AS ARCHAEOLOGY & HERITAGE SERVICES

Heritage Assessment

Proposed development of land at
Upper Battleborough Farm
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Brent Knoll
Somerset
TA9 4HJ

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Cover Photograph: View NW from SE side of A38 looking across proposed site toward Brent Knoll

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1 Non – Technical Summary

AS Archaeology & Heritage Services (hereafter referred to as 'AS Archaeology') was commissioned to carry out a Heritage Assessment with regard to a planning application for the proposed construction of a New Building for Indoor Play Area, Cafe & Farm Shop with associated parking area on land at Battleborough Farm, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 4HJ (NGR ST 34444 50399).

In making this assessment the authors are cognisant of advice received from Historic England and SW Heritage Trust. This advice can be viewed at Somerset Council Planning Portal (Sedgemoor area) and entering the planning application reference.

The results of the assessment may be briefly summarised thus:

1.1 Archaeological Assessment

The overall archaeological potential of the site has been assessed as **High**, with reference to encountering archaeological remains of Iron Age, Roman and medieval date. This assessment reflects the proximity of the site to the Iron Age hillfort of Brent Knoll, which appears to have remained as a focus of occupation during the Romano-British and early medieval periods, and the significant evidence for Iron Age and Roman occupation and field systems identified in the immediate vicinity of the site and its wider environs.

The site also lies close to the medieval settlement of Battleborough and archaeological investigations within the southernmost portion of the site revealed ditches and gullies containing pottery of 11th-13th century date which were interpreted as evidence of a field system which may have been associated with this nearby settlement.

The potential for archaeological remains of Palaeolithic to Bronze Age and post-medieval date has been assessed as **Low to Moderate**. Although evidence of early prehistoric activity is extremely limited, the location of the site within the Somerset Levels suggests potential for encountering waterlogged alluvial and peat deposits which could shed light on human activity and environmental changes dating back to early prehistory.

The site remained as undeveloped pastureland and orcharding throughout the post-medieval period, until a significant reorganisation of the fieldscape pattern occurred in the 1970s. There remains potential to reveal evidence of relict field boundaries and watercourses of post-medieval date.

It is considered that impacts from the proposed development on buried archaeological remains could potentially include 1/ the removal of topsoil which could expose any archaeological remains that may be present immediately below the surface, 2/ excavation of foundations associated with the new building and 3/ excavations for new service trenching, drainage and other associated landscaping features. Full details of the depths of excavation required for the proposed development were not available at time of writing.

In view of the **High** archaeological potential of the site, it is respectfully suggested that a programme of archaeological investigation, the details of which to be agreed with the archaeological officer at South West Heritage Trust, may be required to determine the extent, depth and significance of archaeological deposits and features within the site.

1.2 Heritage Assessment

This Heritage Assessment has been informed by Historic England guidance for assessing impact on heritage assets, their significance and respective settings, namely, *Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015), *The Setting of Heritage Assets*: *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 - Second Edition* (Historic England 2017a) and *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12* (Historic England 2019).

With regard to potential impacts on heritage assets and their respective settings; it is considered that there would be a **Moderate+ Adverse** impact on the setting of the Scheduled hillfort at Brent Knoll and a **Slight to Moderate** impact on the setting of the nearby Grade II listed Battleborough Farmhouse

- *Brent Knoll hillfort and associated field system*

The impact of the proposed development on the setting of Brent Knoll hillfort has been assessed in overall terms as **Moderate+ Adverse**. This assessment takes into account the **Very High** importance of the hillfort as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, representing a fine example of a large univallate hillfort of Iron Age origin which appears to have continued in occupation during the Roman period and possibly the early medieval period and has noteworthy associations with Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian legend, cross-referenced against the magnitude of impact, assessed as **Minor to-Moderate.**

It is considered that the proposed multi-use building, while screened to a certain extent by the belt of woodland to the immediate S of the modern bungalow and outbuildings at Upper Battleborough Farm, would still be partially discernible in views looking SE and SSE from the outer rampart of the hillfort and the roofline of the new building would almost certainly be visible in these views.

However, it may be argued that this visibility can be further reduced by enhancement of the woodland boundary to the S of Upper Battleborough Farm or reduction in the ridge height of the building. It may be noted that historically there was an orchard enclosure to the immediate S of Upper Battleborough Farm which provides an historical precedent for further tree-planting in this area. It is considered the impact caused by visibility of the building may be further reduced in the landscape by the use of green coloured roofing materials or the installation of a 'living roof', also known as green roofs.

The main hardstanding car park proposed within the SW corner of the site, due to its low-lying location would be more clearly apparent in views looking SE and SSE from the outer rampart of the hillfort, although this impact would be mitigated by the proposed tree-planting and swales in this area. The use of recycled green plastic porous cark park paving, as utilised by English Heritage, would lessen the visual impact of the car park area enabling it to blend into the landscape more sympathetically.

Views looking NW from the A38 towards the hillfort would be more noticeably affected by the construction of the proposed multi-use building and associated car parking which would present an intrusive new element appearing in the foreground of these views. It is suggested that the tree and hedge planting proposed for the car parking area should soften these impacts and ideally should reflect the form of the tree-lined hedge boundaries which were present within the site prior to their removal during the 1970s.

- *Battleborough Farmhouse*

The overall impact on the Grade II listed Battleborough Farmhouse can be assessed as **Slight to Moderate Adverse**, based on a cross-referencing of the **High** importance of the farmhouse as a 17th century dwelling with 18th/early 19th century alterations which has retained significant evidence of original fabric, against the magnitude of impact, assessed as **Minor**.
Views from the site towards the listed farmhouse and vice-versa are mostly screened by intervening tree-lined hedges and buildings; however, the development will result in a discernible change to elevated views looking from Brent Knoll hillfort in which Battleborough Farmhouse and the proposal site are intervisible.

Conclusion: In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework, it is assessed that the proposed development, based on the current plans, would result in less than substantial harm in heritage terms to the setting of Brent Knoll hillfort and the Grade II listed Battleborough Farmhouse. It is considered that this harm can be further reduced by means of enhanced tree and hedge planting to soften the impact of the new building and car park.

It may be noted that, prior to the clearances of the 1970s, the site had a much more enclosed character with orcharding, and fields defined by tree-lined hedges and there is potential for the development to restore the historic landscape character of the site.

2 Introduction

AS Archaeology was commissioned to produce a Heritage Assessment with regard to a planning application for the proposed construction of a New Building for Indoor Play Area, Cafe & Farm Shop with associated parking area on land at Battleborough Farm, Brent Knoll, Highbridge, Somerset TA9 4HJ (Sedgemoor District Council Planning Ref. 07/23/00025).

This Heritage Assessment assesses the impact of the scheme on archaeological (i.e. buried) remains and built heritage assets. It forms an initial stage of investigation of the proposal site and may be required in relation to the planning process in order that the local planning authority (LPA) can formulate an appropriate response in the light of the impact upon any known or potential archaeological assets and built heritage assets.

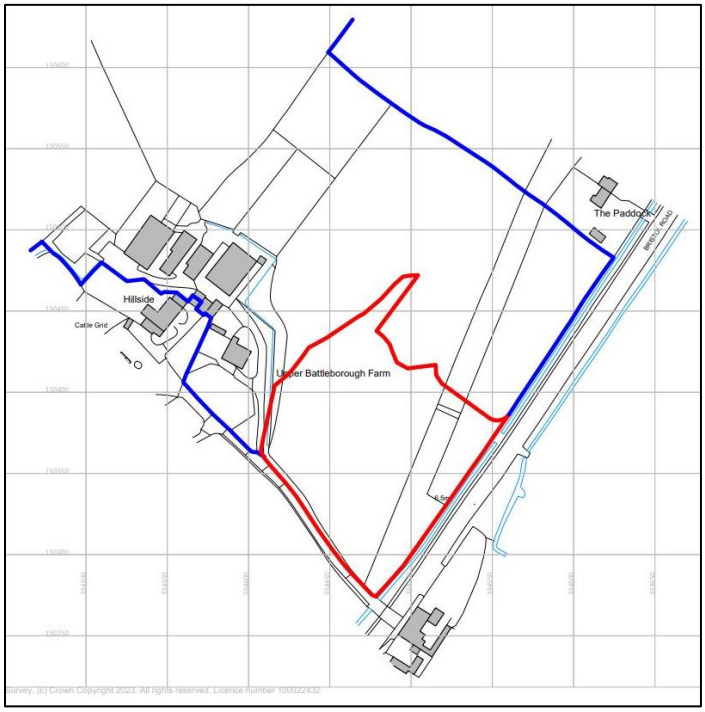

Fig. 1: Site Location plan showing red outline of area subject to planning application. (Reproduced courtesy of the client)

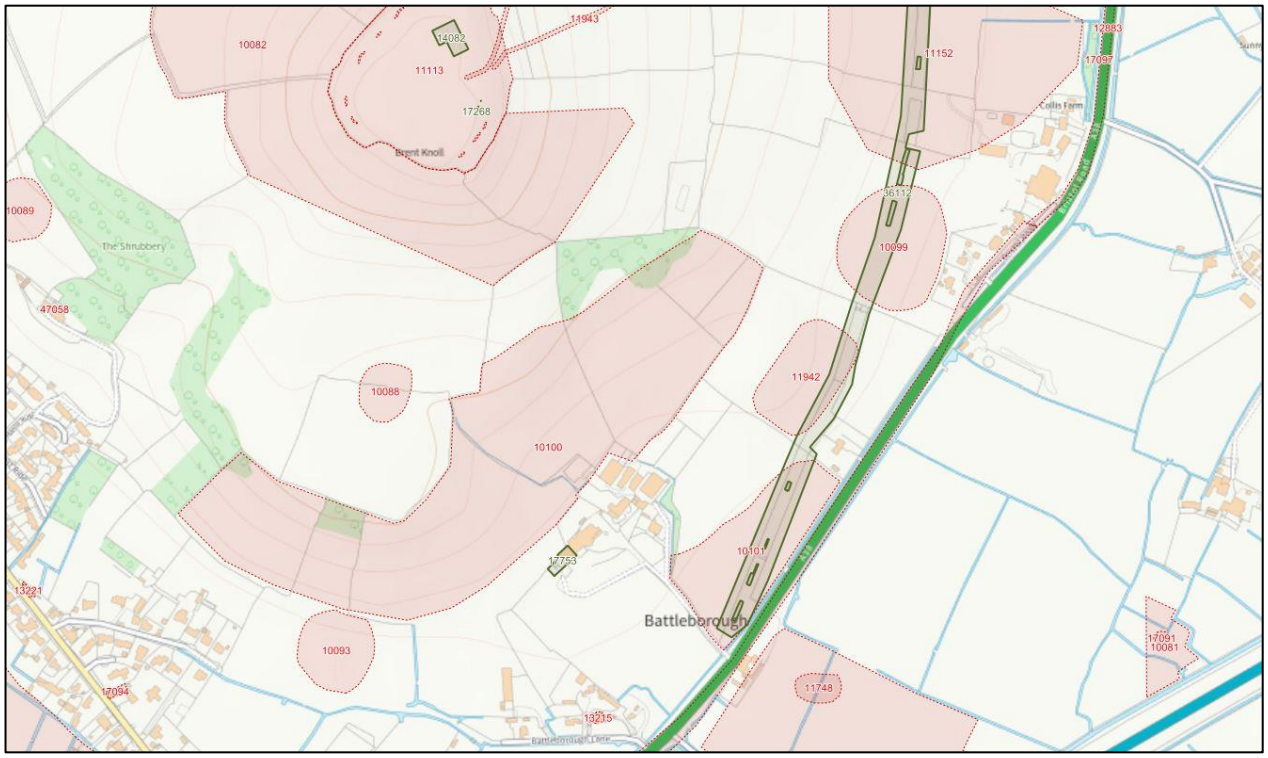

Fig. 1a: Site Location plan showing 'Monuments & fieldwork' locations in close proximity to proposed development. The location of Brent Knoll Scheduled Monument is shown by SHER No.11113. (Reproduced courtesy of SW Heritage Trust)

3 Site Description

The proposal site comprises a large sloping pasture field located immediately NW of the A38 (Bristol Road) and about 1km SE of the village of Brent Knoll within the Somerset Levels (NGR ST 34470 50375). The field rises gently upslope (from about 6.5m AOD adjacent to the road to a height of around 30m AOD at the NW end of the site) towards a late 20th century bungalow and adjacent complex of modern farm outbuildings at Upper Battleborough Farm which are screened from the proposal site by a thin belt of woodland. The boundaries of this large pasture field are defined by a mature hedges and post-and-wire fencing. Adjoining the SW boundary of the site is a metalled driveway running SE-NW from the A38 up to Upper Battleborough Farm and the Battleborough Grange Hotel.

