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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
DESK BASED  
ASSESSMENT**

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**Cornfield School  
Cornfield Close  
Littlehampton  
West Sussex**

**February 2014**

**Planning • Heritage**

Specialist & Independent Advisors to the Property Industry

**Local Planning Authority:  
Arun District Council**

**Site centred at:  
TQ 0322 0333**

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**Report Status:  
Draft to client**

**Issue Date:  
February 2014**

**CgMs Ref:  
SD/16621**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- The site of Cornfield School, Cornfield Close, Littlehampton, West Sussex, has been reviewed for its archaeological potential.
- The study site can be considered to have a potential for below ground archaeological deposits associated with Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman occupation.
- From the Post-Medieval period onwards, the site is likely to have been utilised as agricultural land. Ploughing is likely to have had a widespread negative impact on any sub-surface horizons.
- The construction of the modern school building and landscaping associated with the creation of playfields during the 20<sup>th</sup> century is likely to have had a widespread negative impact on any sub-surface horizons.
- Based on the previous below-ground impacts and small scale nature of the proposed design, it is unlikely that the proposed development will impact upon any below-ground archaeological deposits.
- On the basis of the available information, it is concluded that no further archaeological mitigation work would be appropriate or reasonable in this particular instance.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY**

- 1.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been researched by Sophie Mills and Isabelle Ryan, written by Chris Clarke, and edited by Sally Dicks, of CgMs Consulting on behalf of West Sussex County Council.
- 1.2 The subject of this assessment is the site of Cornfield School, Cornfield Close, Littlehampton, West Sussex, centred on National Grid Reference TQ 0322 0333 (Fig. 1). The study site is bounded by Worthing Road to the north; residential properties to the east; and open ground to the south and west.
- 1.3 West Sussex County Council have commissioned CgMs Consulting to establish the archaeological potential of the site, and to provide guidance on ways to accommodate any archaeological constraints identified.
- 1.4 In line with national and local policy and guidance, this desk-based assessment comprises an examination of evidence on the West Sussex Historic Environment Record (WSHER) and other sources, including the West Sussex Records Office. The report also includes the results of a comprehensive map regression exercise, and a site visit (January 2014).
- 1.5 The study therefore provides an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site and enables relevant parties to consider the need for design, engineering or archaeological mitigation measures.

## 2.0 **PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK**

- 2.1 National legislation regarding archaeology, including scheduled ancient monuments, is contained in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas (AMAA) Act 1979, amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and 2002.
- 2.2 In March 2012, the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which replaces national policy relating to heritage and archaeology (Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment).
- 2.3 Section 12 of the NPPF, entitled *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment* provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and investigation of heritage assets. Overall, the objectives of Section 12 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 that heritage contributes to our knowledge and understanding of the past.
- 2.4 Section 12 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. Paragraph 128 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset, and that level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be *no more than sufficient* to review the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 2.5 *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as: a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. They include designated heritage assets (as defined in the NPPF) and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision-making or through the plan-making process.
- 2.6 Annex 2 also defines *Archaeological Interest* as a heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of

evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

2.7 A *Designated Heritage Asset* comprises a: World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area.

2.8 *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.

2.9 In short, government policy provides a framework which:

- Protects nationally important designated Heritage Assets (which include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas).
- Protects the settings of such designations.
- In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from desk based assessment and field evaluation where necessary) to enable informed decisions.
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not significant enough to merit *in-situ* preservation.

2.10 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.

2.11 Arun District Council Local Plan was published in 2003. It contains the following 'saved' policies relevant to archaeology on the site:

**POLICY AREA17 SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST**

**PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD BE HARMFUL TO THE SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST OF A SITE, WHERE THE PRESENCE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IS KNOWN OR SUSPECTED:**

- (I) THE APPLICANT MUST ARRANGE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE TO BE CARRIED OUT BEFORE THE PLANNING APPLICATION IS DETERMINED;
- (II) WHERE THE ASSESSMENT SHOWS THAT THE PHYSICAL PRESERVATION OF REMAINS IN SITU IS NOT JUSTIFIED, CONDITIONS MAY BE ATTACHED TO ANY PERMISSION GRANTED THAT DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL PROVISION HAS BEEN MADE BY THE DEVELOPER FOR A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING. THE PROGRAMME WILL

**BE CARRIED OUT PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT;  
AND**

**(III) WHENEVER PRACTICABLE, OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE TAKEN FOR THE  
ENHANCEMENT AND INTERPRETATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS LEFT IN  
SITU.**

2.12 In terms of Designated Heritage Assets, as defined in paragraph 2.7 above, no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Protected Historic Wreck sites lie within the study site or its immediate vicinity.

2.13 Accordingly, this desk-based assessment seeks to establish whether locally important artefacts or archaeological remains are present on the study site, and thus whether Policy 17 is relevant.

### **3.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

#### **3.1 Geology**

3.1.1 The British Geological Survey data (BGS 2013) indicates that the solid geology within the vicinity of the site consists of chalk, overlain by superficial River Terrace Deposits.

3.1.2 No geotechnical investigation data is currently available for the site.

#### **3.2 Topography**

3.2.1 The site is rectangular in shape and covers an area of approximately 1ha. The layout of the site is relatively level at a height of 7m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

3.2.2 The River Arun lies approximately 1.8km to the southwest of the site.

## **4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Timescales used in this report:

### **Prehistoric**

|              |                     |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Palaeolithic | 450,000 - 12,000 BC |
| Mesolithic   | 12,000 - 4,000 BC   |
| Neolithic    | 4,000 - 1,800 BC    |
| Bronze Age   | 1,800 - 600 BC      |
| Iron Age     | 600 - AD 43         |

### **Historic**

|                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Roman                      | AD 43 - 410       |
| Anglo-Saxon/Early Medieval | AD 410 - 1066     |
| Medieval                   | AD 1066 - 1485    |
| Post Medieval              | AD 1486 - 1749    |
| Modern                     | AD 1750 - Present |

## **4.1 Introduction**

- 4.1.1 What follows comprises a consideration of archaeological finds and features held within a 1km radius of the study site, also referred to as the study area, held on the Surrey Historic Environment Record (SHER) (Fig. 2), together with a map regression exercise charting the development of the site from the eighteenth century until the present day.
- 4.1.2 In general the HER entries within the study area are characterised by finds and features dating to the prehistoric and Roman periods. Substantial archaeological work has also taken place immediately north of the site at Eden Park and at Watermead Estate.
- 4.1.3 In terms of Designated Heritage Assets, no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens or Protected Historic Wreck sites lie within the study site or its immediate vicinity.

