

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK BASED
ASSESSMENT**

**RADLETT SRFI
ST ALBANS
HERTFORDSHIRE**

ROB BOURN BA MA MIFA

SEPTEMBER 2007

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**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
ST ALBANS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been researched and prepared by Rob Bourn and Kate Page-Smith of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Helioslough.
- 1.2 The assessment considers a number of parcels of land which lie to the south of St. Albans, Hertfordshire. These are:
- the former Radlett airfield, at grid reference TL 155 038 (Fig. 1 – Plot 1).
 - A parcel of land to the east of the Bedford to St Pancras railway, at grid reference TL 161 034 (Fig 1 – Plot 2).
 - An area of land immediately to the north of Radlett airfield, at grid reference 151 046 (Fig. 1 – Plot 3).
 - Land to the north of A414, at grid reference TL154 052 (Fig. 1 – Plot 4).
 - Land to the west of Park Street, at grid reference TL 146 030 (Fig. 1 – Plot 5)
 - Land centred on Smug Oak Lane to the south of the M25, at grid reference TL 144 022 (Fig. 1 – Plot 6)
 - Land to the west of Broad Colney Bridge, at grid reference TL168 030 (Fig. 1 – Plot 7).
 - Land to the south of London Colney, at grid reference TL 180 030 (Fig. 1 – Plot 8).
- 1.3 In accordance with government guidance on archaeology (PPG16), this assessment draws together the available archaeological, historic, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.4 The assessment comprises an examination of evidence in Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Library, St. Albans Museum Service and considers the results of any nearby archaeological investigations, incorporates published material and assess the historic landscape of the site and general area through a map regression exercise.
- 1.5 As a result, the assessment enables relevant parties to assess the archaeological potential of the site and to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and/or archaeological solutions to the potential identified.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

2.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning", providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains. In short, government guidance provides a framework which:

- Protects Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Protects the settings of these sites
- Protects nationally important un-scheduled ancient monuments
- Has a presumption in favour of in-situ preservation of important remains
- In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from field evaluation) to enable informed decisions
- Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not important enough to merit in-situ preservation.

2.2 In considering any proposal for development, including allocations in emerging development plans, the local planning authority will be mindful of the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, of existing development plan policy and of other material considerations.

2.3 The relevant development plan policy framework is provided by the Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review (1991-2011) adopted in 1998. The Plan contains the following policy relating to archaeology:

POLICY 25 – CRITICAL CAPITAL AND OTHER IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

CRITICAL CAPITAL AND OTHER IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS AS LISTED BELOW WILL BE GIVEN PROTECTION FROM DEVELOPMENT OR OTHER PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD CAUSE LOSS, PERMANENT DAMAGE OR SIGNIFICANT AND IRREVERSIBLE CHANGE TO THOSE PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS AND FEATURES THAT DEFINE THEIR SPECIAL QUALITY. THE DEGREE OF PROTECTION GIVEN WILL BE APPROPRIATE TO STATUS, ACCORDING TO THEIR INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL OR LOCAL IMPORTANCE. THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT, WHERE APPROPRIATE, OF THESE ASSETS WILL BE ENCOURAGED.

- vii) SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF BOTH NATIONAL AND LOCAL IMPORTANCE, AND THEIR SETTING**
- viii) LISTED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SETTINGS AND OTHER BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL OR HISTORIC MERIT;**

2.4 The Local Plan framework is provided by the City and District of St. Albans District Local Plan Review, adopted in 1994. The Plan contains the following policies relating to archaeological matters:

POLICY 109 - SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS

PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECT A SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, WILL BE REFUSED ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUNDS UNLESS PRIOR SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT HAS BEEN OBTAINED FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT. IF SCHEDULED MONUMENT CONSENT HAS BEEN GRANTED, THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO PRESERVE THE AMENITY OF ANCIENT MONUMENTS BY RESISTING PROPOSALS WITHIN SCHEDULED AREAS WHICH WOULD DETRACT FROM THEIR CHARACTER.

POLICY 110 - ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES FOR LOCAL PRESERVATION

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE REMAINS WITHIN, OR THE CHARACTER OF, THE SITES FOR LOCAL PRESERVATION AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP. DEVELOPMENT MAY BE PERMITTED IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FOLLOWING EVALUATION, IF THE COUNCIL IS SATISFIED THAT IMPORTANT REMAINS WOULD NOT BE DESTROYED OR THE CHARACTER OF THE SITE ADVERSELY AFFECTED. THE EVALUATION, WHICH MAY INVOLVE LIMITED EXCAVATION OR OTHER WORK (EG. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY) IS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNCIL OR AN ARCHAEOLOGIST APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL. PLANNING PERMISSIONS WILL NORMALLY BE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS REQUIRING FACILITIES FOR THE COUNCIL TO RECORD REMAINS BY EXCAVATION IN ADVANCE OF CONSTRUCTION AND/OR DURING CONSTRUCTION.

VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS WILL BE SOUGHT (EG. UNDER SECTION 106) TO COVER THE COST OF THE WORK, INCLUDING ANY INITIAL EVALUATION, AND TO ENSURE THAT FINDS MADE DURING THE COURSE OF SUCH WORK ARE DONATED TO THE COUNCIL. VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS WILL ALSO BE SOUGHT TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED PRESERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF IMPORTANT REMAINS.

POLICY 111 - ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES WHERE PLANNING PERMISSIONS MAY BE SUBJECT TO A RECORDING CONDITION

WITHIN SITES LISTED BELOW AND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, THE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL NOT NORMALLY REFUSE PLANNING APPLICATIONS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUNDS. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING EVALUATION, PLANNING PERMISSIONS MAY BE SUBJECTED TO A CONDITION REQUIRING FACILITIES FOR THE COUNCIL TO RECORD REMAINS BY EXCAVATION IN ADVANCE OF CONSTRUCTION AND/OR DURING CONSTRUCTION. THE EVALUATION, WHICH MAY INVOLVE LIMITED EXCAVATION OR OTHER WORK (EG. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY), IS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNCIL OR AN ARCHAEOLOGIST APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL.

VOLUNTARY AGREEMENTS WILL BE SOUGHT (EG. UNDER SECTION 106) TO COVER THE COST OF WORK, INCLUDING ANY INITIAL EVALUATION, AND TO ENSURE THAT FINDS MADE DURING THE COURSE OF SUCH WORK ARE DONATED TO THE COUNCIL.

- 2.5 The northern part of Plot 2 lies within an Area of Archaeological Significance: (A.S.R. 43) as defined on the Proposals Map. Part of Site 7 lies within A.S.R 37 and immediately to the west of A.S.R 44. Therefore Policy 111 applies. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Archaeological Sites for Local Preservation within the study site and therefore Policies 108 and 109 do not apply.
- 2.6 This desk-based assessment will enable both the archaeological potential and the potential impact of development on any remains that may be within the site to be

assessed. It will enable all parties to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and/or archaeological solutions to the potential identified and the relevance of the archaeological policies of the Structure and Local Plan.

3.0 GEOLOGY

3.1 Geology

3.2.1 The solid geology within the southern part of Plot 1, Plot 2, Plot 5, 6, 7 and 8 prior to extraction activities was Glacial Gravel. The northern part of Plot 1 is boulder clay and a small portion of the western part of the area is brick earth. The geology of Plot 3 is a mixture of Glacial Gravel, Upper Chalk and alluvium. Plot 4 is a mixture of Taplow Gravel, Upper Chalk, Glacial Gravel and alluvium. within the study site area comprises of Chalk (IGS 1979 1:625,000 scale).

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Timescales used in this report.

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000 – 12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 – 4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 – 2,200 BC
Bronze Age	2,200 – 700 BC
Iron Age	700BC – 43AD

Historic

Roman	43 – 410 AD
Saxon/Early Medieval	410 – 1066 AD
Medieval	1066 – 1485 AD
Post-Medieval	1486 – 1800 AD
Modern	1800 – Present

4.2 Examination of data in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HHER), the Hertfordshire County Records Office and various published and unpublished sources of a search radius of 500m of all 8 sites, indicate that the archaeology of the area is dominated by Prehistoric and Romano-British remains. This report, while considering all of the evidence, will concentrate on the Prehistoric and Roman periods. The location of sites mentioned in the text is shown on Fig. 2.

4.3 **Prehistoric**

4.3.1 A number of Palaeolithic artefacts have been recorded within the study area. These are a worked flint found during gravel extraction within Site 5 (Site 1 – HER 405). An assemblage of two axes, one implement and some perforated stones have been recorded immediately to the west of Plot 3 and 4 (Site 2 – HER 592). Single hand axes have also been recorded from the Old Parkbury gravel pit (Site 3 – HER 692, 693 & 1882) and to the west of Plot 5 (Site 4 – HER 9750, Site 5 – HER 9752, Site 6 – HER 9764). These are all casual finds of artefacts and while they are indicative of surviving gravels underlying the sites having some limited potential, most of the 8 development sites (except for 3 and 4) have been subject to extraction and therefore have zero potential. Sites 3 and 4 have potential for remains lying at some considerable depth below ground level.

4.3.2 From the evidence contained in the HHER, the area was occupied during the early Prehistoric periods. However, the dating and/or the provenance of many of the recorded artefacts is a little vague. A number of early Prehistoric finds have been

recorded within Site 5, an assemblage of residual Mesolithic and Neolithic artefacts (1 scraper, 19 blades and 8 flakes) were recovered with Iron Age finds during the excavation of a Roman villa ahead of gravel extraction on the west side of the River Ver c. 500m within Plot 5 (Site 7 – HER 2928, 4548, 9755). The same HER record notes a further 30 flint artefacts of Mesolithic-Neolithic date from 'Park Street' but there is no record of their exact location or the circumstances of their discovery. Two assemblages of undated, but probable Mesolithic-Bronze Age date were discovered on the edge, and within, the river valley in Plot 3. The finds at Site 8 comprise 4 flint implements (HER 4547) and the finds at Site 9 comprise of 24 scrapers, 7 knives, 4 awls, 2 burins, 5 retouched flakes and blades and a single core (HER 4546). The Site 9 assemblage is quite substantial and was found on a spur overlooking the River Ver which may have been a focus for settlement/occupation. However, there is no available evidence to validate this assertion.