The proposal site is not located within a Conservation Area and does not contain any designated (protected) heritage assets, such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), listed buildings or registered parks and gardens. However, the site lies approximately 460m SE of Brent Knoll hillfort, which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

3.1 Site Proposals

The following summary description of the development is based on the Design and Access Statement provided by the client (fig. 2-3) with a comparison of the existing site (fig. 2a). The proposed development entails the construction of a multi-use building, covering a total floor area of 1250 sq. m., which will house

an indoor play area (Jolly Jumpers) with space for children's parties, a café and farm shop, with external access provided to an adjacent outdoor play area and petting farm (f*ig. 2*). The height of the building, which has been reduced following pre-application advice, rises some 10m to the ridge and approximately 4m to the eaves.

The proposed multi-use building, which is to be set back from the roadside on sloping ground to the immediate S of the belt of woodland screening the site from Upper Battleborough Farm, is intended to appear agricultural in character, consisting of a broad rectangular gabled barn of steel-framed construction with insulated corrugated green panels and timber detailing to the S and E facing elevations (fig. 3). It will be cut into the bank to lower the overall height and extensive additional planting is proposed around the Site to both screen and soften the appearance of the proposed development and to support ecology enhancements. Paths will be laid out connecting the multi-use building to the outdoor play area and petting farm (see also figs. 11, 12 & 13).

Access to the site will be from an existing field gate at the S end of the site, with a hardstanding car parking area laid out within the SW corner of the site and an overflow car parking area laid out to grass in the SE corner. The appearance of the main car parking area will be softened by tree planting and the excavation of swales for drainage.

3.2 Soils & Geology

The British Geological Survey (BGS) records the underlying geology within the vicinity of the site as lying at the interface of two distinct geological strata.

The northern and central portions of the site, lies within an area of mudstone bedrock of the of the Dyrham Formation formed between 190.8 and 182.7 million years ago during the Jurassic period, with no superficial deposits recorded.

The solid geology within the southern portion of the site, adjoining the A38 road, consists of Mudstone bedrock of the Charmouth Formation, formed between 199.3 and 182.7 million years ago during the Jurassic period, overlain by superficial Tidal Flat Deposits (clay, silt, sand) formed between 11.8 thousand years ago and the present during the Quaternary period (BGS 2024).

Fig. 2: Proposed Block Plan
(Reproduced by courtesy of the client)

Fig 2a: Existing site plan shown for comparison with Figure 2 above
(Reproduced by courtesy of the client)

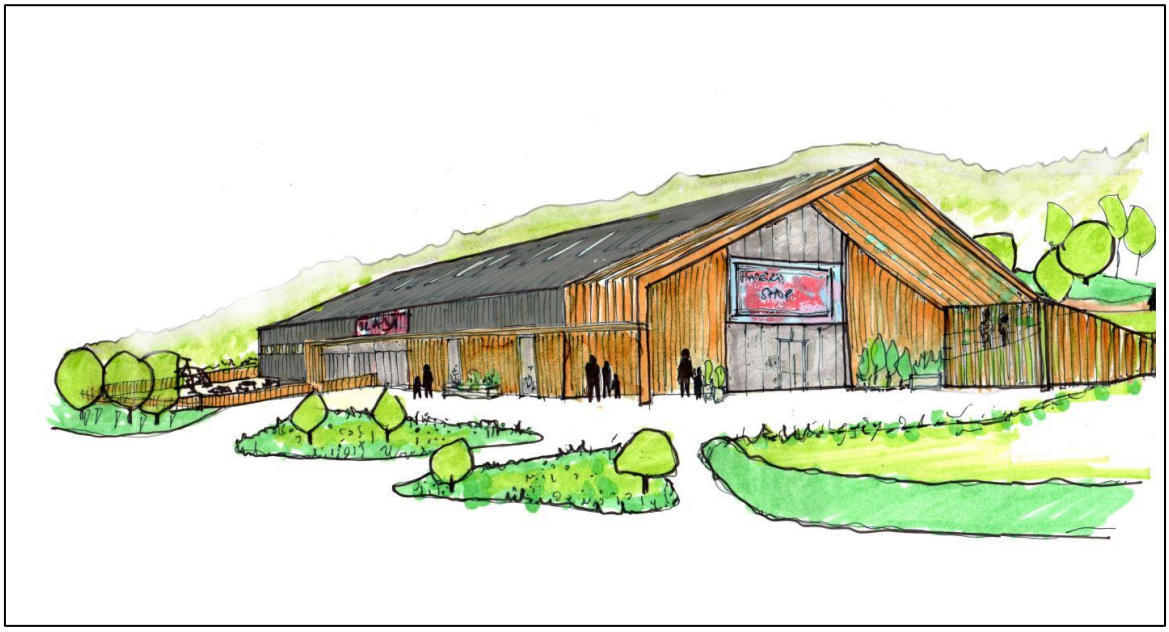

Fig. 3: View of the proposed multi-use building from the SE
(Reproduced by courtesy of the client)

4 Methodology

- *Project Aims*

This Heritage Statement seeks to identify and describe the significance of any archaeological (buried) and built heritage assets which may be affected by the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting.

- *Research Methods*

The research carried out for this Heritage Statement consisted of the following elements:

- *Evaluation and study of archaeological databases*

The Somerset Historic Environment Record (SHER) was consulted, and lists obtained of all known archaeological sites, listed and locally listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments in the study area, defined as a 1km search radius centred on NGR ST 34444 50399 (*Appendix 1).*

- *Evaluation and study of cartographic and other pictorial evidence*

A detailed map regression analysis of the study area was carried out, examining various historic maps of the specific study area, dating back to the late 18th century. These maps were obtained from the Somerset Heritage Centre and National Archives.

- *Evaluation and study of primary written evidence*

Original medieval and post-medieval records relating to the study area were consulted at the Somerset Heritage Centre, the British Library and the National Archives.

- *Evaluation and study of secondary (published) sources*

All published and unpublished works relating to sites and structures of archaeological and historical interest within the study area were evaluated, including relevant volumes of the *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society.*

- *Site Visit*

A site visit was carried out in January 2024 to determine the presence of archaeological remains and identify any potential heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the proposal site, supported by a photographic record taken from key vantage points.

5 Archaeological Assessment

5.1 Prehistoric (Palaeolithic to Bronze Age)

No recorded evidence of Palaeolithic to Bronze Age period archaeology has been identified within the 1km search radius defined for this study, based on consultation of the Somerset HER.

However, the location of the site within the western part of the low-lying Somerset Levels, an area which has been subject to episodes of marine regression and transgression throughout the prehistoric and later periods, suggests potential to encounter waterlogged remains associated with early human activity and exploitation of the tidal river valley, sealed beneath later alluvial layers. Indeed, the BGS records the southernmost portion of the proposal site as lying within an area of superficial Tidal Flat Deposits.

Conclusion: The potential for evidence of prehistoric remains to be identified in the immediate vicinity of the site has been assessed as **Low to Moderate**. Although no recorded evidence of prehistoric (Palaeolithic to Bronze Age) remains occurs within the 1km search radius, the site's location within the Somerset Levels provides potential to encounter buried waterlogged deposits with significant potential to contain organic remains (e.g. pollen, waterlogged wood) which could conceivably shed light on human activity and environmental changes dating back to early prehistory.

5.2 Iron Age/Roman

Significant evidence for Iron Age and Romano-British activity has been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the proposal site and the wider surrounding area. The proposal site lies approximately 460m SE of the Scheduled Monument of Brent Knoll hillfort and its associated field system (HER 11113; List Entry No. 1008248).

Brent Knoll is a large univallate hillfort occupying the top of a steep sided knoll, consisting of a plateau of interbedded Lias limestones and clays surmounted at its S end by Midford Sand deposits, rising to a height of 137m OD above the Somerset Levels and affording extensive, panoramic views across the surrounding low-lying Levels, including views looking westwards as far as the Bristol Channel and even the coast of Wales.

The defences consist of a bank which has been strengthened by scarping and a berm, below which is a further scarp encircling all but the NE side of the hill. The interior has been considerably lowered by quarrying, and the entrance, which is on the east, has been largely quarried away. Extending around the

outer perimeter of the hillfort are a series of single and double lynchets (cultivation terraces) which are particularly well-preserved on the S side of the knoll; however, these appear to be of medieval rather than Iron Age/Roman origin.

The interior of the fort has been extensively quarried for Lias limestone and sand, but considerable areas, especially in the N and SW remain intact. The whole site is under pasture, suffering damage from cattle in places. The outer defences on the N have been adapted as military trenches dating from the Second World War. The main enclosure, encompassing an area of some 1.6 hectares, is defined by an inner bank, discontinuous on the W where it has been impacted by quarrying activity, with an entrance on the E side with some unusual features. About 5m below the inner bank is a flat terrace about 3m wide from the ground which falls to a second major bank which surrounds the hilltop, except on the E where a modern trackway may reflect the original access route.

The original fortification clearly dates to the Iron Age, comparable to other hillforts in the surrounding locality such as Congresbury and South Cadbury, and finds of Iron Age pottery have been recovered both from the rampart and the interior of the enclosure. However, there is significant archaeological evidence to indicate that the hillfort remained in occupation throughout the Roman period.

The late 18th century antiquary Rev. Collinson refers to a 'large double irregular intrenchment' within the hillfort in which brass and silver coins of the Roman empire have been frequently found; and in digging, at its base, spear heads, fibulae, urns and other remains have been thrown up' (Collinson 1791, 196). Another antiquarian account refers to the discovery of an urn containing coins of the emperors Trajan and Severus (Barratt, 1789, 10).