## **4.2 Prehistoric - Palaeolithic and Mesolithic**

- 4.2.1 There are no finds of Palaeolithic date within the 1km study area. There is also very limited evidence for Mesolithic activity with a few residual Mesolithic flints recovered during work at Eden Park immediately northeast of the study site (HER MSW8084, TQ 03482 03558).
- 4.2.2 Aside from this site there are a few undated prehistoric finds recorded on the HER in the vicinity that seem likely to date from the early prehistoric. Geotechnical work recorded a palaeochannel at Eden Park (HER MSW7992, TQ 034 035). A flint scatter was found during work on the Rustington Bypass c.1km north-east (HER MWS3486, TQ 04160 03650). Undiagnostic flints were also found c.900m east, c.1km north-east and c.950m north-west (HER MWS3485, TQ 04100 03500; MWS5735, TQ 03910 04050; MWS4373, TQ 02935 04105). A stone axe was found in the general vicinity of the site (HER MSW1260, TQ 03400 03400).
- 4.2.3 Given the available evidence, the study site can be considered to have a low potential for the early prehistoric periods, though isolated residual flints cannot be precluded.

## **4.3 Prehistoric - Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age**

- 4.3.1 From around 4000 BC the mobile hunter-gathering economy of the Mesolithic gradually gave way to a more settled agriculture-based subsistence. The pace of woodland clearance to create arable and pasture-based agricultural land varied regionally and locally, depending on a wide variety of climatic, topographic, social and other factors. The trend was one of a slow, but gradually increasing pace of forest clearance.
- 4.3.2 By the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium, i.e. 1000 BC, the landscape was probably a mix of extensive tracts of open farmland, punctuated by earthwork burial and ceremonial monuments from distant generations, with settlements, ritual areas and defended locations reflecting an increasingly hierarchical society.
- 4.3.3 Limited evidence for Neolithic activity in the study area comes from Eden Park immediately northeast of the study site, where evaluation recorded a Neolithic ditch and later excavation found two Neolithic axes, though these were deemed to have been curated and deposited in a later feature (Wessex Archaeology, 2008) (HER MWS8084, TQ 03482 03558). Two Neolithic axes were also found c.300m north of the

study site (HER MWS3095, TQ 03270 03650), while several Neolithic worked flints were found c.950m west of the site (MWS3123, TQ 02300 03500).

- 4.3.4 Work at Eden Park found evidence for settlement and agricultural activity dating from the middle to late Bronze Age. A driveway with associated ditches and a number of wells suggested a focus on animal husbandry, though the truncated remains of field systems also suggested arable farming. A possible roundhouse was recorded in the east of the site (to the north of the study site) and other pits also suggested settlement nearby (Wessex Archaeology, 2008).
- 4.3.5 The HER contains a number of other records relating to Bronze Age activity in the study area. Approximately 300m to the northeast the HER records a find of a Bronze Age scraper (HER MWS3077, TQ 03550 03450). A number of Bronze Age features including a pit, ditch, postholes and a flint spread were found in evaluation trenches c.1km east at the Horticulture Research International (HRI) site, Worthing Road (HER MWS4369). A later phase of work at this site recorded further possible Bronze Age occupation (HER MWS7450, TQ 04124 03305). A few fragments of Bronze Age pottery were found c.650m southeast of the study site (HER MWS3069, TQ 03700 02790).
- 4.3.6 By the Iron Age the focus of settlement appears to shift away from the site at Eden Park to an area c.1km southwest of the study site, near Wick Farm Road (MWS3083, TQ 02380 02780). Excavations at Wick Farm Road identified several phases of activity incorporating multiple hut structures and enclosures, with a range of Iron Age artefacts recovered. The pottery assemblage also indicates there may have been some continuity of activity into the Roman period. Ditches believed to be contemporary with the Wick Farm Road settlement were found on an adjacent site (MWS3916, TQ 03700 03300).
- 4.3.7 Work at the Watermead estate immediately east of the study site recorded a small scatter of mid-late Iron Age pottery (HER MWS4097, TQ 03804 03489). The work at the HRI site found sparse evidence of Iron Age activity with one complete vessel and two ditches and a pit (HER MWS5762). Early Iron Age pottery was recorded during works at Littlehampton Roman Villa c.900m south-east of the study site (HER MWS2969 at TQ 0396 0266) and a sub rectangular feature containing late Iron Age pottery was found during work on the Rustington Bypass c.1km east of the study site (HER MWS3480 at TQ041 036).

- 4.3.8 The available evidence suggests that the study site can be considered to have a low potential for evidence of Neolithic activity, with a moderate potential for evidence of settlement and agricultural activity dating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

#### 4.4 Roman

- 4.4.1 There is substantial evidence for Roman activity from both Eden Park to the west and Watermead Estate to the east of the study site. At Eden Park a series of ditches formed a field system dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Wessex Archaeology, 2008). At Watermead Estate there were also ditches forming possible field boundaries or trackways. In the west of the site there was also occupation evidence in the form of beam slots, postholes and rubbish pits indicating perhaps a timber building (Gilkes & Hammond, 1991) (HER MWS4097, TQ 03804 03489).
- 4.4.2 Work along the Rustington Bypass to the east of the study site recorded a number of Roman finds and features including a pit, pottery, a ditch of over 37m in length and further pottery (HER MWS3476, TQ 03900 03400; MWS3482, TQ 04100 03500; MWS3481, TQ 04150 03520). Roman artefacts were also recovered from a trench c.400m east of the study site (HER MWS4096, TQ 03700 03300).
- 4.4.3 A large number of Roman features, mainly dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century were also found at the HRI site c.1km to the east of the study site including ditches, pits, small scale quarrying and postholes indicative of occupation (HER MWS4370). Further work at the HRI site revealed an early Romano-British settlement with an enclosed working area including kilns (HER MWS7057).
- 4.4.4 Other isolated finds of Roman date have been made in the study area consisting of:
- Cremations c.600m north and c.800m southwest (HER MWS3492, TQ 02950 03950; MWS3461, TQ 02730 02630)
  - Pottery fragments found c.300m north, c.900m northeast, and c.1km south (HER MWS3094, TQ 03270 03650; MWS3086, TQ 03800 04040; MWS3470, TQ 03600 02400)
  - Individual coins found c.900m southwest, c.850m south, and c.1km southeast (MWS3082, TQ 02550 02650; MWS3081, TQ 02810 02520; MWS3472, TQ 03720 02450)
- 4.4.5 A small villa was excavated at Gosden Road, c.1km south-east of the study site. There were also three burial urns on this site (HER MWS5755, TQ 03960 02660).