4.3.3 Excavations at Old Parkbury, to the south Site 1 and the M25 revealed an early Neolithic boat burial containing a skeleton in a wooden box and remains of two other wooden containers. Adjacent were six post-hole built Neolithic round houses and associated rubbish pits containing Grooved Ware sherds (Site 10 – HER 6977).

4.3.4 A single pit with two associated post holes of Bronze Age date were recorded during the excavation of the Park Street Roman villa c. 500m to the west of the site (Site 11 – HER 603). When the records of the excavation were reassessed in the 1980's it was suggested that an adjacent scatter of post holes were probably contemporary with the pit and therefore, there are hints that the western bank of the River Ver was occupied at this time. A Bronze Age palstave has been recorded in Park Street (Site 12 – HER 9756) which was probably a votive offering in the river. A gold torc was reported to have been found at Parkbury in 1744 and a second one was reported to also have been found in 1748 (Site 10 – HER 2927).

4.3.5 The findings in Site 5 indicate that there was at least some Bronze Age activity in the study area. However, there is no evidence to suggest that such remains survive within Sites 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. There is a low to moderate potential for such remains within Area 2, 3 and 4.

4.4 **Iron Age**

4.4.1 During the late Iron Age the area shows increasing contact between the local tribes and continental Europe. Recognizable settlements usually took the form of

farmsteads, often in groups and surrounded by field systems and sometimes with associated cemeteries nearby. Coinage begins to appear in the southeast of England particularly in the area controlled by the Catuvellauni. Coin inscriptions show that "Verlamion" had a royal mint in the period from roughly 20 BC to 10 AD, producing coins on behalf of the king Tasciovanus, which implies that it was the tribal centre of the area.

4.4.2 During the early 1930s, a series of excavations were undertaken in the area to the south of the later Roman city, as well as within the City itself, particularly around the modern Prae Wood area to the north of the study site, where complexes of ditches and settlement enclosures and hearths were discovered. This was identified as being the Iron Age "oppidum" of Verlamion, with a habitation area in the north separated by a palisade or fence from an area to the south designated for livestock.

4.4.3 More recent work suggests that this interpretation was rather too simple, as it is now known that Verlamion covered a much larger area including under the later Roman city and to the south and west of the 1930s excavations. Current thinking visualizes the oppidum as a complex of open spaces, fields and trackways, interspersed with farmsteads, small settlements and cemeteries. The focal point may have been a royal building in the centre of what later became the Roman town where significant amounts of coin-moulding debris have been found. The type of settlement can be described as an "unenclosed nucleated settlement" carrying out the functions of a town, such as trade, administration and the like but with a particularly heavy bias towards farming.

4.4.4 The study site lies c. 3km to the south west of the oppidum within what is likely to have been a relatively densely populated and intensively occupied landscape. Evidence of Iron Age settlement in the vicinity of the study site was recorded during the excavation of the Park Street villa (Site 7 - HER 198). Hints of early Iron Age occupation comprised a number of early and mid Iron Age pottery sherds were recovered as residual finds in later Roman features as well as from a 'general Belgic level'. The implication of the 'Belgic level' deposits is that there may have been long-lived occupation on or near the site during the earlier Iron Age. The excavation revealed a late Iron Age settlement comprising at least two rectangular buildings which produced pottery, a 'slave chain' and three Iron Age coins. Occupation appears to have dated from the early 1st century AD and while it appears that the occupation may have been widespread, the majority of the deposits of this date were destroyed by gravel extraction with no archaeological investigation. A single late Iron Age coin

(c. 40BC) has been recorded at 24 Branch Road, Park Street c. 100m to the west of the study site (Site 13 – HER 9763).

4.4.5 An Iron Age roundhouse has been recorded during a watching brief in Colney Park (within area 7) (Site 14 – HER 7313).

4.4.6 Late Iron Age settlement has also been recorded at Old Parkbury to the south of the M25 (Site 10 – HER 4819 & 9707).

4.4.7 The area to the east of the railway and within the grounds of Napsbury Hospital is occupied by a series of undated cropmarks of presumed Prehistoric and/or Roman date (Site 15 – HER 6013 & 6014). These cropmarks have been designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance (A.S.R. 43 on the Proposals Map) and extend into the northern portion of the study to the east of the railway. Further features of a presumed Prehistoric date were recorded during an evaluation on the northern side of the hospital which are likely to be associated with the cropmarks (Site 16 – HER 9671). The presence of these cropmarks is evidence of an extensive area of occupation and associated activity both within and to the east of Plot 2. Although there are no records of such features to the west of the railway, it is considered possible that similar remains may have been present prior to gravel extraction.