Between 1812 and 1830, the local antiquarian Reverend Skinner undertook several excavations in an 'entrenchment' within the hillfort (presumably the same feature mentioned by Collinson) where he discovered 'a good many pieces of the coarse Roman pottery, namely, some stone ware, black and brown, and also one of the flat-headed nails, of the same kind I found in the winter at Camerton, which was used for keeping on the stone tiling on the roofs of their dwellings' (Gray 1906, 45). Further investigations by Skinner recovered quantities of painted plaster and box-flue tile. These antiquarian investigations appear to indicate the presence of a substantial Roman building within the interior of the hillfort, perhaps a villa or, more likely, a temple (Burrow 1981, 360).

In connection with this, it may be noted that a geophysical survey undertaken within the northern part of the hillfort in 2006 identified several curving linear features and three areas of high resistance which could possibly represent buildings although the possibility that they are geological features cannot be ruled out (HER 14082; Driscoll & Driscoll 2006). There has been little modern intrusive investigation within the interior of the hillfort; however archaeological recording of the excavation of three holes for Easter crosses measuring 0.3m square × 0.5m deep in 2004 recovered abraded sherds of Roman Black Burnished ware pottery, animal bone, building material and burnt limestone (HER 17268; Papworth 2004).

There is also considerable evidence for Romano-British occupation and associated field systems in the wider locality of the hillfort at Brent Knoll, pointing to the existence of an extensively settled rural hinterland in this area. Archaeological excavations undertaken along the route of a water main diversion between East Brent and Brent Knoll in 2013 revealed evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British activity at the N end of the pipeline, on lower lying ground to the E of the hillfort (Area 7, 8 and 9) between 430 to 700m NE of the proposal site (HER 10999; 37481).

The earliest feature consisted of an E-W aligned linear in Area 7 interpreted as a holloway leading to the hillfort, the lower fills of which contained pottery of Middle to Late Iron Age date while the uppermost fills contained Roman pottery. Further to the N, within Area 8 an E-W aligned boundary ditch of similar date was identified, which was cut at its N end by a substantial ditch feature containing Roman pottery of 2nd-4th century date. The remains of a D-shaped ditched enclosure of early Roman date were also identified which appeared to be associated with settlement activity and had been abandoned by the late Roman period. Other features revealed during the investigations included a sub-circular pit of Roman date, a possible oven feature and a series of rectilinear ditches forming part of a field system, the fills of which contained pottery of 2nd-4th century date, fired clay and animal bone (Powell et al, 2013; Powell 2016).

It was suggested that these features represented part of a settlement of Late Iron Age/Roman date occupying the lower slopes of the hillfort which extended to the W of the excavated area of the pipeline route. Aerial photographs show a series of rectilinear enclosures in this area which could possibly represent further evidence of Romano-British occupation (HER 11942) although this has yet to be verified by field investigation.

Evidence of Romano-British occupation and agricultural activity has been identified to the S, SE and E of the proposed development area. Finds of Roman pottery, animal bone, Lias stone slabs and an associated ashy deposit, possibly representing the remains of a building, were found during the construction of a barn to the SE of the A38 near Battleborough about 200m S of the proposal site (HER 11747). A field evaluation undertaken at Sanders Garden Centre (to the immediate S of the abovementioned site) in 2004 revealed a sequence of alluvial deposits over 2m in depth and a thin peaty later at a depth of 1.5m. At a depth of about 1m bgl, a buried soil horizon was identified in all five trenches, containing abraded sherds of Roman pottery and animal bone (HER 17474; King 2004).

Further evidence of Roman pottery and dressed stonework, possibly representing the remains of buildings, was found during rescue excavations for the M5 motorway in the early 1970s within a field to the SE of the A38, about 340m SE of the proposal site (Dawson et al. 2001, 46).

It is possible that these findings represent evidence of a settled rural hinterland either associated with a focus of settlement at Brent Knoll hillfort or a substantial villa site at Lakehouse Farm, about 770m E of the proposed development (HER 10479). The remains of this villa, which were again revealed during excavations for the M5 motorway, consisted of large quantities of building materials including dressed stone blocks and slabs, sandstone roofing tiles, ceramic roof tiles, box-flue and hypocaust tiles, painted wall plaster and window glass, as well as a large assemblage of 1st-4th century pottery (Dawson et al, 2001, 46).

Conclusion: The potential for encountering Iron Age and Romano-British remains in the vicinity of the proposal site has been assessed as **High**. The proposal site lies about 460m SE of the Scheduled Iron Age hillfort of Brent Knoll within an area which displays considerable evidence of Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement activity and associated field systems. There is good potential for further evidence of settlement activity from this period to be encountered within the proposal site, based on the evidence of antiquarian findings and more recent field investigations in the immediate and wider locality.

5.3 Medieval

Evidence of early medieval activity has been identified in the vicinity of the site. The place name of Brent appears to be of Celtic origin, denoting a 'high place' doubtless referring to the hillfort of Brent Knoll. It is possible that the hillfort may have been occupied and refortified during the early medieval period and elements of the hillfort have been suggested as representing evidence of refortification including the outer bank and the D-shaped platform at the entrance. A series of single and double lynchets are also visible extending around the outer perimeter of the hillfort which are presumed to represent evidence of a strip field system (HER 10082), the origins of which may date back to the early medieval period although some may be of a later medieval date.

Brent Knoll has long-established associations with the Arthurian legend dating back at least to the early 12th century; the historian William of Malmesbury in his account of the early history of Glastonbury Abbey ('*De antiquitate Glastonie ecclesie*'), refers to a reputed grant of the manor of Brent to the monks of Glastonbury by King Arthur and also identifies it as 'Mons ranarum', the site of a reputed battle between one of Arthur's knights and three giants (Abrams 1996, 70; Carley 2001, 21)..

Another tradition identifies Brent Knoll as the site of the battle or siege of 'Mons Badonicus' (Badon Hill) an important victory of the Britons over the invading Saxons mentioned by the Welsh cleric Gildas which took place at some point during the late 5th or early 6th century, although there remains a considerable degree of uncertainty over its exact date and location (Dobson 1948, 43-45).

Whatever the case, it appears that Brent Knoll was a Saxon royal estate and had been granted to Glastonbury Abbey by the late 7th century AD. A charter of King Ine of Wessex dated c. 693 AD records a grant of 10 hides of land at Brent to Abbot Haemgils of Glastonbury (Abrams 1996, 69). Although its authenticity has been questioned, the basis of the charter appears to be substantially genuine and points to the existence of a substantial pre-Conquest estate, the administrative centre of which may, at one point, have been the hillfort at Brent Knoll.

The landholding of Glastonbury at Brent Knoll appears to have increased by the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086, which records an estate of 20 hides at 'Brentemerse'. This estate had been partially broken up into several smaller units, including a landholding of five virgates held by one Ralph de Conteville as a tenant of the Abbey. This landholding can be identified with the estate later known as Battleborough, which is first referred to as 'Batelebergam' in a survey of the Abbey's estates dated 1189, when Richard de Conteville was recorded as the tenant of the five virgates for the service of a quarter part of a knight's fee (Stacy 2001, 85).

The origins of the place name Battleborough are unclear; the 'borough' (*burh*) presumably refers to the hillfort at Brent Knoll while the first element could either represent an Old English personal name or the site of a nearby battle. As mentioned above, it is possible that it may have been the scene of a major engagement between the Britons and the Saxons, while Collinson suggested that it could refer to the site of a 'notable skirmish' between King Alfred and the Danes (Collinson 1791, 196). The latter suggestion should not be discounted as Alfred is known to have taken refuge in the Somerset Levels during the 870s and it is possible that Brent Knoll could have been reoccupied during this period although it is not mentioned in the early 10th century Burghal Hidage as one of Alfred's fortified *burhs*.

Archaeological evidence also points to the existence of a settlement at Battleborough during the medieval period, which appears to have extended across the site of the proposed development. It is presumed that the settlement was located somewhere close to the Grade II listed farmhouse at Battleborough Farm which retains a 17th century core though refronted in the early 19th century (HER 13215). However, it may actually have extended further to E and NE of the present farmstead.

The results of the Bristol Water pipeline excavations undertaken in 2013 to the east of Battleborough (Area 1) identified evidence for a series of intercutting rectilinear ditches and gullies extending across the southern half of the field containing the proposal site, which appeared to represent evidence of a field system on the periphery of a nearby settlement which appears to have lain to the immediate W (HER 10001). The fills of these features contained a large assemblage of pottery, chiefly dating from the 11th-13th centuries and it was suggested that they represent evidence of a period of land reclamation or repeated attempts to drain the lower lying land to the immediate E and NE of the settlement at Battleborough (Powell et al. 2013; Powell 2016, 47).

It is highly likely that these features extend across a larger area than was investigated as part of the pipeline excavations in 2013. Aerial photographs show a series of rectilinear and curvilinear features extending not only across the southern half of the proposal site but also further upslope. Some of these features could be associated with another field system extending across the slopes N of Upper Battleborough Farm which is also of probable medieval origin (HER 10100).

Conclusion: The potential for archaeological remains of medieval date has been assessed as **High**. Extensive evidence of field systems of medieval date has been identified within the proposal site and its surrounding locality. Archaeological excavations within the southern half of the site determined that some of these feature's date to the 11th-13th centuries and represent land reclamation and cultivation activity associated with a nearby settlement at Battleborough, the origins of which date back to before the Norman Conquest and was probably established by Glastonbury Abbey who held the estate at Brent Knoll since the late 7th century AD. The place name Battleborough also suggests possible associations with a nearby battlefield site of likely pre-Conquest date.

5.4 Post – Medieval

The earliest map to show the study area is Day and Masters' map of Somerset (1782) which shows the hillfort of Brent Knoll in relief with the course of the present-day A38 shown extending to the E and SE; this roadway had been turnpiked by the Bridgwater Trust in 1759 (HER 24587). Little useful topographical detail is provided regarding the proposal site.

Consequently, the earliest map to show the proposal site in appreciable detail is an Ordnance Survey drawing of Burnham-on-Sea and district surveyed in 1802 (*fig. 4*). The hamlet of Battleborough is marked, consisting of three main farmsteads situated to the S of Brent Knoll hillfort adjacent to the line of the turnpike road (A38).

The proposal site is shown as lying within a rectangular field enclosure to the NE of the trackway leading off from the A38 towards a cluster of buildings set within a rectangular farmyard identifiable with Upper Battleborough Farm. A separate group of buildings situated adjacent to the turnpike road, immediately SW of the trackway to Upper Battleborough Farm can be identified with another farmstead known as Battleborough House, while further to the W, a lane is shown leading to the farmhouse known as

Battleborough. No building activity is indicated within the development site, which is shown as agricultural land.

The extant Grade II listed farmhouse at Battleborough appears to date to the 17th century while Upper Battleborough Farm (now converted to Battleborough Grange Hotel) may be of 18th century origin. A watching brief carried out on an extension to the hotel in 2005 revealed a ditch dating to the 18th or 19th century with no evidence of activity earlier than the 18th century (HER 17753; Leach 2005). Battleborough House was demolished at some time between 1961 and 1975 but may have been of 17th century origin, traditionally it was reputed to have been occupied as a military headquarters during the battle of Sedgemoor in 1685 (Somerset Guardian and Radstock Observer, 17 January 1947).