- 4.4.6 Given the reasonable amount of evidence for Roman occupation in the study area, the study site is considered to have a moderate potential for Roman remains.

#### **4.5 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval**

- 4.5.1 There appeared to be another hiatus in activity in the early Medieval period with no activity recorded at Watermead Estate and a small quantity of Anglo-Saxon/early Medieval pottery from one ditch at Eden Park (Wessex Archaeology, 2008).
- 4.5.2 The only other evidence for this date comes from an evaluation at The Poplars c.750m east of the study site which recorded linears and pits of Anglo-Saxon date suggestive of activity on the periphery of settlement (HER MWS7430, TQ 04004 03358).
- 4.5.3 There is limited evidence for activity in the Medieval period in the wider area. However, the archaeological works at Eden Park did reveal a trackway running north/south in the south west of the site, along with a number of other features such as ditches, gullies and postholes of indeterminate function that were broadly dated to the Medieval period (Wessex Archaeology, 2008) (HER MWS8084, TQ 03482 03558).
- 4.5.4 Isolated fragments of Medieval pottery were found c.900m southwest of the site (MWS3473, TQ 02560 02700).
- 4.5.5 Due to the paucity of evidence for this period, the study site is considered to have a low potential for Anglo-Saxon and Medieval remains.

#### **4.6 Post-Medieval and Modern (including map regression exercise)**

- 4.6.1 During the majority of the Post-Medieval the site appears to have remained in the agricultural hinterland to the north of the coastal settlement.
- 4.6.2 The earliest cartographic depiction of the site is shown on Gardner and Gream's map of 1795 (Fig. 3), locating the site in open agricultural ground to the south of the hamlet at Torrington. The layout of the site remains unchanged in 1806 (Fig. 4), 1813 (Fig. 5), and 1825 (Fig. 6).
- 4.6.3 The Leominster Title Map of 1837 (Fig. 7) shows the study site containing elements of two different plots, both of which are recorded as arable ground. A track follows the boundary between the two fields. The layout of the site remains unchanged in 1876 (Fig. 8), 1897 (Fig. 9), 1911 (Fig. 10), and 1932 (Fig. 11).

4.6.4 By 1987 (Fig. 12) the site has been converted into playing fields, and subsequently Cornfield School has been built (Fig. 13).

4.6.5 The potential for archaeological remains of a Post-Medieval or Modern date to be present in the site is low.

#### **4.7 Negative Evidence**

4.7.1 Archaeological negative evaluations have been undertaken c.250m to the north of the site (MWS4368, TQ 03150 03550) and c.800m northwest (MWS4373, TQ 02935 04105).

#### **4.8 Assessment of Significance**

4.8.1 There are no designated or non-designated archaeological assets within the study site.

4.8.2 The assessment has identified a potential for remains associated with Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman occupation to be present on the site. Any potential archaeological remains related to this period are assessed to be of local importance.

## **5.0 SITE CONDITIONS, THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSETS** (Impact on the Buried Archaeological Deposits)

### **5.1 Site Conditions**

5.1.1 The overall site is currently occupied by modern school buildings, associated playing fields and parking facilities. The area of the proposed development lies adjacent to the eastern elevation of the school and southern site boundary, within the existing car park (Plate 1 & 2).

5.1.2 No features of heritage interest were identified during the course of the site visit.

5.1.3 From the Post-Medieval period onwards, the site is likely to have been utilised as agricultural land. Ploughing is likely to have had a widespread negative impact on any sub-surface horizons.

5.1.4 The construction of the modern school buildings and landscaping associated with the creation of playfields during the 20<sup>th</sup> century is likely to have had a widespread negative impact on any sub-surface horizons.

### **5.2 Proposed Development Impact**

5.2.1 The site is proposed for development consisting of the construction of a single storey extension to the southeast elevation of the school (Fig. 14). The impact of the proposed development will be limited to the footprint of the new extension.

5.2.2 The proposed development is likely to have a negative localised impact on below-ground horizons.

### **5.3 Impact on Archaeological Assets**

5.3.1 The proposed development would not impact any designated archaeological assets.

5.3.2 Similarly, it would not impact any non-designated assets recorded in the WSHR.

5.3.3 Any potential archaeological remains on the site are likely to have been subject to truncation by the creation of modern car parking facilities, and as such are assessed to be of limited local importance.

## **6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The site of Cornfield School, Cornfield Close, Littlehampton, West Sussex, has been reviewed for its archaeological potential.
- 6.2 In accordance with central and local government planning policy and guidance, a desk based assessment has been undertaken to clarify the archaeological potential of the study site.
- 6.3 The study site can be considered to have a potential for below ground archaeological deposits associated with Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman occupation.
- 6.4 From the Post-Medieval period onwards, the site is likely to have been utilised as agricultural land. Ploughing is likely to have had a widespread negative impact on any sub-surface horizons.
- 6.5 The construction of the modern school building and landscaping associated with the creation of playfields during the 20<sup>th</sup> century is likely to have had a widespread negative impact on any sub-surface horizons.
- 6.6 The site is proposed for development consisting of the construction of a new teaching block.
- 6.7 Based on the previous below-ground impacts and small scale nature of the proposed design, it is unlikely that the proposed development will impact upon any below-ground archaeological deposits.
- 6.8 On the basis of the available information, it is concluded that no further archaeological mitigation work would be appropriate or reasonable in this particular instance.