4.4.8 On the basis of the available evidence, the study site and its immediate environs appear to have been relatively intensively occupied and settled at various times during the Prehistoric periods. Cropmarks of possible Prehistoric date are known within and to the east of Plot 2 and it is quite likely that there is an area of earlier Prehistoric occupation/activity within Plot 3. Gravel extraction will have destroyed any associated remains within the majority of the site west of the railway but where extraction has not occurred the site is considered to have high potential for Prehistoric remains.

4.5 **Roman**

4.5.1 The study site lies c. 2.3 km to the south east of the Roman town of Verulamium. Although the development of the town will have influenced the surrounding landscape, the details of the town do not have direct bearing on the study site and will not be repeated here. Watling Street, the principal Roman road from London to Verulamium, runs north south just to the west of the site and forms its western boundary at the southern tip beside the M25 (Site 17 – HER 4576). The road would have been a major focus point of settlement throughout the period. However, with the exception

of the south-eastern corner, it is considered unlikely that the study site contains any remains directly associated with Watling Street itself. It is conceivable that remains associated with the road may be present within the site margins.

- 4.5.2 Excavations ahead of gravel extraction to the west of the River Ver c. 400m to the west of the study site revealed the remains of a corridor villa comprising 5 rooms and a cellar facing east toward the River and Watling Street (Site 7 – HER149, 1469, 9796 & 9797). The villa also possessed a separate bath building, various outbuildings, a timber wharf along a palaeochannel of the River Ver and possibly an aqueduct. The date of the villa is a little uncertain but it has produced 1st – 2nd century occupation debris. However, two 4th century burials in lead lined coffins laid within flint walled enclosures have been recorded 75m to the north east of the Villa, thereby implying that the villa was occupied until at least the 4th century.
- 4.5.3 There has been a report of a Roman villa having been located within the northern end of Plot 1 (Site 18). This is based on some parch marks that have been noted on some aerial photographs. The origins of these marks are not clear. While they appear to represent some sort of former structure, they are convincing as representing a villa, although it is possible. A more probable explanation is a WWII airfield structure or just geological marks.
- 4.5.4 Excavations at Old Parkbury to the south of the M25 have revealed a Roman tile kiln and works (Site 10 - HER 2929 & 4838).
- 4.5.5 The cropmarks recorded to the east of the railway, partially within Plot 2 are undated (Site 5). However, it is possible that these are Roman in date and may represent a settlement that may have Iron Age origins but was also occupied during the Roman period.
- 4.5.6 On the basis of the available evidence, the study site and its immediate environs appear to have been relatively intensively occupied and settled during the Roman periods. The northern portion of the part of the site on the eastern side of the railway is known to contain cropmarks of possible Roman date and it is possible that settlement and/or associated field systems may once have extended across the whole study site. However, gravel extraction will have destroyed any remains within the majority of the site west of the railway but where extraction has not occurred the site is considered to have high potential for Roman remains.

4.6 **Saxon – Medieval**

- 4.6.1 There are no records of any sites or features of Saxon date within the study area. The site is beyond the nearby settlements that may have Saxon origins and therefore, it is considered to have low potential for Saxon remains.
- 4.6.2 There is a supposed deserted Medieval village at Napsbury (Site 19 – HER 1829). Its existence is only known through documentary sources and its location is actually unknown. It is possible that it consisted of scattered houses or possibly could have been at Broad Colney. Whatever is correct, it is unlikely to have extended into any of the proposed development sites.
- 4.6.3 The remains of the 12th century St John's the Baptist Church lies immediately to the east of Plot 7 (Site 20 – HER 4267). However, it is unlikely that remains associated with this extend into Plot 7.
- 4.6.4 The Park Street Pest House was supposedly constructed in the 14th century to quarantine Black Death victims (Site 21 – HER 7309). However, there is no evidence to validate this and it is considered more likely that it did not exist before the 16th/17th century. 61-63 Park Street is a late Medieval hall house (Site 22 – HER 9500). The only other record of Medieval finds is a hoard of 221 gold coins of largely Medieval date found hidden in Medieval cottages opposite Park Street Mill in 1886 and it has been suggested that this was related to a resting place for pilgrims visiting the Abbey at St. Albans (Site 23 – HER 9703). A forge associated with Park Mill since the 14th century is recorded within Park Street (Site 24 – HER 9701). The implication of the presence of these Medieval structures is that there was at least some sort of Medieval settlement at Park Street but this is likely to be quite small and would not have extended into Plot 1 or 5.
- 4.6.5 To the south of the M25, Old Parkbury was a Manorial house (Site 25 – HER 9704, 9705 & 0706). Remains associated with this site are will not have extended into any of the proposed development sites.
- 4.6.6 On the basis of the available evidence, the 8 proposed development plots are considered to have low potential for Medieval remains.

4.7 **Post-Medieval**

4.7.1 An account of the Post-Medieval period of the development site is considered in detail in the Historic Landscape Assessment report (CgMs November 2004) and therefore, will not be considered within this report.