The Brent Knoll tithe map of 1841 (which was based on an earlier parish survey drawn up thirty years earlier), is the earliest map to provide a detailed and accurate topographical depiction of the proposal site and its surroundings (fig. 5). It shows that the southern part of the site lay within a sub-rectangular pasture field described as 'adjoining the turnpike road' (Plot 21) which belonged to the farmstead at Battleborough House, situated to the immediate SW of the site (fronting onto the turnpike road) and owned by one John Herridge.

The N part of the site lay within a rectangular enclosure marked as 'The Orchard' (Plot 22) and a larger, more irregularly shaped pasture field described as 'adjoining the Orchard' (Plot 21a), both of which belonged to Joseph Porter, the owner of Upper Battleborough Farm and tenanted by one John House. The pattern of settlement at Battleborough appears to have changed little from that shown on the 1802 OS map and it is evident that the site was primarily pastoral in character. Upper Battleborough Farm was put up for sale in June 1873 and the description of the estate given in the sales particulars differs little from that given in the 1841 tithe award.

The OS 1st edition map of 1886 (fig. 6) shows that the pattern of land use, field enclosure and settlement in the immediate vicinity of the site had changed relatively little since the early 1840s, the boundaries of the southernmost field adjoining the turnpike road are shown as tree-lined while the rectangular orchard enclosure to the NW is shown as densely planted with trees. The SW boundary of both fields appears to be defined by a tree-lined watercourse or drainage ditch running parallel to the trackway leading up from the turnpike road to Upper Battleborough Farm. The buildings at Upper Battleborough Farm appear to have been expanded to the NE, with two oblong barns marked to the immediate N of the orchard. Little change to the pattern of land use and fieldscape is indicated on the OS 2nd edition map of 1904 (fig. 7), except that an additional barn appears to have been added to the cluster of outbuildings to the N of the orchard.

An RAF vertical photograph of 13 January 1946 (RAF/3G/TUD/UK/19/5240) shows the pattern of land use and field enclosure as having remained largely unaltered since the early 20th century (fig. 8). Within the southernmost, sub-rectangular pasture field, the boundaries of which are shown as heavily tree-lined, two parallel, roughly linear features are depicted running NE-SW, intersecting with several shorter ditches running NW-SE. These ditches are not shown on earlier 19th century mapping of the site and could conceivably relate to land reclamation and cultivation activity of medieval or possibly earlier date. These features are also visible on modern LiDAR imagery of the proposal site (fig. 10).

It is possible that some of these ditches correspond to features which were identified during the 2013 water pipeline excavations. The rectangular orchard enclosure is still shown as planted with trees, while

the larger field to the NE of the orchard is shown as under pasture and crossed by a series of rectilinear features running NW-SE which may represent relict strip fields.

Little change to the pattern of land use, settlement and field boundaries in the vicinity of the site is indicated on an oblique aerial photograph taken on 4 July 1953 (CUCAP Ref. MD56) or an OS 6-inch map of 1961 (fig. 9). By the mid-1970s, however, extensive changes to the pattern of fieldscape and settlement had occurred in the immediate vicinity of the site, as shown on an Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1975 (not reproduced for copyright reasons). Within the site itself, the boundaries of the sub-rectangular field adjoining the A38 had been removed and the rectangular orchard enclosure to the NW had been completely cleared to create one large pasture field.

This reorganisation of the field boundary pattern appears to have occurred contemporaneously with the construction of a modern bungalow (marked as 'Battle-boro' on the 1975 map) to the immediate S of the outbuilding complex at Upper Battleborough Farm (which had also been expanded with the addition of several large rectangular shelter sheds of concrete and steel framed construction). To the SW of the proposal site, adjoining the A38, the farmhouse and outbuildings at Battleborough House had also been demolished at some point between 1961 and 1975. The farmhouse at Upper Battleborough Farm appears to have been substantially rebuilt and converted into a hotel (Battleborough Grange) by no later than 1986.

Conclusion: The potential for encountering post-medieval remains has been assessed as **Low to Moderate**. Historic mapping shows that the proposal site lay within an area of pasture and orchard enclosures, the boundaries of which remained largely unchanged from the early 19th century up to the 1960s, with no evidence of building activity recorded within the site. These field boundaries were swept away during the 1970s when the pattern of enclosure was substantially altered, contemporary with the construction of a modern bungalow and the demolition of the nearby farmstead of Battleborough House.

It is possible that evidence of relict field boundaries and drainage ditches of post-medieval date will be encountered within the proposal site; however, these would be regarded as being of relatively Low importance in archaeological terms.

5.5 Archaeological Assessment - Conclusions

The overall archaeological potential of the site has been assessed as **High**, with reference to encountering archaeological remains of Iron Age, Roman and medieval date. This assessment reflects the proximity of the site to the Iron Age hillfort of Brent Knoll, which appears to have remained as a focus of occupation during the Romano-British and early medieval periods, and the significant evidence for Iron Age and Roman occupation and field systems identified in the immediate vicinity of the site and its wider environs.

The site also lies close to the medieval settlement of Battleborough and archaeological investigations within the southernmost portion of the site revealed ditches and gullies containing pottery of 11th-13th century date which were interpreted as evidence of a field system associated with a nearby settlement.

The potential for archaeological remains of prehistoric (Palaeolithic to Bronze Age) and post-medieval date has been assessed as **Low to Moderate**. Although evidence of early prehistoric activity is limited, the location of the site within the Somerset Levels suggests potential for encountering waterlogged alluvial and peat deposits which could shed light on human activity and environmental changes dating back to early prehistory.

The site remained as undeveloped pastureland and orcharding throughout the post-medieval period; however, there is potential to reveal evidence of relict field boundaries and watercourses of post-medieval date which are still visible on the ground and are also shown on aerial photography and LiDAR imagery.

It is considered that impacts from the proposed development on buried archaeological remains could potentially include 1/ the removal of topsoil which could expose any archaeological remains that may be present immediately below the surface, 2/ excavation of foundations associated with the new building and 3/ excavations for new service trenching, drainage swales and other associated landscaping features. Full details of the depths of excavation required for the proposed development were not available at time of writing.

Conclusion: In view of the **High** archaeological potential of the site, it is respectfully suggested that an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, the details of which to be agreed with the archaeological officer at South West Heritage Trust, may be required to determine the extent, depth and significance of archaeological deposits and features within the site, which may involve geophysical survey followed by targeted trial trenching.

Fig. 4: Extract from the OS surveyors drawing for Burnham-on-Sea and district (1802) with site marked in red (Reproduced by courtesy of the British Library)

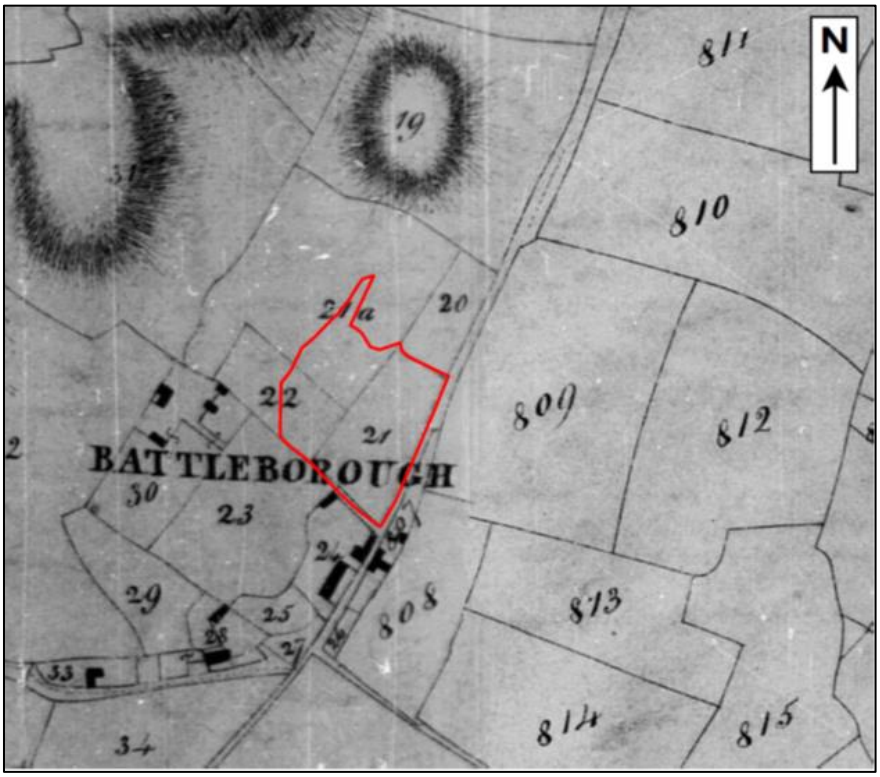

Fig. 5: Extract from the tithe map for Brent Knoll parish (1841)
(Reproduced by courtesy of the National Archives)

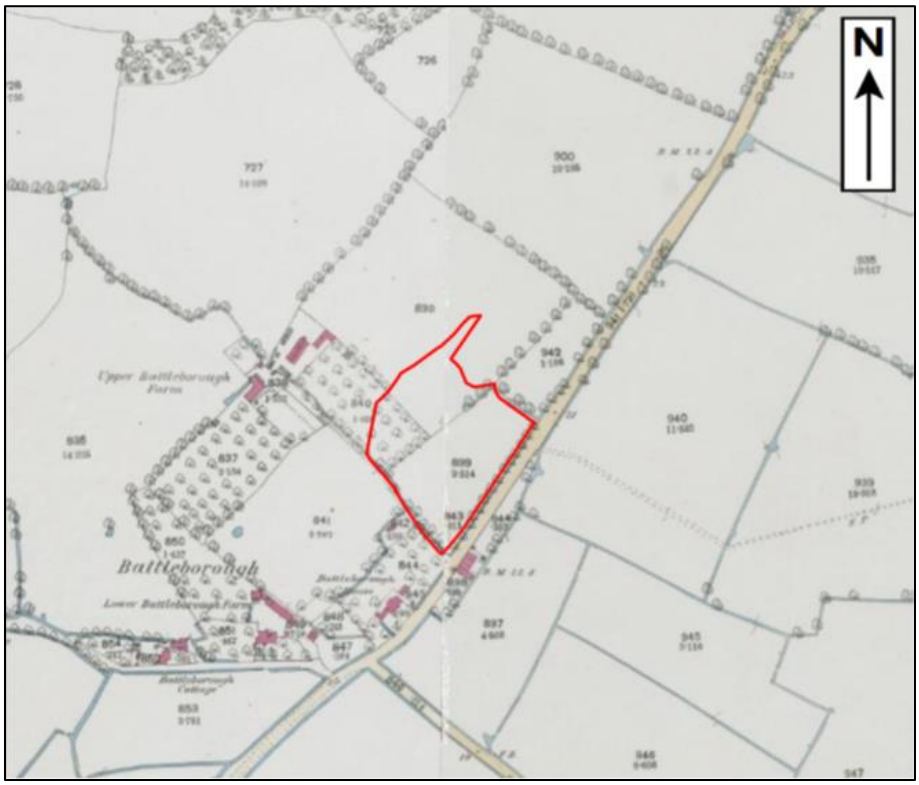

Fig. 6: Extract from the OS 1st Edition 25-inch map of 1886
(Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)