## **SOURCES CONSULTED**

### **1. General**

West Sussex Heritage Environment Record  
British Library  
West Sussex Records Office

### **2. Bibliographic**

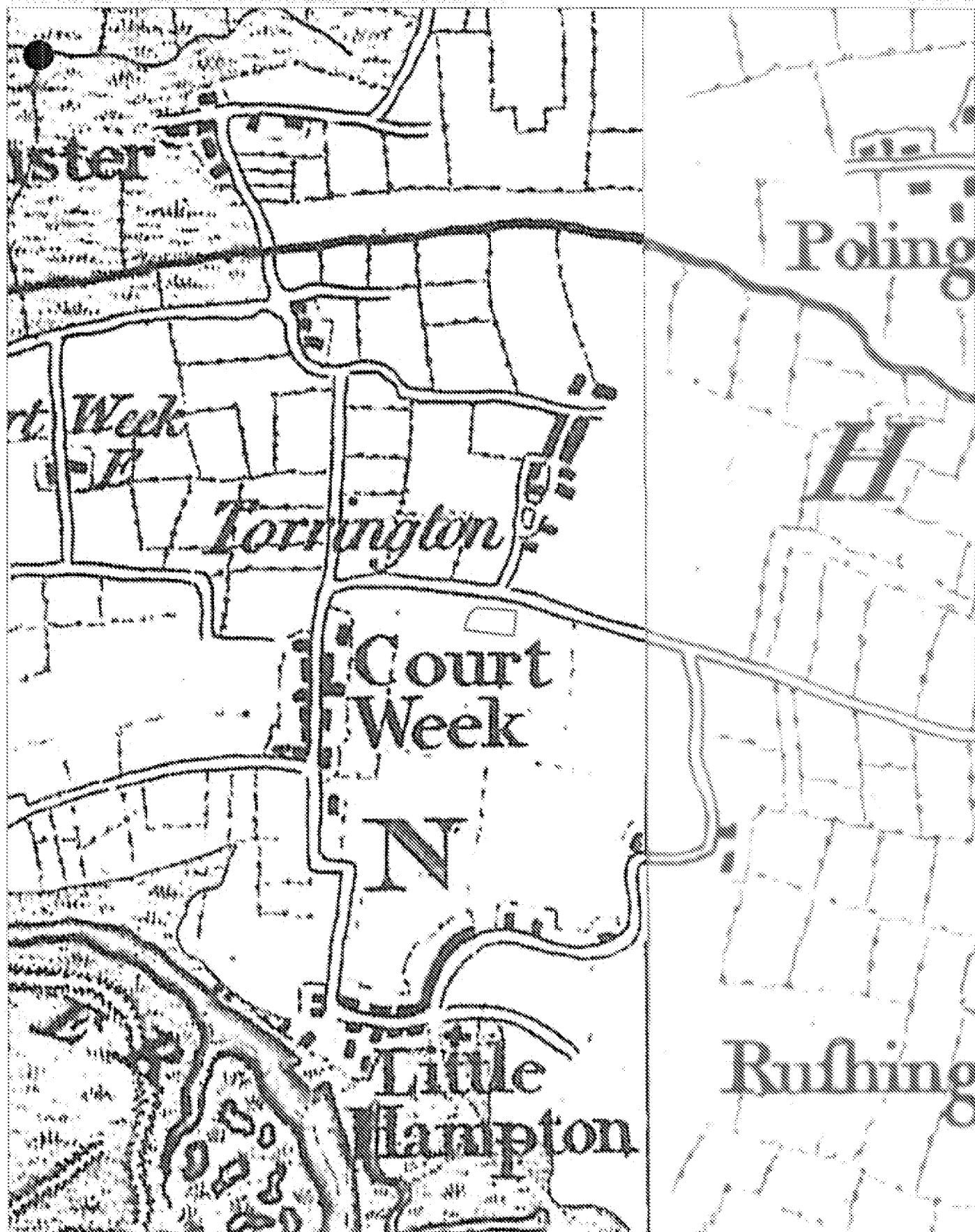
British Geological Survey *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/> 2013  
Daggett, W. *Littlehampton 1600-1650* Littlehampton Local History Society 1998  
Open Domesday <http://domesdaymap.co.uk/> 2014  
Wessex Archaeology *Land at Eden Park (Former Toddington Nurseries) Littlehampton, West Sussex: Post-Excavation Assessment Report and Updated Project Design for Analysis and Publication* 2008

### **3. Cartographic**

1795 Gardner and Gream  
1806 Ordnance Survey Drawing  
1813 Ordnance Survey  
1825 C & J Greenwood  
1837 Leominster Tithe Map  
1876 Ordnance Survey  
1897 Ordnance Survey  
1911 Ordnance Survey  
1932 Ordnance Survey  
1966-87 Ordnance Survey  
2013 Google Earth View