4.8 **Modern**

4.8.1 For Plots 1, 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8, the modern period is characterised by mineral extraction undertaken since WWII. Prior to this, Plot 1 contained Radlett Aerodrome which was built in 1930. The land was purchased in 1929 by Handley Page Ltd and by 1930 Radlett Aerodrome was opened for the assembly and testing of aircraft (HER 9905). Previously Handley Page Ltd had manufactured, assembled and tested aircraft at Cricklewood. However, when Radlett Aerodrome opened, operations were reduced to the manufacture of parts and as a result, Cricklewood Airfield was sold. At Radlett Aerodrome hangars were built along Watlington Street at Colney Street to the south of Plot 1. In 1941 flight sheds were built at Park Street (to the west of Plot 1) and the airfield was extended north which required Stroud Wood to be felled and levelled. In the late 1950's and early 1960's new factories were built at Colney Street (south of the study site) and in 1966 all the Cricklewood production moved to Radlett. The layout of the airfield in 1960 is shown in Figure 3. However, in 1970 Handley Page Ltd went into liquidation and by September of that year the final clearance of the factories (to the south of Plot 1) ready for the sale of the airfield, was completed.

4.8.2 During the period Handley Page Ltd operated at Radlett Aerodrome, they produced and tested a number of aircraft designs including the HP38 bomber, the HP50 Heyford, the HP57 Halifax and the Halifax MK1 bomber. During World War II a considerable number of aircraft were produced and tested at Radlett Aerodrome for the Royal Air Force. The aerodrome therefore, played a significant part in the war.

4.8.3 Between 1970 and 1990 the airfield remained unused and by the mid 1990's large areas of the airfield were quarried for gravel (Figs. 4 & 5). The majority of the structures, including the airstrips have been demolished or dug up and therefore, there is little remaining off the airfield within Plot 1. Any surviving structures within Plot 1 are of historic interest.

4.8.4 The recent land use of Plots 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 will be considered in turn demonstrating the extent of the gravels workings.

- 4.8.5 Gravel extraction at Plot 1 commenced after the closure of the Radlett Airfield. However, it is only on the 1999 OS map that the pit is depicted at which time it occupied the majority of the eastern half of the area (Fig. 5). Aerial photographs taken in 2003 show that the majority of the rest of the site had been extracted by that time and reinstated (Fig. 6). On later aerial photographs on Microsoft's Live Search website show that the south western corner of the site has been subject to extraction as there is a visible drop round the edges of the site with small bodies of water within the main part of the site that were not visible on previous photographs (www.local.live.com - these photographs cannot be reproduced here due to copyright issues). Therefore, with the exception of a small portion of the site at the northern end, any archaeological remains formerly located within Plot 1 will have been destroyed or badly damaged.
- 4.8.6 Gravel extraction within Area 2 commenced after WWII and by 1960 the southern most end of the site was occupied by a gravel pit (Fig. 3). By the time the 1972-8 OS map was published the majority of the southern end of the site had been extracted and the central portion was an active gravel pit (Fig. 4). The 1985 OS map depicts the whole of the southern half of Plot 2
- 4.8.7 Gravel extraction in Plot 5 commenced sometime between WWII and 1960. The 1960 OS 1:10,000 map shows that by this time extraction had occurred across most of the central portion of the area, including the Park Street Roman villa the site of which is marked (Fig. 7). The vast majority of the rest of Plot 5 had been extracted by 1975 (Fig. 8). Prior to the construction of the M25, the south western portion of Plot 5 appears not to have been excavated. However, the 1990 OS map depicts this area as being occupied by a large embankment which is likely to have been associated with the construction of the M25 (Fig. 9). Therefore, the whole of Plot 5, with the exception of narrow strips on either side of the River Ver have been excavated. This will have destroyed any archaeological remains within this area with the exception of possibly some riverside structures in the unquarried strip on the west side of the River.
- 4.8.8 Until the construction of the M25, Plot 6 was part of the large gravel pits in Plot 5. Therefore the recent land use of this plot is the same as for Plot 5. That is, extraction of the eastern portion of the site occurred sometime before 1965 (Fig. ?) and the western portion sometime before 1975 (Fig. 8) with the last south western portion being extracted sometime before 1990 (Fig. 9). Therefore, except for a very narrow strip around the southern, eastern and western edges, any archaeological remains within this plot will have been destroyed.

- 4.8.9 In Plot 7 gravel extraction took place sometime between 1978 and 1985 (Fig. 12 and 13). Although the edges of the pit are not shown on any of the OS maps, the disappearance of all of the field boundaries on the 1985 map is indicative of an extensive quarry. The 1985-1990 OS map shows that the stream that forms of the northern and western boundary of the site had been moved where it is adjacent to the M25 which will have destroyed any remains in the south western tip of the site.
- 4.8.10 Extraction in Plot 8 commenced in the north eastern and south western corner by 1951 (Fig. 10). By 1960 the two pits had expanded considerably (Fig. 11). By the time the next OS map was published (1972-8), the gravel pits had extended across the rest of the site (Fig. 12). Therefore, any archaeological remains that may have been located within this area will have been destroyed.