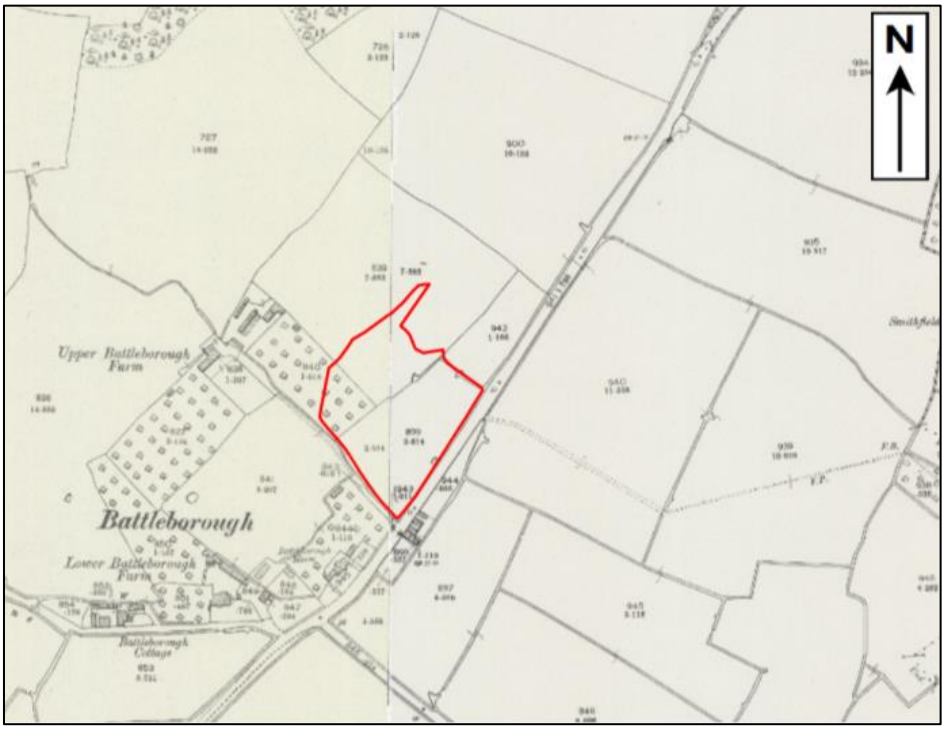

Fig. 7: Extract from the OS 2nd edition 25-inch map of 1904
(Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)

Fig. 8: Extract from a RAF vertical aerial photograph dated 13 January 1946 with site marked in red
(Reproduced by courtesy of Somerset Heritage Centre)

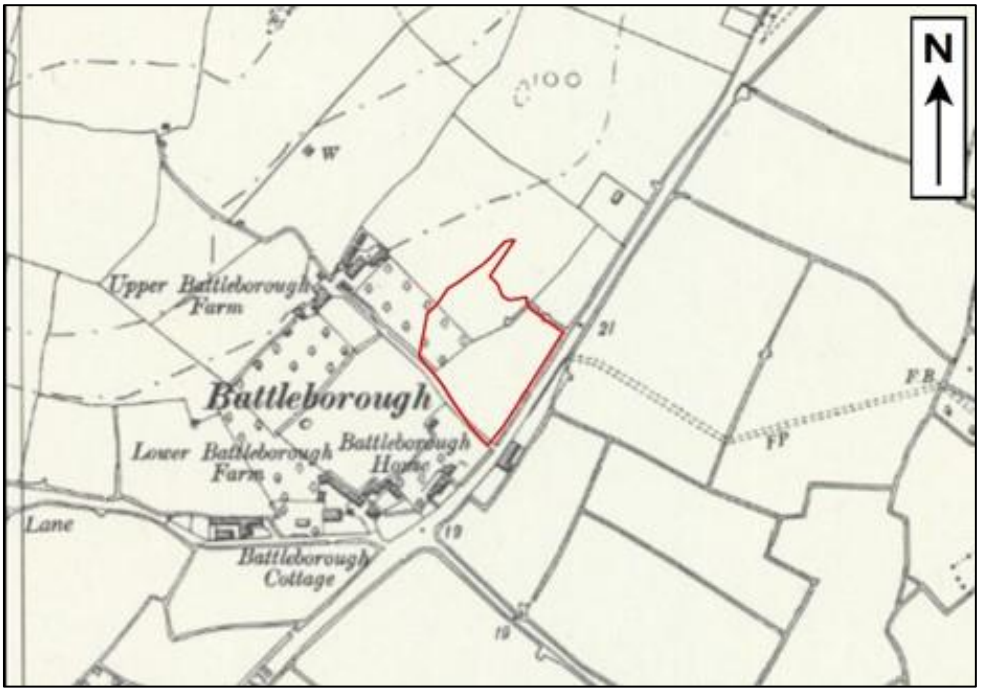

Fig. 9: Extract from an OS provisional edition 6-inch map of 1961
(Reproduced by courtesy of the Somerset Heritage Centre)

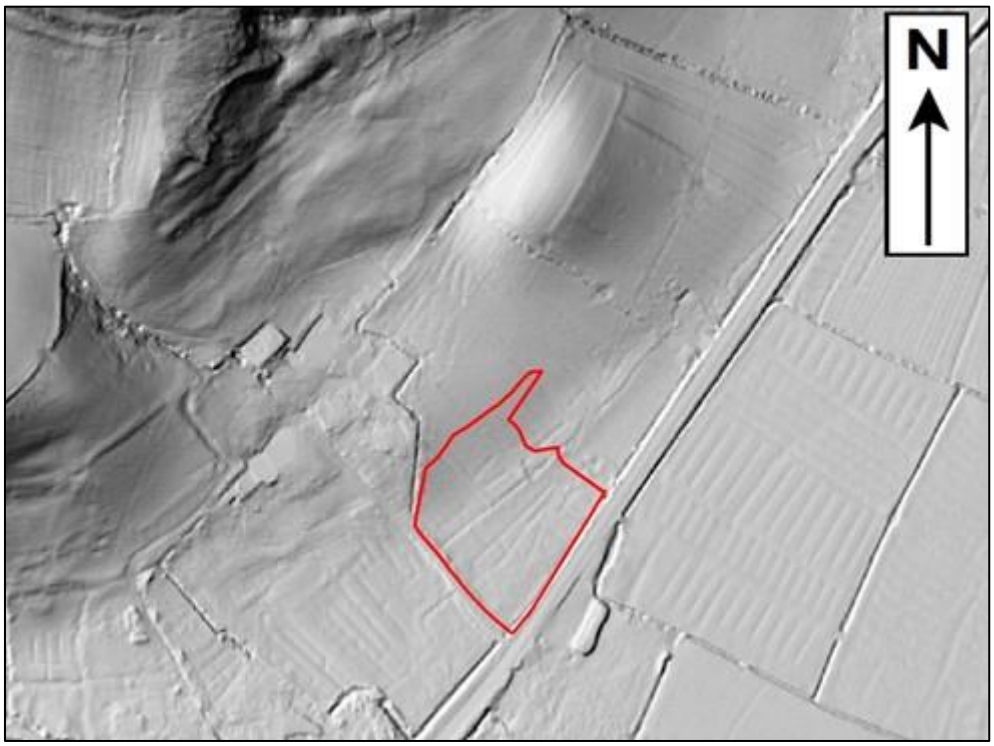

Fig. 10: Extract from LiDAR 1m DTM imagery of the site
(Reproduced by courtesy of the Environment Agency)

6 Site Visit

A site visit was undertaken in January 2024 to determine the presence of archaeological and built heritage assets in the vicinity of the site and photographs were taken from key vantage points across the site (Plates 1-6).

The proposal site comprises a large pasture field to the NW of the A38 which rises gently upslope (from SE to NW) towards a modern bungalow and a complex of 20th century agricultural buildings of concrete and steel-framed construction associated with Upper Battleborough Farm, which are largely concealed from view by a diagonal belt of trees which represents a relatively recent plantation (dating from the 1970s). The boundaries of the site are mostly defined by hedges (tree-lined in places) and post-and-wire fencing, with the wayleave of the Bristol Water mains water pipeline defined by two parallel wooden fences running ENE-WSW across the southern part of the site.

The site lies beneath the Scheduled hillfort of Brent Knoll (in the guardianship of the National Trust) which is prominently situated on a steep-sided hilltop rising to an approximate height 137m AOD and features prominently in views looking NW from the A38.

Several long linear ditches were noted as extending roughly NE-SW across the site, one of which, represented by a shallow depression (also functioning as a drainage feature) appeared to represent the former northern boundary of the sub-rectangular pasture field which is marked on historic mapping dating back to the early 19th century. Intersecting with these NE-SW aligned linears are a series of rectilinear depressions aligned NW-SE and running downslope, some of these could represent evidence of post-medieval field drains while others may represent the remains of a medieval strip field system which is also traceable on aerial photography and LiDAR imagery of the site.

Plate 1: View looking NW from Ollie's Café carpark across towards the proposal site, with Brent Knoll hillfort featuring prominently in the background

Plate 2: View looking NNW towards the site of the proposed multi-use building, situated adjacent to the belt of woodland screening the bungalow and farm buildings at Upper Battleborough Farm

Plate 3: View looking directly NW upslope across the site (with linear depression aligned NE-SW visible in foreground), with the hillfort of Brent Knoll visible in the backdrop

Plate 4: View looking NE across the eastern portion of the site, showing evidence of linear ditch features extending across the site and modern wayleave fencing visible to right of picture

Plate 5: View looking SW along the western portion of the site, with NE-SW aligned depression (former field boundary?) visible

Plate 6: View looking SE towards the SE boundary of the site, defined by a mature hedge

7 Heritage Assessment

This section of the report comprises 1/ a description of designated and non-designated built heritage assets in the vicinity of the site and their respective settings, 2/ an assessment of the significance of these built heritage assets and the extent to which setting contributes to their significance and 3/ an assessment of the magnitude of impact resulting from the proposed development on designated and non-designated built heritage assets in the vicinity of the site.

This Heritage Assessment has been informed by Historic England guidance for assessing impact on heritage assets, their significance and respective settings, namely, *Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015), *The Setting of Heritage Assets*: *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 3 - Second Edition* (Historic England 2017a) and *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12* (Historic England 2019).

Consultation of the Somerset Historic Environment Record identified a total of eight designated heritage assets within a 1km radius of the site, comprising seven listed buildings (including the Grade I listed church of St Michael, Brent Knoll) and one Scheduled Ancient Monument, namely Brent Knoll hillfort. However, it was determined following the site visit to assess potential impacts that only two heritage assets have potential to be affected by the proposed development, namely:

1/ Brent Knoll hillfort and associated field system, designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and situated about 460m NW of the proposal site (List Entry No. 1008248)

2/ Battleborough Farmhouse, designated as a Grade II listed building and situated about 170m WSW of the proposal site (LB Ref. 1262835).