Site Boundary



Not to Scale:  
Illustrative Only

Figure 3:  
1795 Gardner and Gream

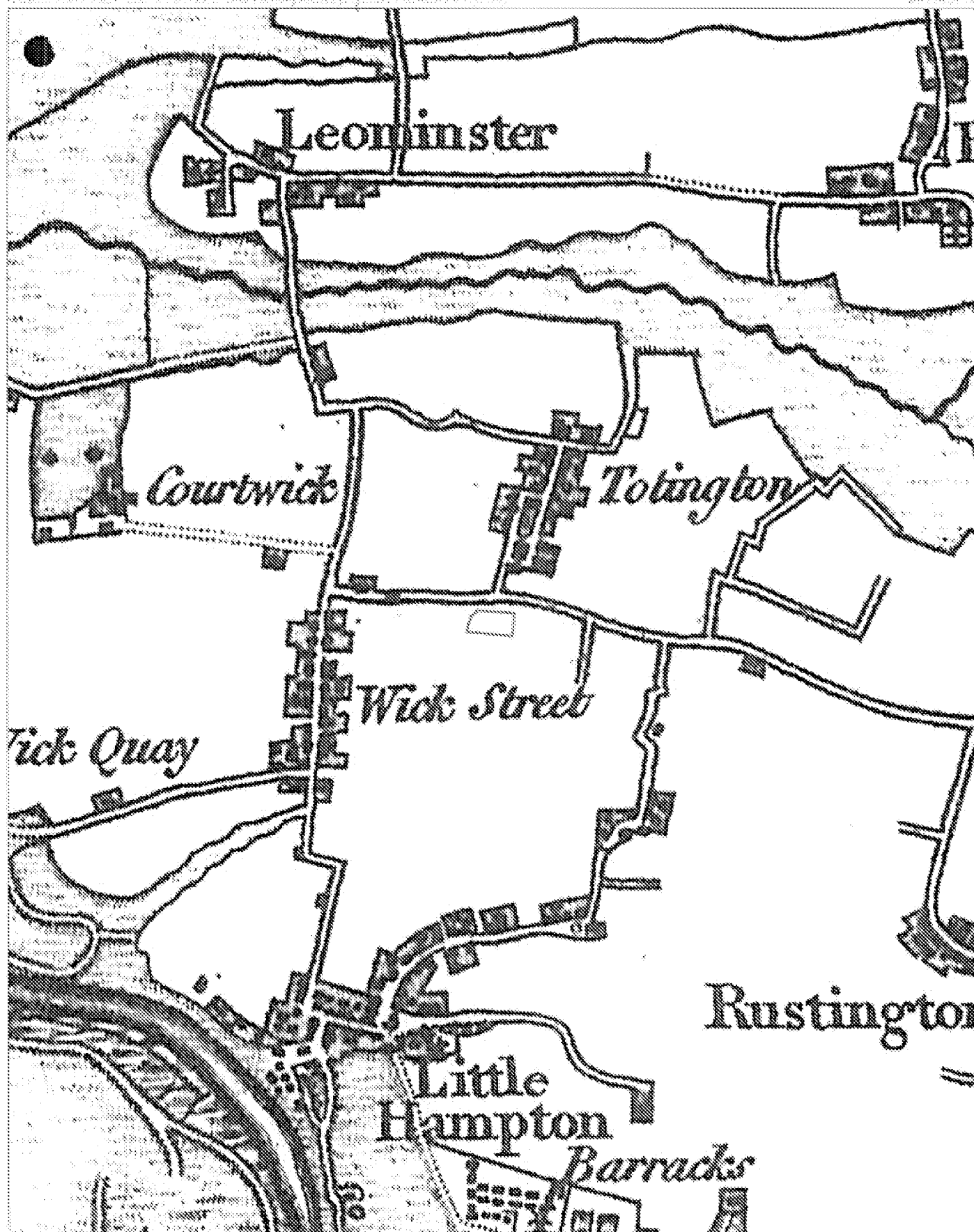


 Site Boundary



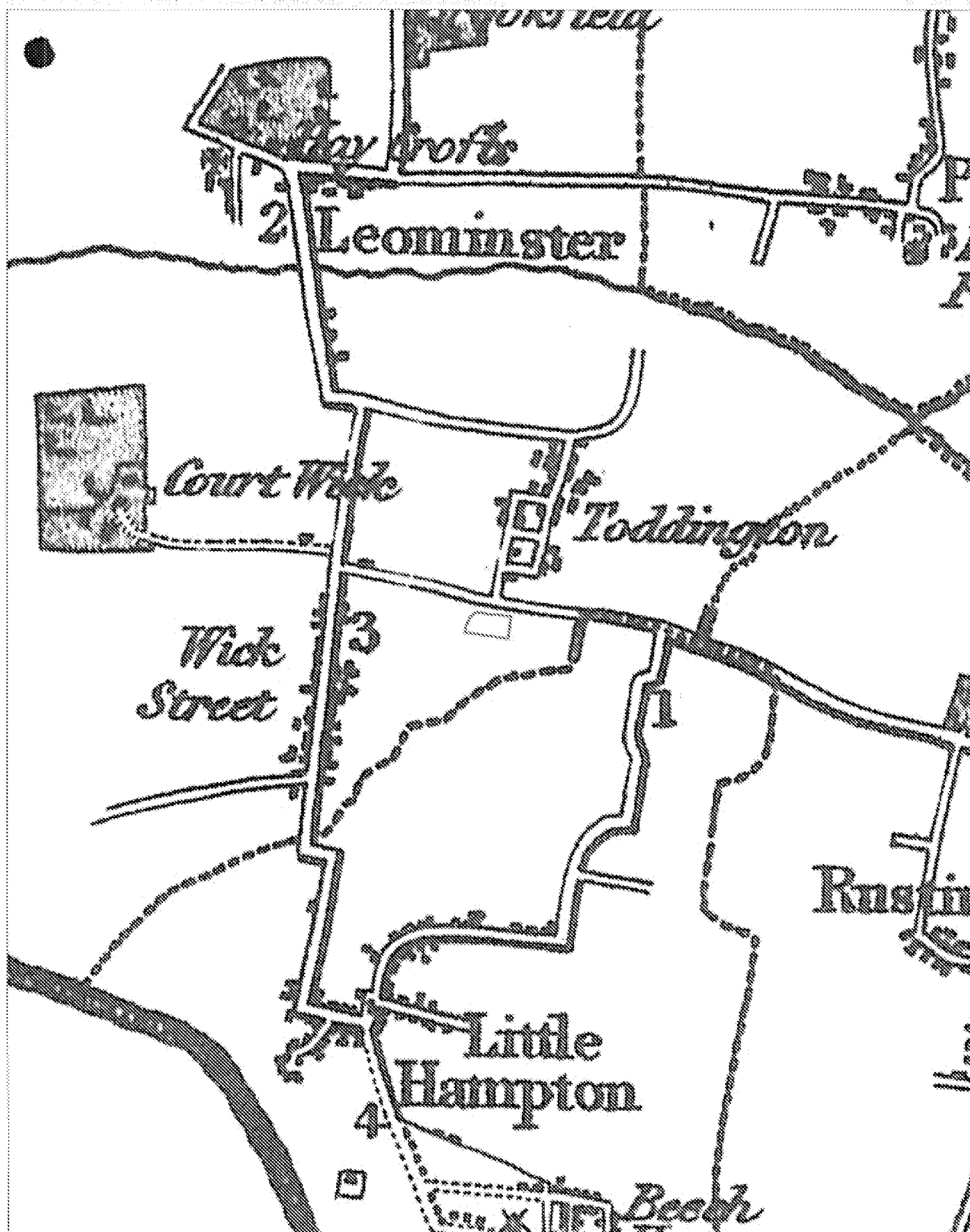
Not to Scale:  
Illustrative Only

Figure 4:  
1866 Ordnance Survey  
Drawing



Not to Scale  
Illustrative Only

Figure 5:  
