>
Not to scale
Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)



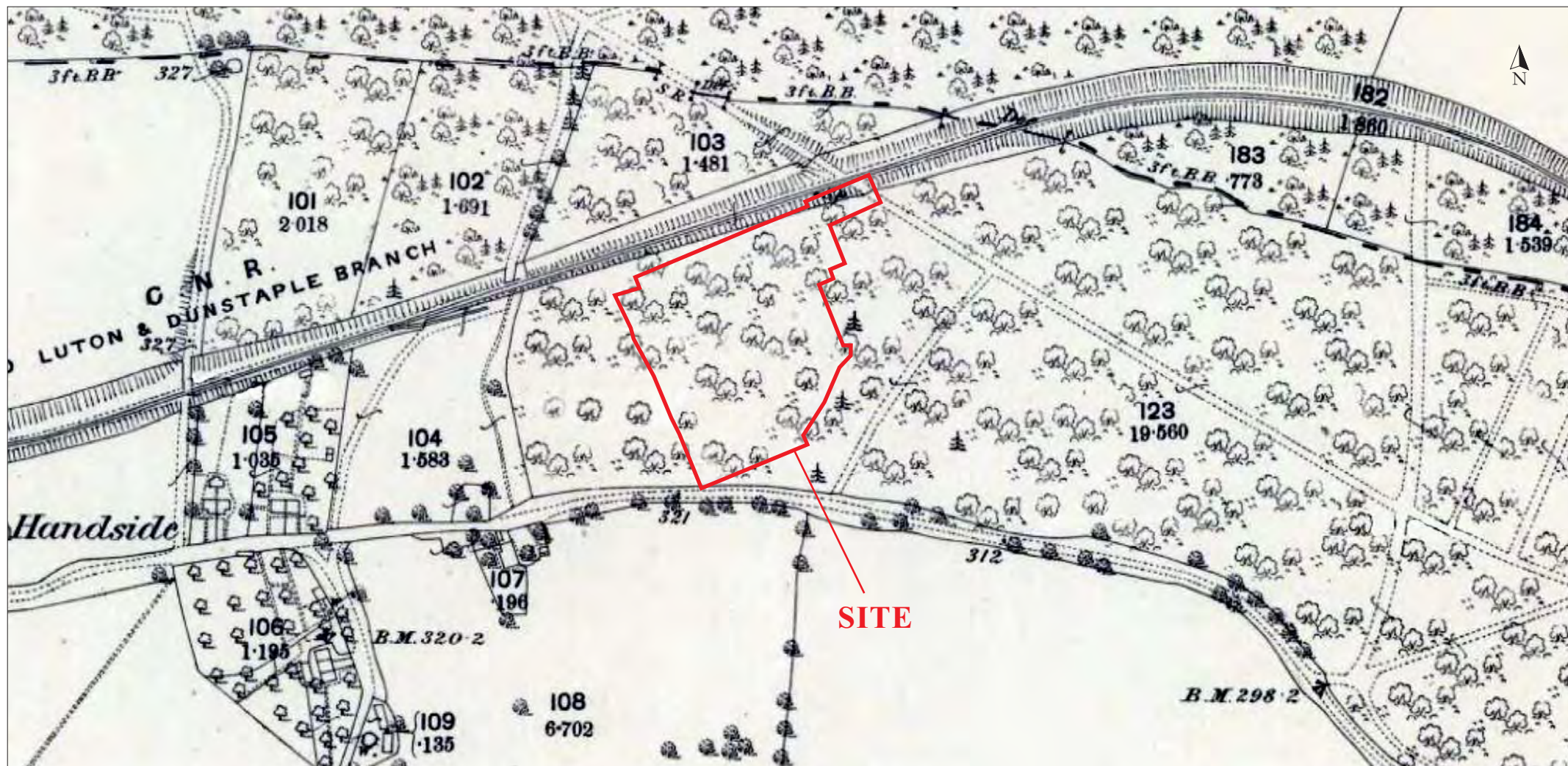


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<b>Fig. 6 Upper Handside Farm, 1810</b>
Not to scale
Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)