5.0 SITE CONDITIONS AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Site Conditions

5.1.1 The site was inspected on 29th September 2004.

5.1.2 Plot 1 is currently farmland with a number of ponds which are the remnants of gravel extraction. The line of the former runway at the northern end still survives with the strips either side being grassland. There do not appear to be any airfield related structures surviving but it is possible that some minor elements may survive. Plot 2 is grassland. Plot 3 is grassland with the River Ver crossing north east – south west across the site. Plot 4 is farmland and water meadow. Plot 5 is farm land and scrubland with a number of ponds which are remnants of the gravel extraction. Plot 6 is farmland. Plot 7 is farmland. Lot 8 is farmland.

5.2 The Proposed Development & Potential Archaeological Impacts

5.2.1 The proposed development comprises the construction of a railway distribution centre consisting of 5 large warehouse units located within Plot 1 to the west of the railway within land that has been subject to previous gravel extraction. The warehouses will be served by a new railway track which will leave the existing railway within Plot 2 and traverse across the land to the east of the railway and cross the railway into Plot 1 roughly mid-way along the eastern boundary. An access road will be run from the A414 immediately to the west of Hedges Farm down to a roundabout at the northern end of Unit 1 and then runs down the western side of the SRFI and joins the A5183 beside the M25 at the southern end of Plot 1 (Fig. 2). Plots 3-8 are proposed as a country parks (Figs. 15-17).

Plot 1

5.2.2 The desk-based assessment has established that Plot 1 has been extensively quarried. The construction of the development and access roads within the former quarried area (i.e. the majority of the area in question) (Fig. 15) will have no archaeological impact as the quarrying will have destroyed any remains formerly located there. The parchmarks recorded at the northern end of the former airfield runway will not be impacted by the proposed development. These parchmarks will be surveyed as part of an on-going geophysical survey of parts of Plot 1, 2 and 4.

5.2.3 The gravel bluff overlooking the River Ver in the north western corner of Plot 3 has the potential for Bronze Age remains (Fig. 2 site 8). This suspected site lies beyond the footprint of the main development and will not be subject to planting. Therefore, any remains associated with the flint assemblage recorded there will be preserved in situ.

Plot 2

5.2.4 The southern end of Plot 2 has been extensively quarried (Figs 4 & 5). This will have destroyed any archaeological remains in that area. The northern end of Plot 2 has not been quarried. Cropmarks of settlement and field system remains of Prehistoric and/or Romano-British dates are known to the east of the area and may extend into Plot 2. If such remains survive within Plot 2, the construction of the railway will impact upon them. The majority of the area will be built up prior to tree planting and the excavation of a number of ponds (Fig. 15). Due to levels being raised, landscaping, tree planting and the creation of the ponds will have no archaeological impacts. The unquarried area of Plot 2 be included as part of the on-going geophysical survey and reported upon elsewhere.

Plot 3

5.2.5 A small assemblage of flints are recorded within Plot 3 (Site 9). These are located away from any proposed tree planting and therefore any associated remains will not be impacted. Proposed planting within this area is mainly focussed on the edges where there are no recorded remains. Therefore, the proposed development will have no archaeological impact in Plot 3 (Fig. 18)

Plot 4

5.2.6 Plot 4 contains no known archaeological remains. The geophysical survey of this area has revealed no significant archaeological remains in this area. Therefore, the proposed planting will have no significant archaeological impact (Fig. 19)

Plot 5

5.2.7 Although Plot 5 is known to have contained a Roman villa and associated structures, the majority of such remains will have been destroyed through archaeological excavation and gravel extraction. It is possible that some associated remains could survive near the River Ver. However, proposed planting within Plot 5 is to the south and west of the former villa within areas that have been extensively quarried and therefore there will be no archaeological impact in Plot 5 (Fig. 16).

Plot 6

5.2.8 Plot 6 has been extensively quarried with proposed planting being entirely located within the land filled former quarry pit (Fig. 16). Therefore, the proposed planting in Plot 6 will have no archaeological impact.

Plot 7

5.2.9 Plot 7 has been extensively quarried with proposed planting being entirely located within the land filled former quarry pit (Fig. 17). Therefore, the proposed planting in Plot 7 will have no archaeological impact.

Plot 8

5.2.10 Plot 8 has been extensively quarried with proposed planting being entirely located within the land filled former quarry pit (Fig. 17). Therefore, the proposed planting in Plot 8 will have no archaeological impact.