7.1 Identification of Heritage Assets

- *Brent Knoll hillfort and associated field system (Scheduled Ancient Monument)*

A detailed description of the hillfort and its associated field system has been provided in Section 5.1 and consequently the following description represents a concise summary. Brent Knoll is a large univallate hillfort of Iron Age origin situated on the summit of a steep sided knoll, rising to an approximate height of 137m OD above the western half of the Somerset Levels and affording extensive, wide-ranging views across the surrounding low-lying Levels, including views looking westwards as far as the Bristol Channel and beyond towards the coast of Wales (on a clear day).

The interior of the fort is under pasture and has been extensively quarried for Lias limestone and sand (activity probably dating back to the medieval period), but extensive areas, especially in the N and SW remain intact and relatively undisturbed.

Antiquarian investigations dating back to the late 18th/early 19th century identified evidence for a substantial Roman building within the N part of the site and associated finds of coins and pottery and there is possible evidence for refortification of the site during the early medieval period. Extending around the outer perimeter of the hillfort are a series of single and double lynchets (cultivation terraces) which are particularly well-preserved on the S side of the knoll; however, these appear to be of medieval origin. The outer defences on the N have been adapted as military slit trenches dating from the Second World War.

Plate 7: View WNW from the A38 towards the summit of Brent Knoll with proposal site in foreground

Plate 8: View looking NE across interior of Brent Knoll hillfort showing extensive evidence of historic quarrying activity

Brent Knoll was designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument in October 1981, the Scheduling description, derived from the National Heritage List for England, reads as follows:

'Reasons for Designation:

Large univallate hillforts are defined as fortified enclosures of varying shape, ranging in size between 1ha and 10ha, located on hilltops and surrounded by a single boundary comprising earthworks of massive proportions. They date to the Iron Age period, most having been constructed and used between the fourth century BC and the first century AD, although evidence for earlier use is present at most sites. The size of the earthworks reflects the ability of certain social groups to mobilise the labour necessary for works on such a monumental scale, and their function may have had as much to do with display as defence. Large univallate hillforts are also seen as centres of redistribution, both for subsistence products and items produced by craftsmen. The ramparts are of massive proportions except in locations where steepness of slope precludes easy access. They can vary between 6m and 20m wide and may survive to a height of 6m. The ditches can measure between 6m and 13m wide and between 3m and 5m deep. Access to the interior is generally provided by one or two entrances which often take the form of long passages formed by inturned ramparts and originally closed by a gate located towards the inner end of the passageway. The entrance may be flanked by guardrooms and/or accompanied by outworks. Internal features included timber or stone round houses; large storage pits and hearths; scattered postholes, stakeholes and gullies; and square or rectangular buildings supported by four to six posts, often represented by postholes, and interpreted as raised granaries.

Large univallate hillforts are rare with between 50 and 100 examples recorded nationally. Most are located within southern England where they occur on the chalklands of Wessex, Sussex and Kent. The western edge

of the distribution is marked by scattered examples in north Somerset and east Devon, while further examples occur in central and western England and outliers further north. Within this distribution considerable regional variation is apparent, both in their size, rampart structure and the presence or absence of individual components. In view of the rarity of large univallate hillforts and their importance in understanding the organisation and regional structure of Iron Age society, all examples with surviving archaeological remains are believed to be of national importance.

Brent Knoll fort is a good example of a large univallate hillfort, with a complete circuit of defences, an entranceway flanked by guardrooms, and a hollow way leading to it. Although much of the interior has subsequently been quarried, areas of undisturbed ground remain, and the discovery of Roman building foundations in the 19th century demonstrates that archaeological deposits survive. Snail shells are present in exposed soils, and this, together with other finds, demonstrates a high potential for environmental, dating and the recovery of occupation evidence. Strip lynchets to the north may overlie extra-mural features, or may themselves be outworks or contemporary fields. The site has been linked with the King Arthur legends. The area was border territory in the unsettled post-Roman period, and a fort in this strategic location may provide evidence for dates of Saxon penetration. Although Iron Age in origin, late Roman or early Dark Age reoccupation of hillforts is known from a number of sites in the area.

Details:

The monument includes a large univallate hillfort and associated field system on the top of Brent Knoll, an island in the surrounding levels rising to 139m at this point and overlooking a large area towards the Bristol Channel and inland. A low rampart c.1m high, with internal quarry ditches, encloses the 1.6ha flat top of the hill. The external face of this rampart falls steeply by c.2m to a step c.2.75m wide, beyond which the ground drops again c.2m-5m to a wider outer terrace c.4m-6m wide which may have originally been a ditch with counterscarp bank. Below this the ground falls away to the natural contour. The absence on the north eastern side of the outer terrace may suggest that this part of the site was left unfinished. The ramparts are constructed of stone or rubble, probably quarried from the interior. Eroded patches of the slope between the two terraces show a rough stone facing and in one place a line of cut stones. The entrance to the fort is on the east, where a hollow way, reused as a later quarry track, runs between slightly inturned ramparts. On the outer side the ramparts drop to form flanking platforms, thought to be guard houses. The southern of these is D-shaped, 12m by 8m; the northern is crescent shaped, formed of two D-shaped hollows 11m by 8m. Both may have been affected by or even created by later quarrying; however they do seem likely to be original.

In a similar location on the lower terrace to the south of the entrance is a feature of comparable shape and size, perhaps representing a later extension of the gateway. The present track into the fort probably dates from the later quarrying of the interior and leads around the slope to form a wide hollow way curving across the field below. Just outside the fort entrance this appears to overlie an earlier narrow hollow way which can be seen running in a straight line down from the fort, crossed again by the later track at the bottom of the field. This earlier feature may represent the original approach to the fort. Towards the north end of the fort a narrow gap in the rampart, inturned on one side, may be an original feature. On the northern tip of the fort the step below the rampart drops to form a small platform, 7m by 5m. The lower terrace protrudes to form two bastions, and a large lynchet immediately below is possibly an additional rampart. These features may have guarded the north approach to the fort; the gap mentioned above

perhaps provided access to them. A 35m stretch of the inner rampart on the west side is tumbled or levelled. A limestone quarry, probably medieval, has affected part of the interior to a depth of up to 1.5m. Quarrying seems to have begun near the entrance and spread out into the interior. Banks and mounds present may have been formed or heightened by quarry spoil. Despite this, areas of the original ground surface exist in the north and south west of the interior. Quarry pits inside the rampart along the west and northeast are also considered to be original.

Partial excavation of the interior in the early 19th century revealed a Roman building, probably in the northwest of the fort. Across the spine of the hill immediately to the north of the fort are a series of single and double lynchets. These appear to be part of a strip-field system, probably medieval, traces of which can be seen around the entire hill, most notably on the south. The lower terrace of the fort, together with the two higher lynchets, has been used for military slit-trenching by the Home Guard in World War II. The site is considered to be Iron Age in origin, although the visible ramparts may be Roman. The outer terrace, if not original, may be a Dark Age re-fortification, seemingly incomplete. Legends associate the Knoll with King Arthur, and the fort has been claimed as the site of Mons Badonicus. Finds from the excavation include Iron Age pottery, Roman pottery and coins, Roman building material, charcoal and animal bones. Roman finds and settlement are common around the Knoll and nearby. Excluded from the scheduling are the Jubilee Stone and the flag mast, although the ground beneath these features is included.'

Battleborough Farmhouse (Grade II)

Plate 9: View looking N from Battleborough Lane towards Battleborough Farmhouse, with Brent Knoll hillfort visible in background

Battleborough Farmhouse (Plate 9) is situated in a sheltered location on the N side of Battleborough Lane just off the A38, about 170m WSW of the proposal site. It comprises a two-storey gabled dwelling with attic rectangular in form and externally roughcast with a pitched slate roof with dentilled eaves and mullioned windows with label mouldings. The interior of the house appears to be of 17th century date (with some 18th century alterations) but was re-fronted in Tudor Gothic style in 1830 by a Mr Harden as commemorated by a plaque affixed to the exterior. To the rear of the property are several outbuildings

of 19th and 20th century date. Documentary evidence attests to the existence of a settlement at Battleborough dating back to the late 11th century, when it was held as a tenancy of the manor of Brent belonging to Glastonbury Abbey.

The farmhouse was designated as a Grade II listed building on 30th May 1985 (List Entry No. 1262835), the listing description extracted from the National Heritage List for England reads as follows:

'*Farmhouse, now house. Probably C17 core, refronting dated on right return: "J Harden 1830" on a tablet, below it an heraldic shield. Stippled roughcast, bitumenised slate roof in 2 sections of slightly differing height, coped verges and a centre coping to roof, 3 pairs of diagonally set rendered stacks. Gothick style. Two storeys and attic, 2:2 bays, 3-light casements, each light with a 4-centred head, stopped labels. Central door opening, 6-panelled door in a conforming style; rendered and gabled porch, slate roof. Heraldic shield with crest between right 2 bays on first floor, beneath raised lettering: "Battleborough". Cross-beamed ceiling to right ground floor room; this room also with a wooden panelled East wall incorporating a niche cupboard, probably of the first half of the C18.*

7.2 Assessment of Significance

- *Brent Knoll hillfort and associated field system (Scheduled Ancient Monument)*

Brent Knoll may be regarded as a designated heritage asset of **Very High** importance, as a well-preserved, substantial Iron Age hillfort which due to its considerable elevation, represents a dominant historic landmark across the western portion of the Somerset Levels.

Although the interior of the fort has been impacted by quarrying activity, there is significant potential for the survival of archaeological deposits and structural remains dating from the Iron Age and Roman periods and the hillfort may well have been re-occupied during the early medieval period. The presence of medieval lynchets and more recent WWII slit trenches attest to the continued usage of the hillfort for agricultural and military purposes over the centuries.

Its historical importance is underlined by its associations with the Arthurian legend (it has been suggested as the site of the battle of Mount Badon) and its long-established connections with Glastonbury Abbey dating back to well before the Norman Conquest. Its significance and amenity value are further enhanced by its prominent siting on a steep sided hilltop rising above the Somerset Levels, Brent Knoll is in the custodianship of the National Trust is well-frequented by walkers seeking the wide ranging, panoramic views afforded from the summit of the hillfort.

- *Battleborough Farmhouse (Grade II)*

Battleborough Farmhouse may be regarded as being of **High** importance as a Grade II listed former farmhouse retaining significant historic fabric of 17th-18th century date concealed behind its early 19th century exterior. Its significance is further enhanced by its proximity to the Iron Age hillfort of Brent Knoll (from which the name of Battleborough is derived, at least in part) and its historical associations with the medieval hamlet of Battleborough, which was an ancient landholding of Glastonbury Abbey dating back at least to the 11th century and probably earlier.

7.3 Assessment of Magnitude of Impact

- *Brent Knoll hillfort and associated field system (Scheduled Ancient Monument)*

The impact of the proposed development on the setting of the Scheduled Monument of Brent Knoll hillfort has been assessed as **Moderate+** in scope. It is likely that the proposed multi-use building, while screened to a degree by the wooded lower slopes of the hillfort and the belt of woodland to the immediate S of the modern bungalow and outbuildings at Upper Battleborough Farm, would still be partially discernible in views looking SE and SSE from the outer rampart of the hillfort (*Plates 10-11*) and the roofline of the new building would almost certainly be visible in these views.