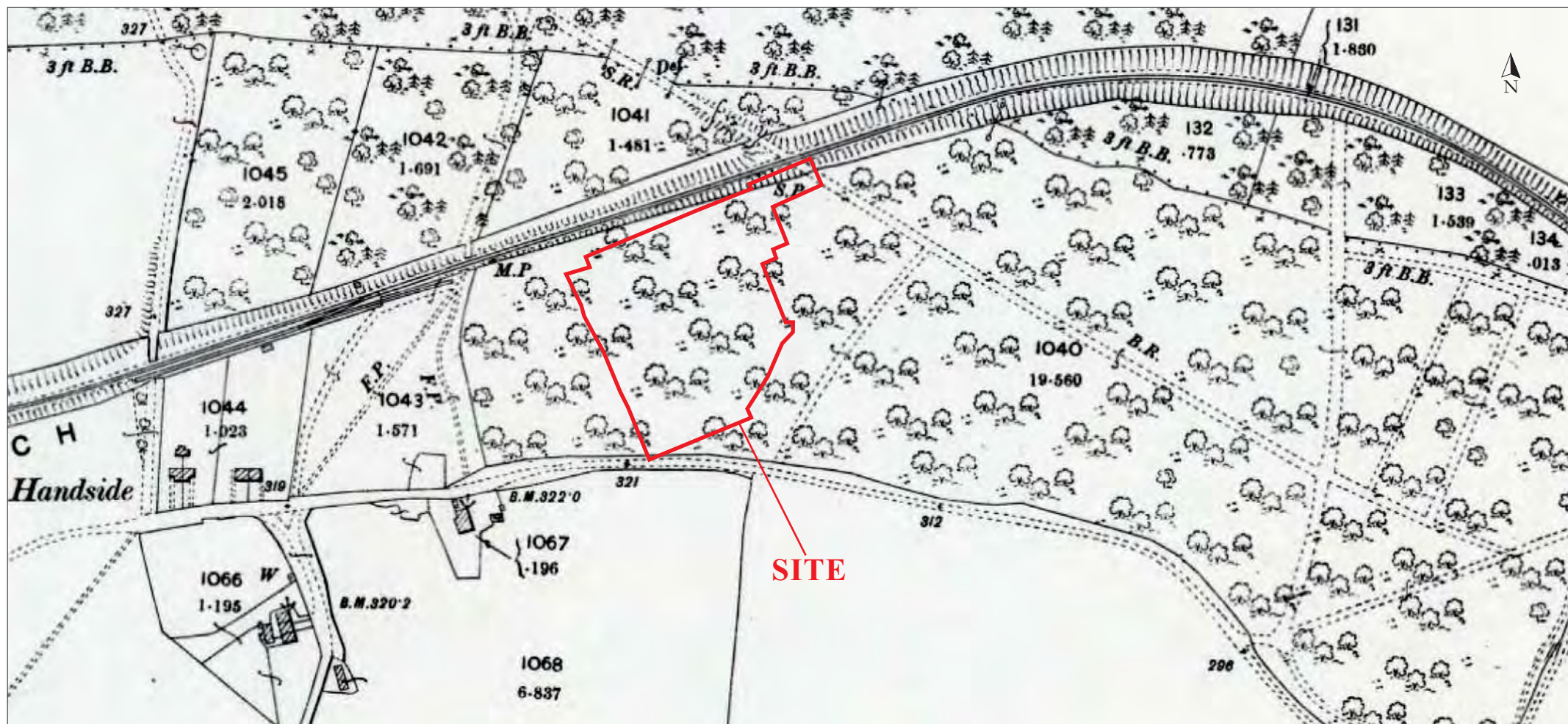




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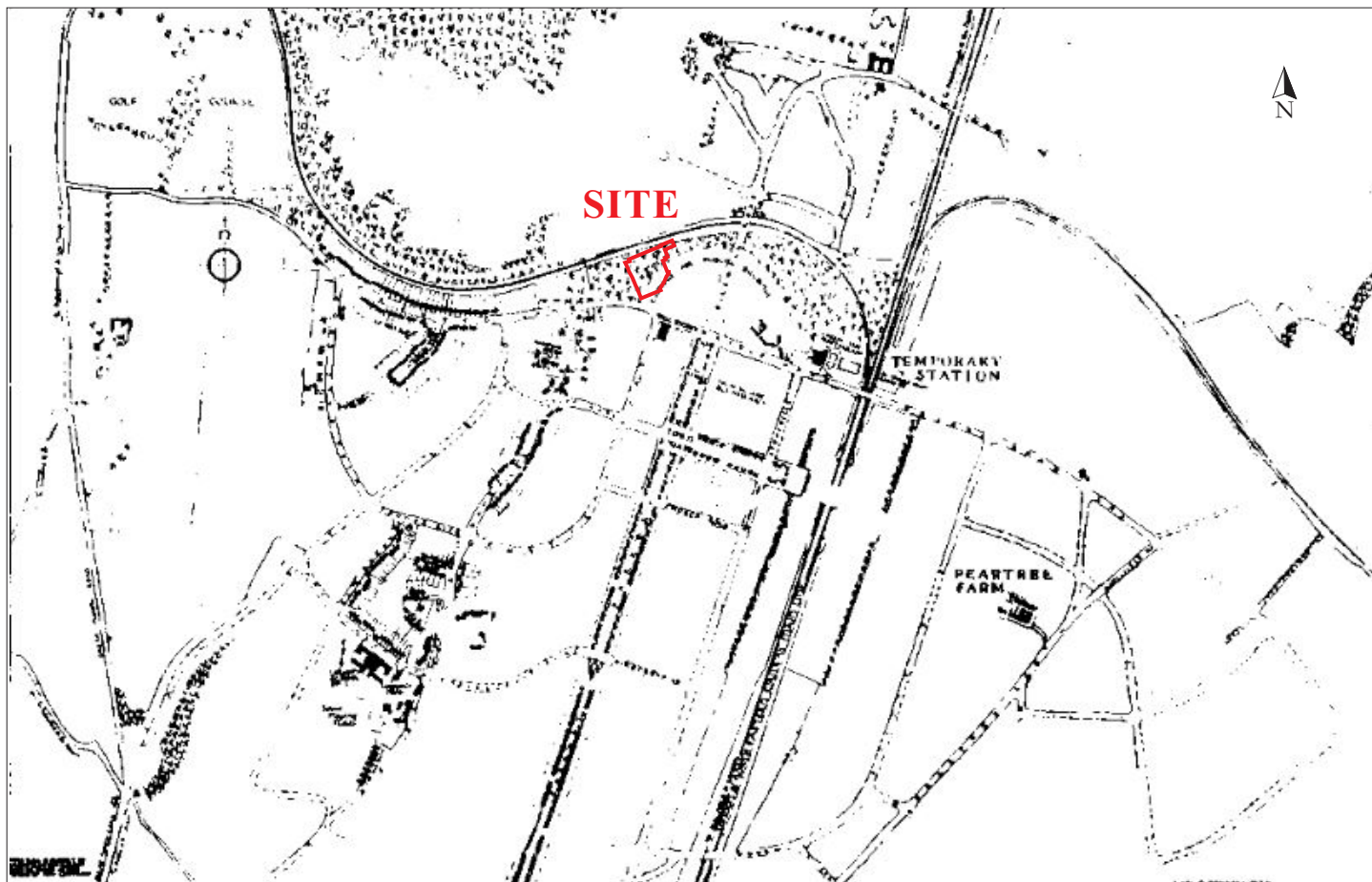
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<b>Fig. 8 OS map, 1878</b>
Not to scale
Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)





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<b>Fig. 9 OS map, 1898</b>
Not to scale
Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)