1813 Ordnance Survey



Site Boundary



Not to Scale:  
Illustrative Only

Figure 6:  
1825 C & J Greenwood

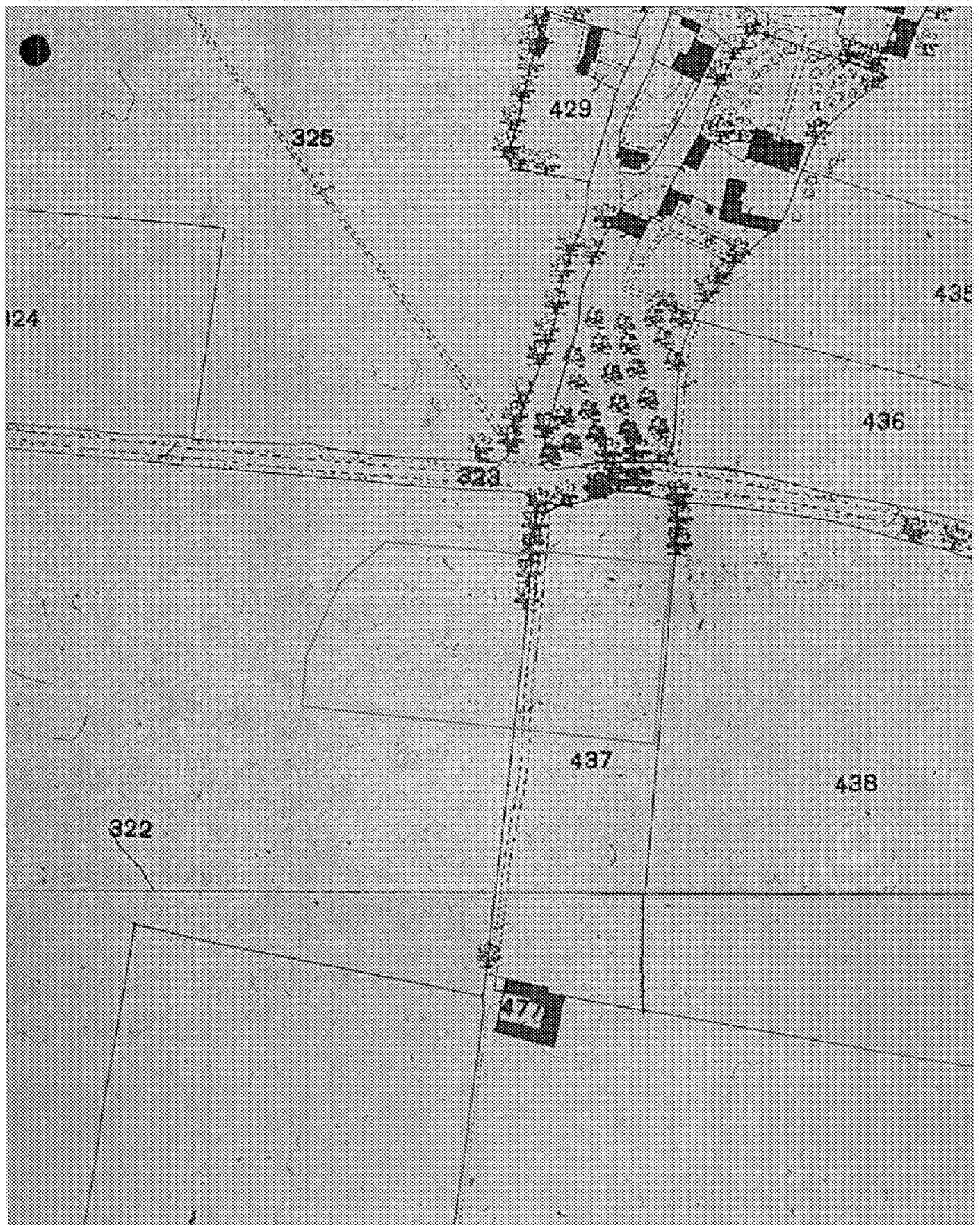


Site Boundary



Not to Scale  
Illustrative Only

Figure 7:  
1537 Leominster Title Map

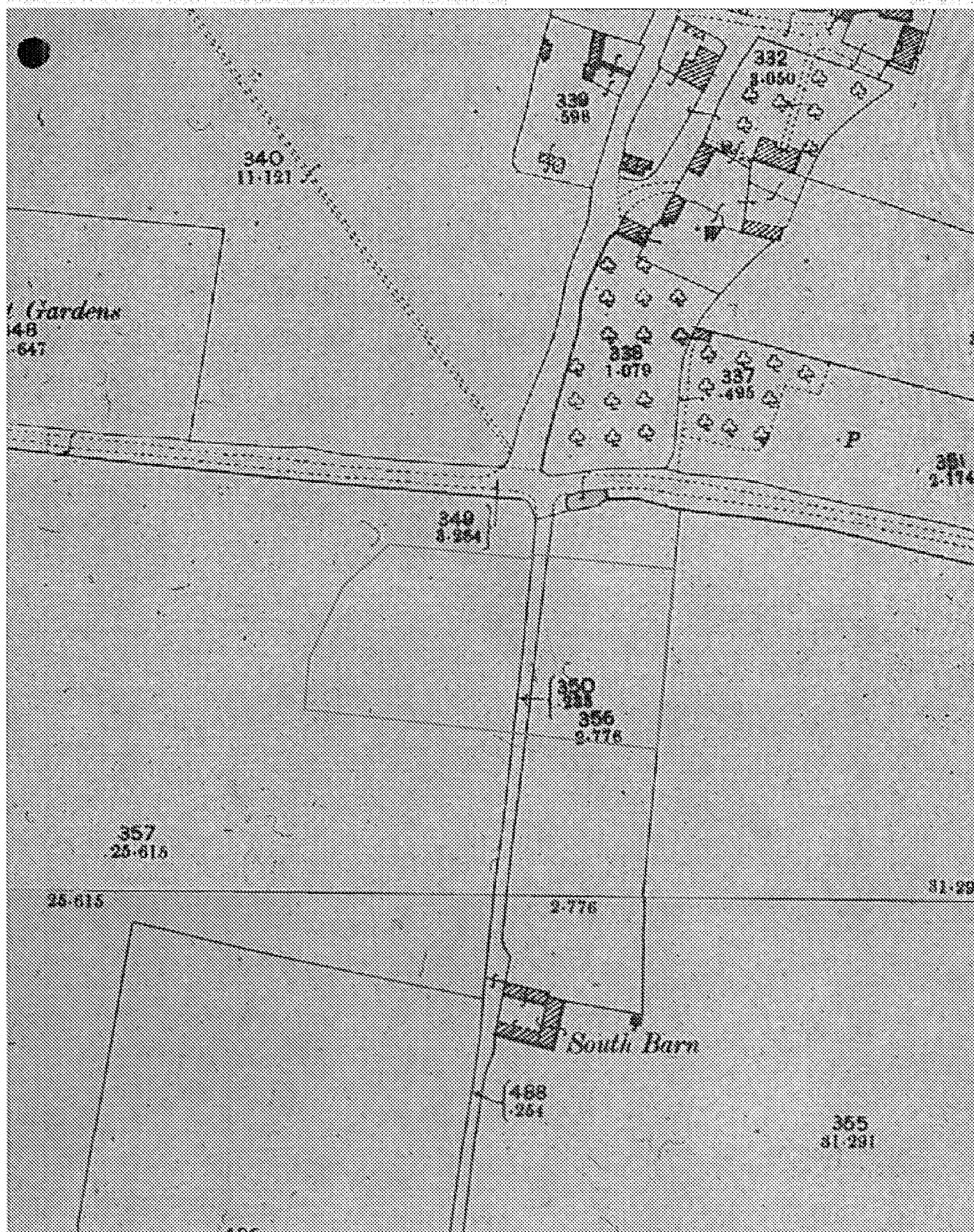


 Site Boundary



Not to Scale  