It is suggested that this visibility could be further reduced by additional enhancement of the woodland copse to the S of Upper Battleborough Farm or reduction in the ridge height of the building, although the proposed setting of the multi-use building into the slope should further limit views looking SE from the hillfort ramparts. It may be noted that historically there was a large rectangular orchard enclosure to the immediate S of Upper Battleborough Farm, which was removed in the 1970s which suggests a precedent for further tree-planting in this area.

The main hardstanding car park proposed within the SW corner of the site, due to its low-lying location adjacent to the A38, would be more clearly discernible in views from the outer rampart of the hillfort, although this impact would be partially mitigated by the proposed tree-planting and swales in this area.

Plate 10: View looking SE from the outer rampart of Brent Knoll hillfort towards the site, partially obscured by trees although the area of the proposed car park adjoining the A38 is visible

Views looking NW from the A38 towards the hillfort would be more noticeably affected by the construction of the proposed multi-use building and associated car parking which would evidently represent an intrusive new element appearing in the foreground of these views.

It is suggested that this impact can be partially ameliorated by the tree and hedge planting proposed for the car parking area, which should reflect the historic form of the tree-lined hedge boundaries which were present within the site prior to their removal during the 1970s. Historically, the current appearance of the site as an open pasture field is of relatively recent origin; historic mapping and aerial photographs clearly show that the site was occupied by several tree-lined and hedged enclosures dating back at least to the beginning of the 19th century and there is potential for the proposed development to restore (in some part) the historic landscape character of the site prior to the considerable changes made during the 1970s.

Plate 11: View SSE from the Jubilee Monument on the outer rampart of the hillfort towards the proposal site

- *Battleborough Farmhouse (Grade II)*

Views looking WSW from the site towards Battleborough Farmhouse are limited by the tree-lined hedge boundary along the SW edge of the site, which is to be enhanced as part of the proposed development. There are also several outbuildings to the rear of the listed farmhouse which further limit visibility of the site, although there may be views from the upper floor of the house. The farmhouse is intervisible with the development site in views looking SE and SSE from the outer rampart of Brent Knoll hillfort and it is considered that the development will result in a change to the wider landscape setting of the listed farmhouse as experienced from this vantage point. Based on the above assessment, the magnitude of impact can be assessed as **Minor**; the immediate setting of the farmhouse will not be directly affected although there will be an impact on its wider setting.

7.4 Overall Conclusions

The Heritage Statement has reached the following overall conclusions regarding the potential and significance of the archaeological and built heritage resource within the specific study area, which may be summarised thus:

- *Brent Knoll hillfort and associated field system*

The impact of the proposed development on the setting of Brent Knoll hillfort has been assessed in overall terms as **Moderate+ Adverse**. This assessment takes into account the **Very High** importance of the hillfort as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, representing a fine example of a large univallate hillfort of Iron Age origin which appears to have continued in occupation during the Roman period and possibly the early medieval period and has noteworthy associations with Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian legend, cross-referenced against the magnitude of impact, assessed as **Minor to-Moderate.**

It is considered that the proposed multi-use building, while screened to a certain extent by the belt of woodland to the immediate S of the modern bungalow and outbuildings at Upper Battleborough Farm, would still be partially discernible in views looking SE and SSE from the outer rampart of the hillfort and the roofline of the new building would almost certainly be visible in these views.

It may be argued that this visibility could be further reduced by enhancement of the woodland boundary to the S of Upper Battleborough Farm or reduction in the ridge height of the building. It may be noted that historically there was an orchard enclosure to the immediate S of Upper Battleborough Farm which suggests a precedent for further tree-planting in this area.

The main hardstanding car park proposed within the SW corner of the site, due to its low-lying location would be more clearly discernible in views looking SE and SSE from the outer rampart of the hillfort, although this impact would be mitigated by the proposed tree-planting and swales.

Views looking NW from the A38 towards the hillfort would be more noticeably affected by the construction of the proposed multi-use building and associated car parking which would represent an intrusive new element appearing in the foreground of these views. It is suggested that the tree and hedge planting proposed for the car parking area should soften these impacts and ideally should reflect the form of the tree-lined hedge boundaries which were present within the site prior to their removal during the 1970s.

- *Battleborough Farmhouse*

The overall impact on the Grade II listed Battleborough Farmhouse can be assessed as **Slight to Moderate Adverse**, based on a cross-referencing of the **High** importance of the farmhouse as a 17th century dwelling with 18th/early 19th century alterations which has retained significant evidence of original fabric, against the magnitude of impact, assessed as **Minor**.

Views from the site towards the listed farmhouse and vice-versa are mostly screened by intervening tree-lined hedges and buildings; however, the development will result in a discernible change to elevated views looking from Brent Knoll hillfort in which Battleborough Farmhouse and the proposal site are intervisible.

8. Bibliography

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9. Cartography

(All maps were obtained from Somerset Heritage Centre unless otherwise stated)

1782: Day & Masters' Map of the County of Somerset

1808: OS Surveyor's Drawing of Burnham-on-Sea & District (British Library)

1841: Brent Knoll tithe map & award

1886: OS 1st edition 25-inch map

1904: OS 2nd edition 25-inch map

1961: OS provisional edition 1:10560 map

1975: OS National Survey 1:2500 map

(Aerial photographs dating back to c.1946 were consulted at the Somerset Heritage Centre and the Cambridge University Centre for Aerial Photography)

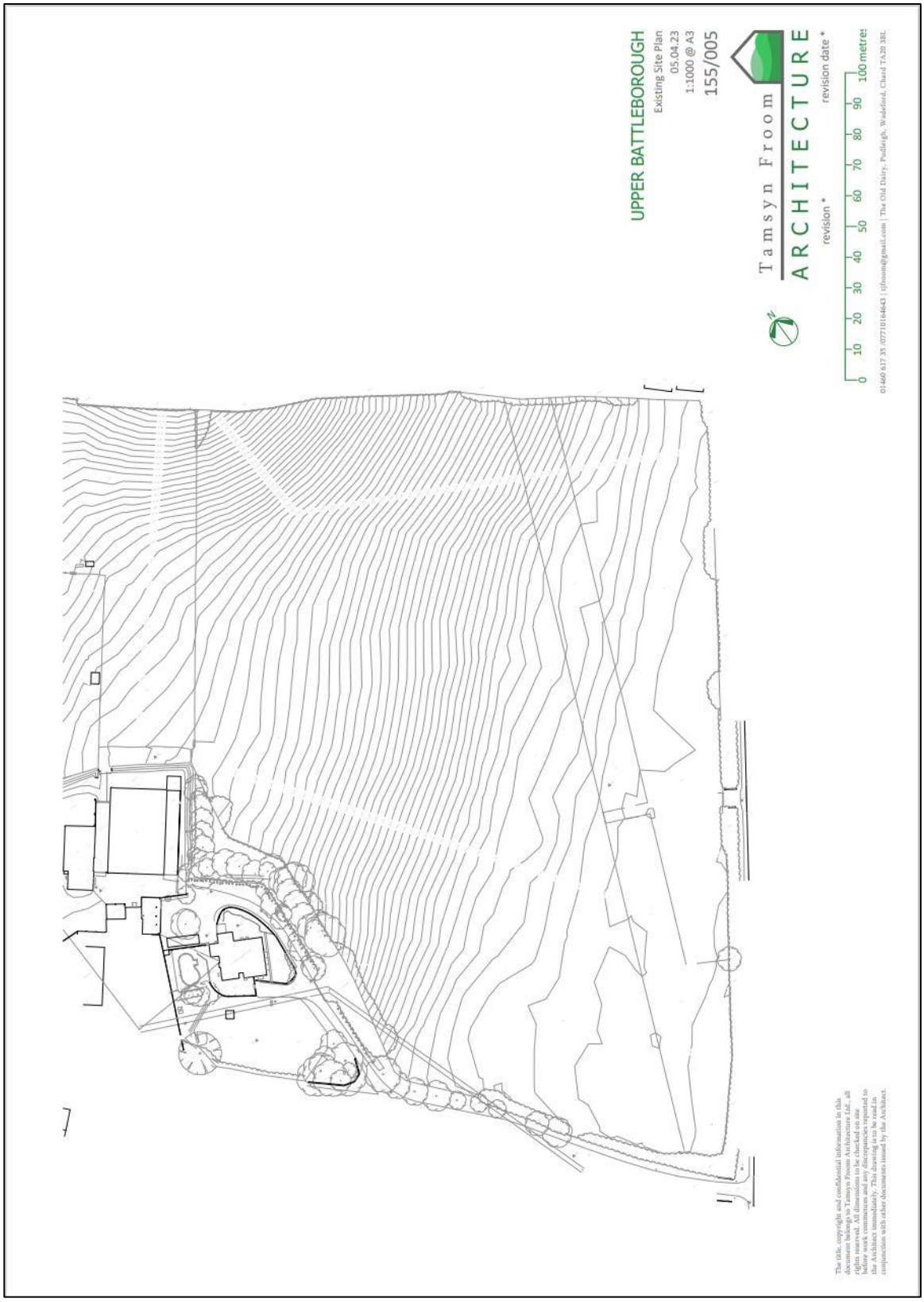

Fig. 11: Existing site plan
(Reproduced by courtesy of the client)

Fig. 12: Proposed site plan
(Reproduced by courtesy of the client)