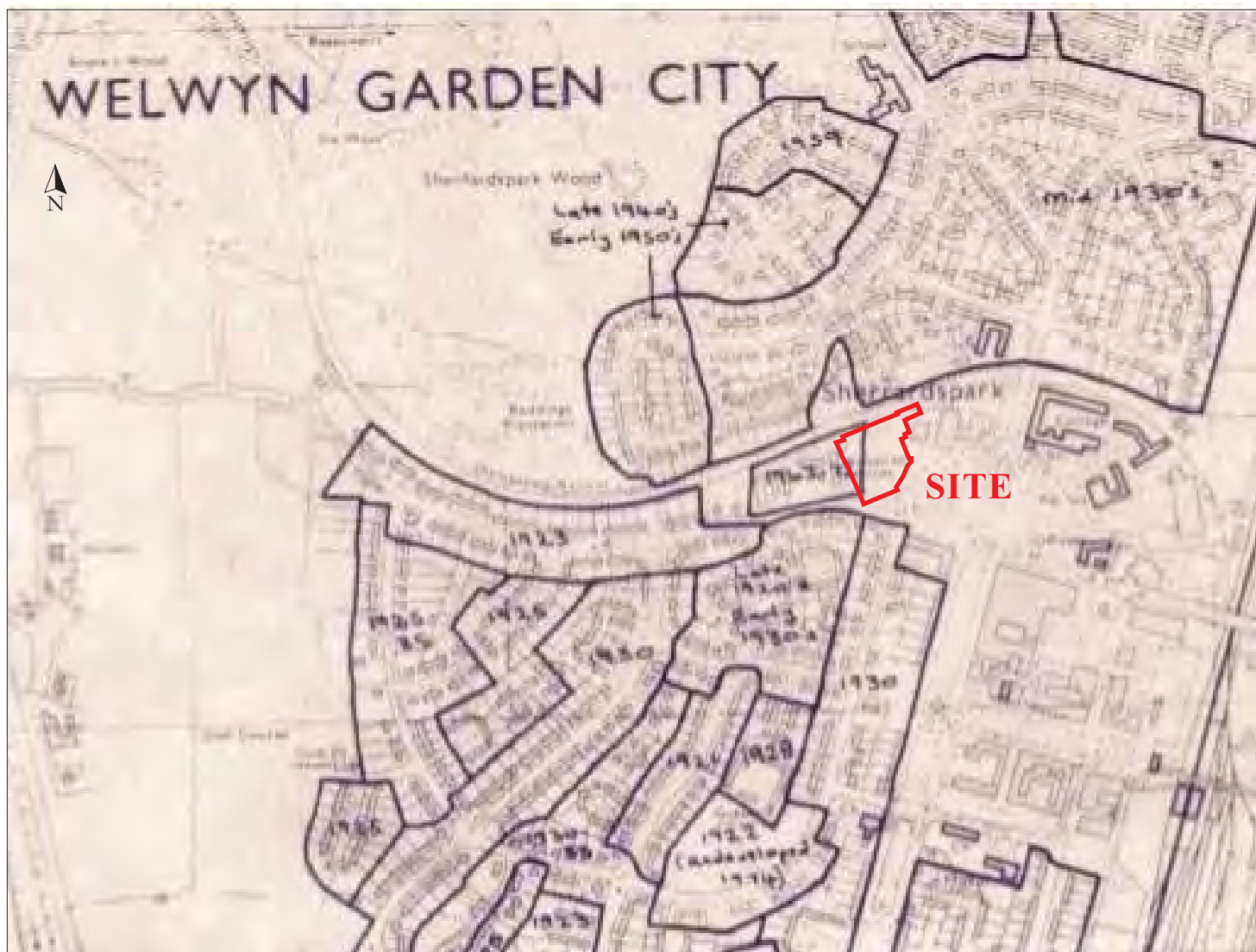


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**Fig. 10** Louis de Soisson's plan, 1920