6.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The desk-based assessment has established that although the proposed development site lies in an area generally considered to have high archaeological potential, the majority of the Plots have been extensively quarried. This quarrying will have destroyed remains formerly located within the majority of Plot 1, the southern half of Plot 2 and plots 5, 6, 7 and 8. Geophysical survey of Plot 4 has revealed no anomalies interpreted as representing significant archaeological remains. Plot 1 contains an assemblage of Prehistoric flints in the north western corner on a bluff overlooking the River Ver. A small assemblage of flints has been recorded in Plot 3. The most significant remains recorded within the proposed development site is a major villa within Plot 5, which has been destroyed through archaeological excavation and gravel extraction. Radlett Aerodrome formerly occupied Plot 1. The airfield has been demolished and removed through quarrying activity.
- 6.2 Should any airfield structures survive within Plot 1, the proposed development may impact upon them. The flint assemblage recorded within area will be beyond the main development and will not be subject to planting. Therefore, archaeological impacts within Plot 1 will be limited very limited and only upon remains of local importance. The construction of the railway line through Plot 2 may impact upon archaeological remains should they survive within the northern part of the site. The majority of Plot 2 will be built up prior to the construction of a number of ponds and planting and therefore, the landscaping proposals will have no archaeological impact. The proposed planting within Plot 3 will avoid all known archaeological remains (a small flint assemblage) and therefore the proposed development will have no archaeological impacts. There are no known remains within Plot 4, therefore the planting in this area will have no archaeological impacts. Plots, 5, 6, 7 and 8 have all been subject to previous extensive gravel quarrying and subsequent land fill which will have removed all remains within in them. It is possible that some remains associated with the villa in Plot 5 may survive beside the River Ver. The proposed planting in all of these areas will be within former quarry areas and therefore will have no archaeological impacts. There is no proposed planting in the area of the former Roman villa in Plot 5 and therefore, there will be no impacts upon possible villa remains.

SOURCES CONSULTED

General

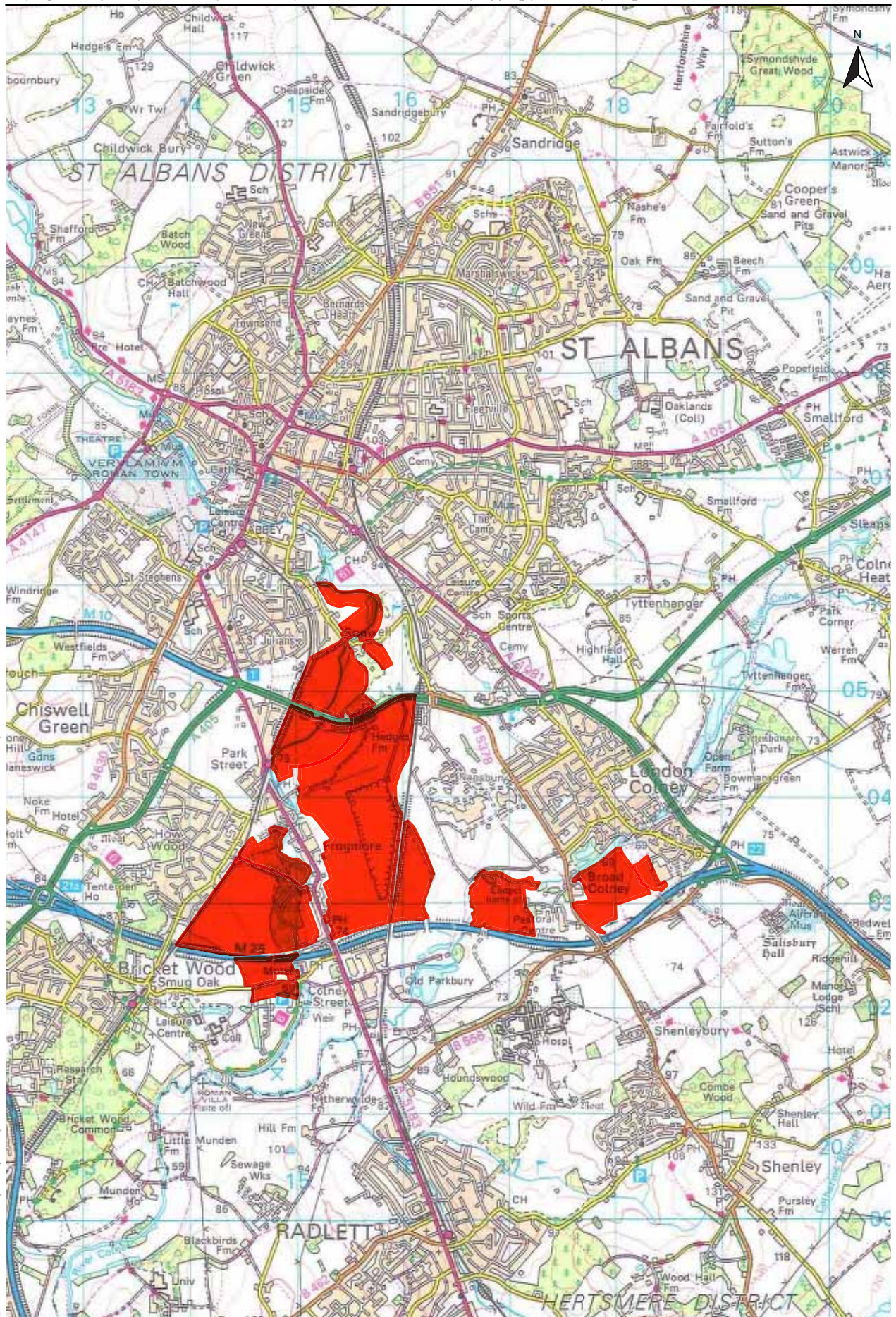
Simon West – Acting Archaeological Officer St Albans District Council
Ros Niblett – Former St Albans District Archaeologist
St Albans Museum Service
Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record
Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies Office