Illustrative Only

Figure 8:  
1876 Ordnance Survey

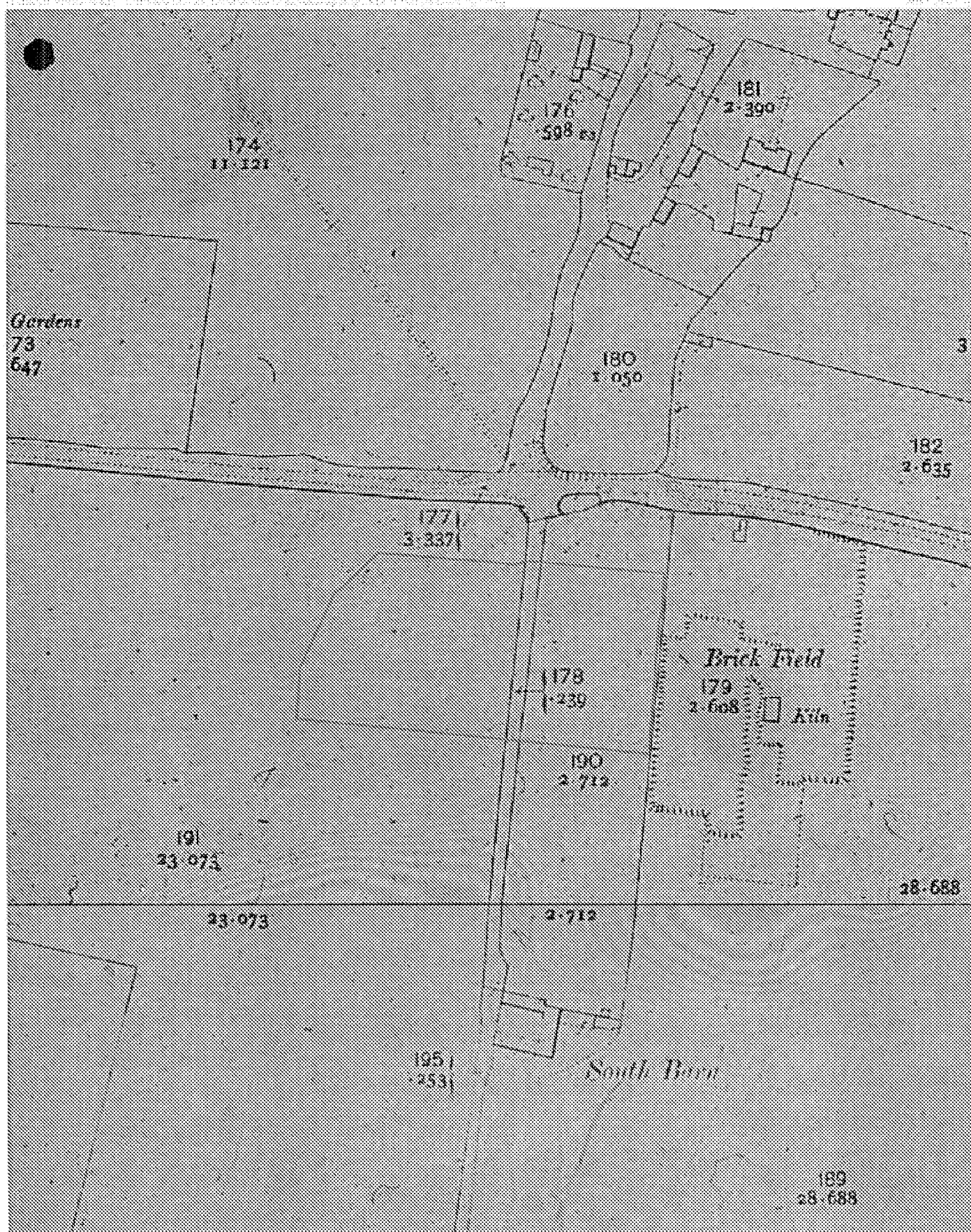


Site Boundary



Not to Scale:  
Illustrative Only

Figure 9:  
1897 Ordnance Survey

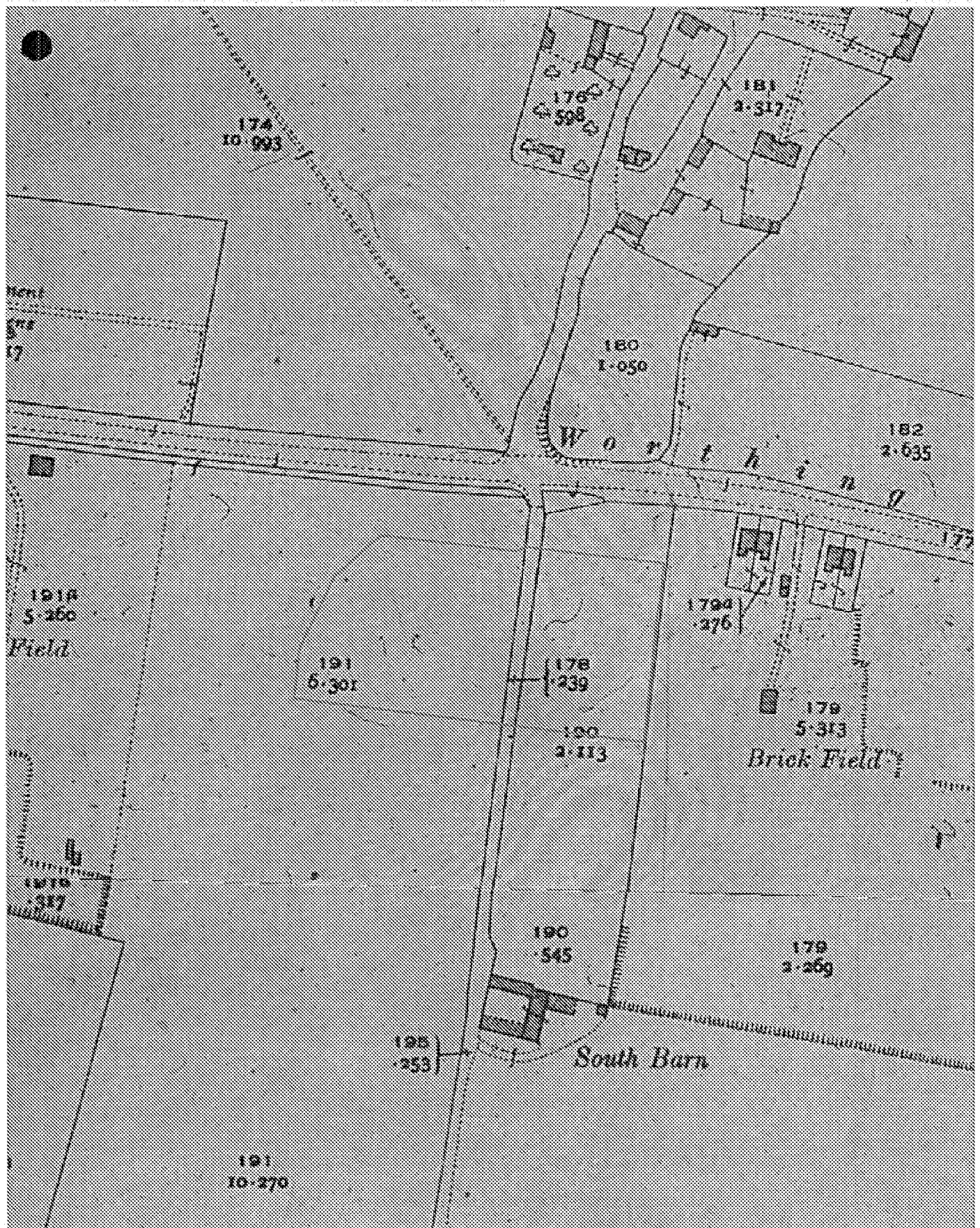


 Sale Boundary



Not to Scale:  
Illustrative Only

Figure 10:  
1911 Ordnance Survey