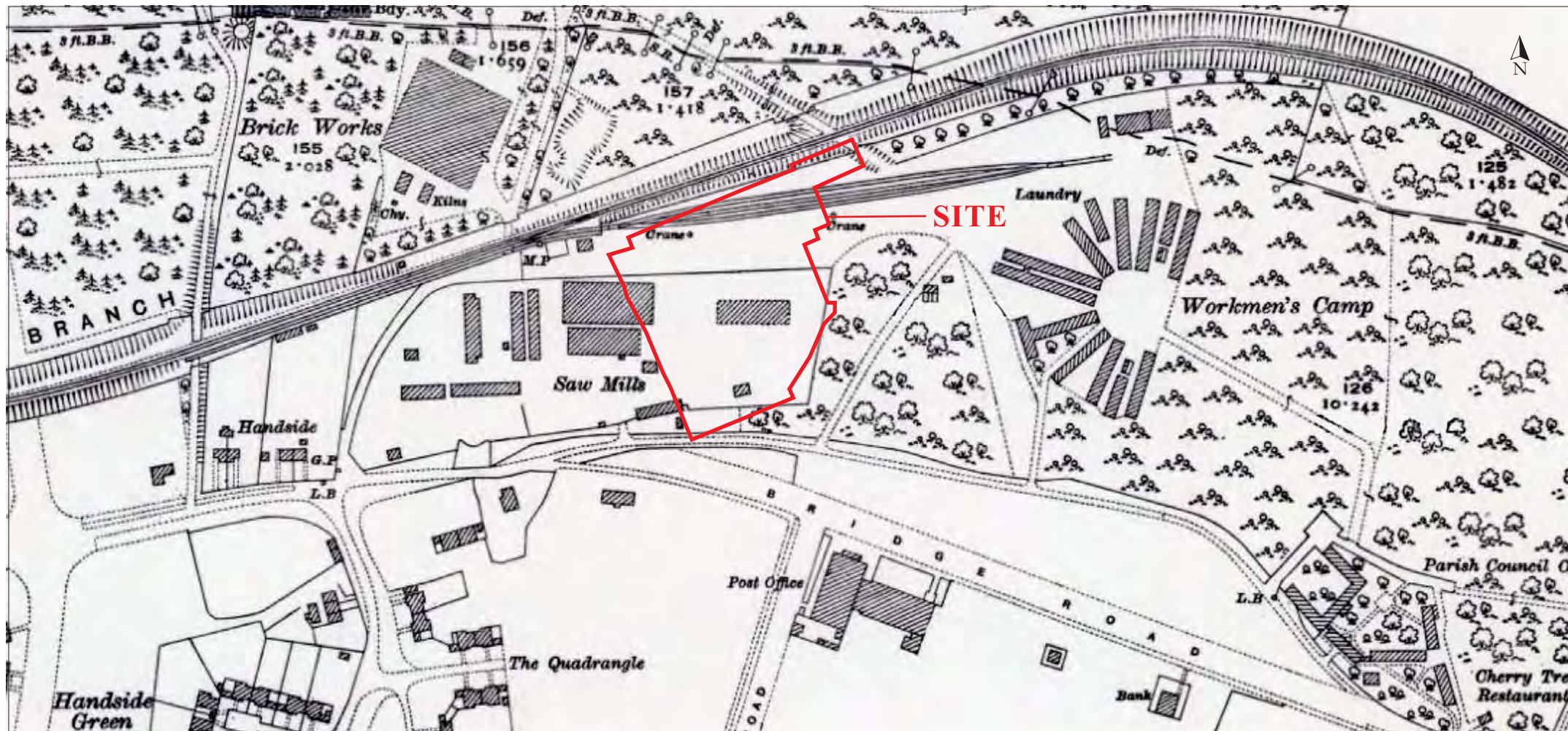
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Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)



<i>Archaeological Solutions Ltd</i>
<b>Fig. 11 Council map, c. 1921</b>
Not to scale
Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)