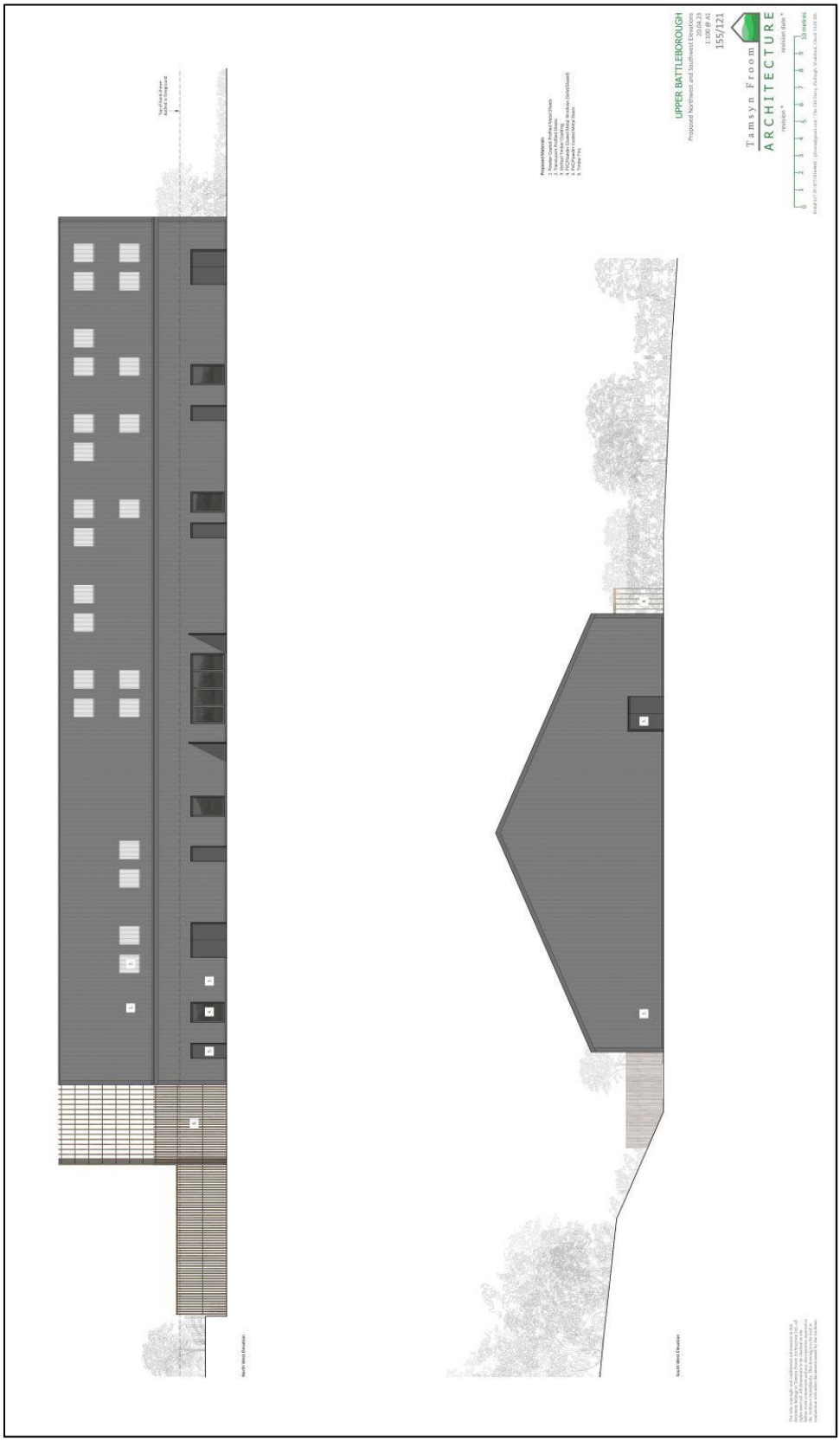

Fig. 13: Proposed elevations of café/visitor centre
(Reproduced courtesy of the client)

Appendix 1: Historic Environment Record – Gazetteer & Map

HER Ref.	Description	Date	NGR
11113	Brent Knoll hillfort, Brent Knoll	Iron Age	ST 34115.50986
11941	Hollow way, Brent Knoll	Iron Age	ST 34350 51087
11943	Trackway, Brent Knoll	Iron Age	ST 34320 51059
37481	Iron age and Roman enclosures and field system, South View Farm, East Brent	Iron Age/Roman	ST 34711.51271
10088	Roman finds, north-west of Battleborough, Brent Knoll	Roman	ST 34061 50591
10089	Roman finds, NE of St Michael's Church, Brent Knoll	Roman	ST 33610 50814
10479	Lakehouse Farm Roman villa, East Brent	Roman	ST 35589 50756
11747	Roman site, SE of Battleborough, Brent Knoll	Roman	ST 34526 50049
11942	Earthworks, NE of Battleborough	Roman (?)	ST 34580 50609
10081	Roman and medieval settlement, Smithfield Cottage, Brent Knoll	Roman/Medieval	ST 35022 50276
10086	Roman and post medieval finds, south-east of Battleborough, Brent Knoll	Roman/Post-Medieval	ST 34741 50099
10099	Roman and medieval to modern ditches and pond, W of Brent Knoll Cottage, Brent Knoll	Roman/Medieval	ST 34688 50769
10100	AP marks, N of Battleborough, Brent Knoll	Medieval	ST 34201 50521
10101	Medieval field system, NE of Battleborough, Brent Knoll	Medieval	ST 34512 50394
10082	Strip lynchets and field system, Brent Knoll	Medieval	ST 34046 51019
10455	Church of St Michael and churchyard, Brent Knoll	Medieval	ST 33535 50758
10485	Earthworks, N of Brent Knoll hillfort, East Brent	Medieval	ST 34169.51311
11152	Landscape remains, NW and E of Brent Knoll, Brent Knoll	Medieval	ST 33140 52996
18233	Settlement site, E of Smithfield Farm, East Brent	Medieval	ST 35458 50317
18234	Possible deserted settlement site, E of Smithfield Farm, East Brent	Medieval	ST 35296.50249
32120	Ninth-century and later settlement, Brent Knoll	Medieval	ST 33494 50696
29686	Medieval and earlier River Siger, Burnham and East Huntspill	Medieval	ST 34358 47656
37739	Ridge and furrow cultivation, SE of Battleborough, East Brent	Medieval	ST 34642.50135
10093	Medieval and later finds, W of Battleborough, Brent Knoll	Medieval/Post-Medieval	ST 34000 50272
10095	Medieval and later finds, S of St Michael's church, Brent Knoll	Medieval/Post-Medieval	ST 33514 50527
10488	Deserted farm, E of Smithfield Farm, East Brent	Post-Medieval	ST 35298 50571
11748	Axehead find, SE of Battleborough, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 34595 50226
12883	Eighteenth-century Turnpike road, East Brent to Churchill Rocks	Post-Medieval	ST 39178 53615
17091	Smithfield Cottage Site, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 35018 50287
17097	Milestone and milepost, A38, East Brent	Post-Medieval	ST 34941 51000
13214	Somerset Court, Harp Road	Post-Medieval	ST 34585 49414
13215	Battleborough Farmhouse, Battleborough	Post-Medieval	ST 34323.50189
13217	Croft House and garden wall, Brent Street, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 33983 49912
13221	Saddlers Cottage and Wayside, Brent Street, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 33620 50346
13230	Edward Symes monument, Church of St Michael, Church Lane, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 33553 50727
15995	Second World War slit trenches, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 34116 51019
17092	Milestone 50m south east of White Cross Farm, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 34017 49686
17093	Signpost, White Cross, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 34043.49769
17635	War memorial, Church of St Michael, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 33570 50733
17094	New Inn Beer House, Brent Street, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 33727 50221

HER Ref.	Description	Date	NGR
11940	Quarries, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 34202 51205
32734	Badgworth Court, Harp Road, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 34459 49427
47058	Manor House, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 33653.50692
48497	School house, Brent Knoll	Post-Medieval	ST 33544 50683
11801	AP marks, S of Brent Knoll	Unknown	ST 33983 49452
57141	Evaluation (2000), St Michael's House, South Brent	2000	ST 33482 50693
17474	Evaluation (2004), Sanders Garden Centre, Bristol Road, Brent Knoll	2004	ST 34335 49994
17268	Excavation (2004), Brent Knoll Hillfort	2004	ST 34172 50940
17753	Watching Brief (2005), Battleborough Grange Hotel, Brent Knoll	2005	ST 34279 50382
14082	Geophysical survey (2006), Brent Knoll hillfort	2006	ST 34142 51026
28231	Watching brief (2008), St Michael's church, Brent Knoll	2008	ST 33540 50744
36112	Geophysical survey (2013), Cheddar to Brent Knoll water pipeline	2013	ST 34685 50936
32166	Excavation (2013), pipeline, E of Brent Knoll	2013	ST 34694 51023
32806	Watching brief (2014), Westcountry Motor Homes, Brent Knoll	2014	ST 34003 49542
41328	Evaluation (2019), S of 2 Brent Street, Brent Knoll		ST 34047 49875
41451	Watching brief (2019), Brent Knoll pipeline	2019	ST 34743 51148

Table 1: Gazetteer of Archaeological Monuments and Listed Buildings recorded within a 1km radius of the site, based on consultation of the Somerset Historic Environment Record

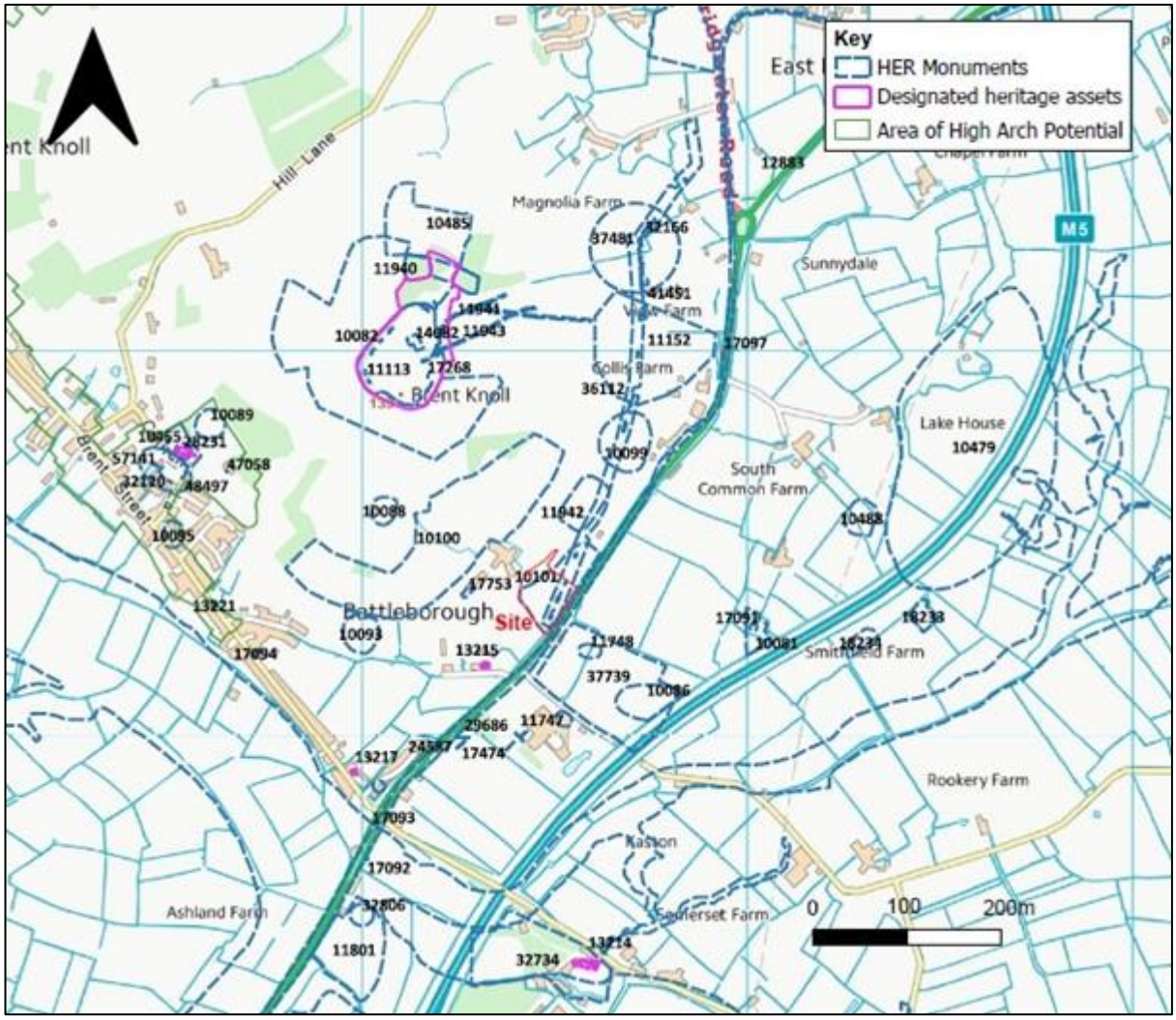

Fig.14: Plan of archaeological monuments and events in the vicinity of the site, based on consultation of the Somerset Historic Environment Record (1km radius)