Site Boundary



Not to Scale:  
Illustrative Only

Figure 11:  
1932 Ordnance Survey





 Site Boundary



Not to Scale:  
Illustrative Only

Figure 13:  
Google Earth View

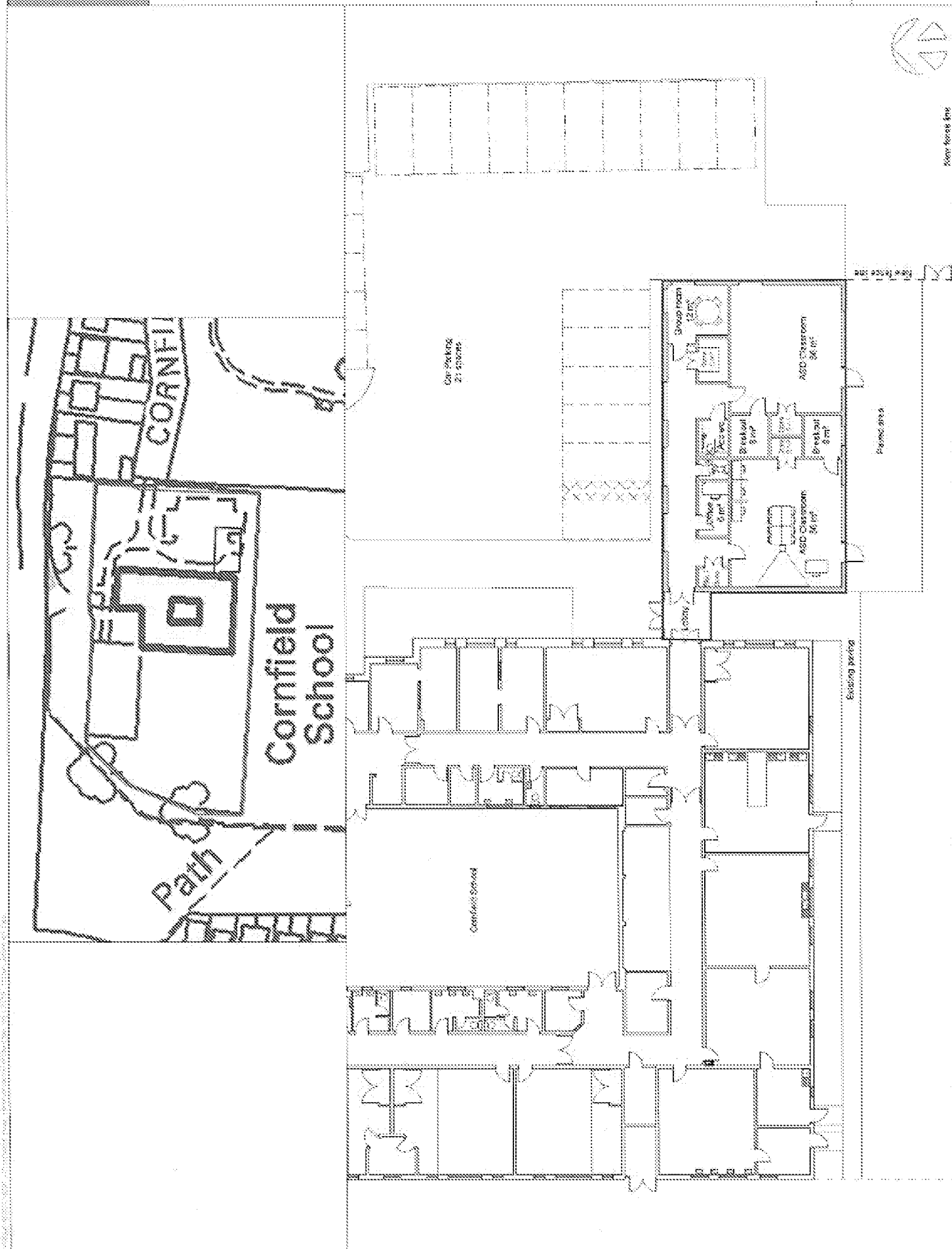




Plate 1: Area of Proposed Development Looking West



Plate 2: Area of Proposed Development Looking East