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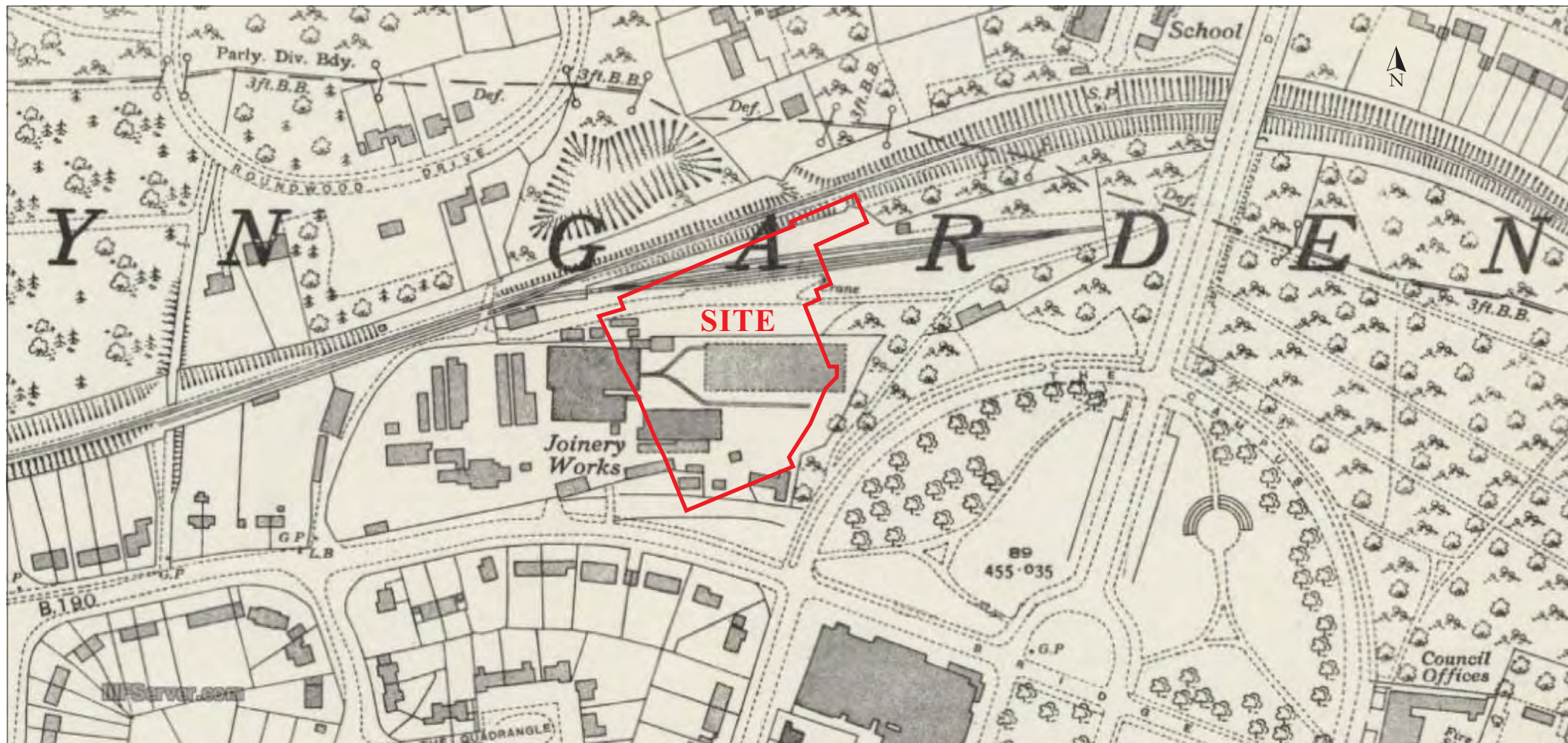
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**Fig. 12 OS map, 1923**

Not to scale

Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)





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<b>Fig. 13 OS map, 1943</b>
Not to scale
Welwyn Campus West, Hertfordshire (P8406)