Bibliographic

VCH 1971. The History of the County of Hertfordshire. Volume iiiii

Cartographic

1766 Andrews and Drury Map of Hertfordshire
1836 Map of the Parish of Great Amwell
1880 Ordnance Survey Map 1:2,500 scale
1898 Ordnance Survey Map 1:2,500 scale
1923 Ordnance Survey Map 1:2,500 scale
1938 Ordnance Survey Map 1:2,500 scale
1964/73 Ordnance Survey Map 1:2,500 scale
1977/8 Ordnance Survey Map 1:2,500 scale



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Figure 1: Site location




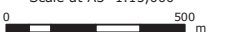
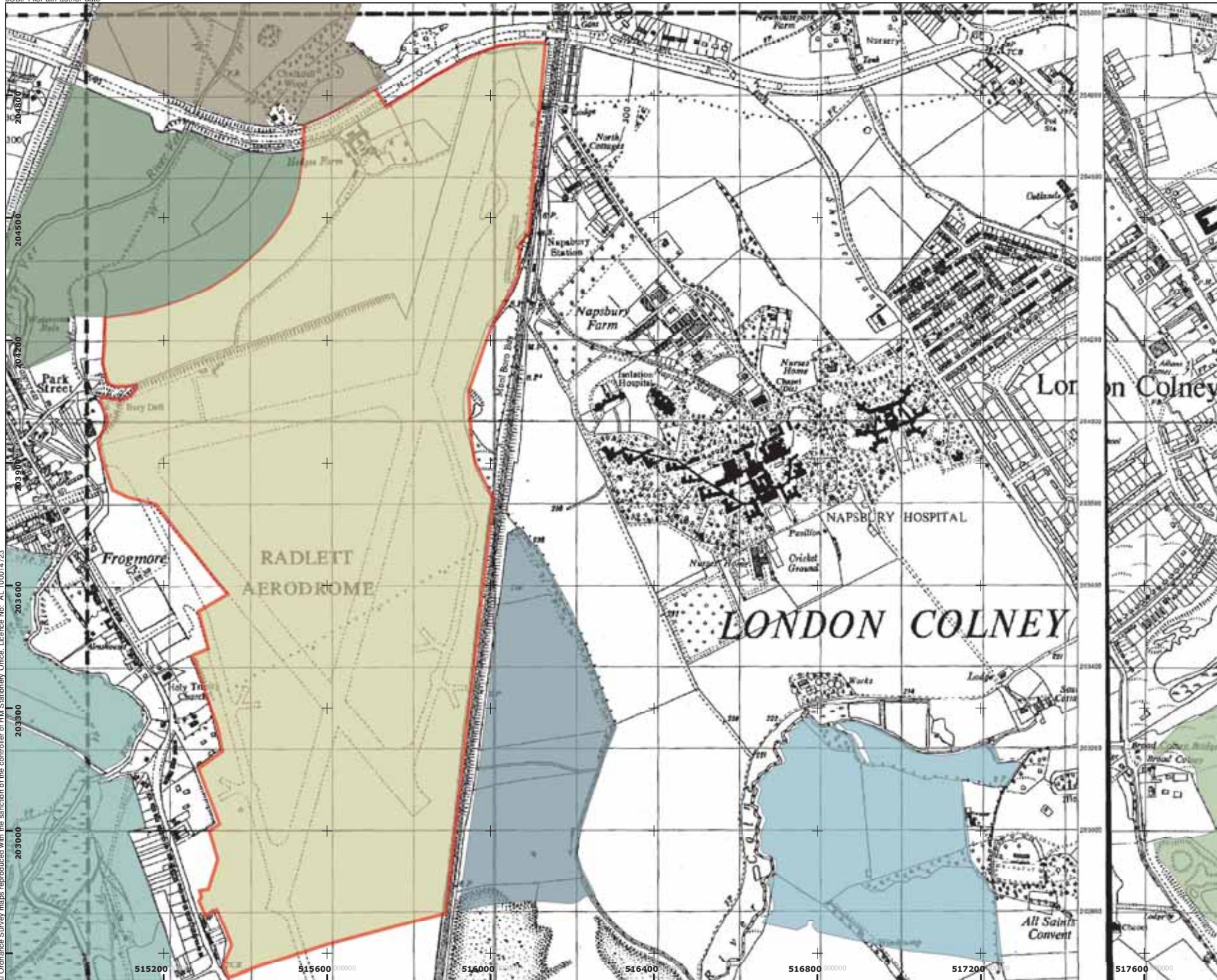
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Figure 2: Location of sites mentioned in the text



Key
Development Site Boundary

- Plot 1
- Plot 2
- Plot 3
- Plot 4
- Plot 5
- Plot 6
- Plot 7
- Plot 8




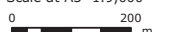
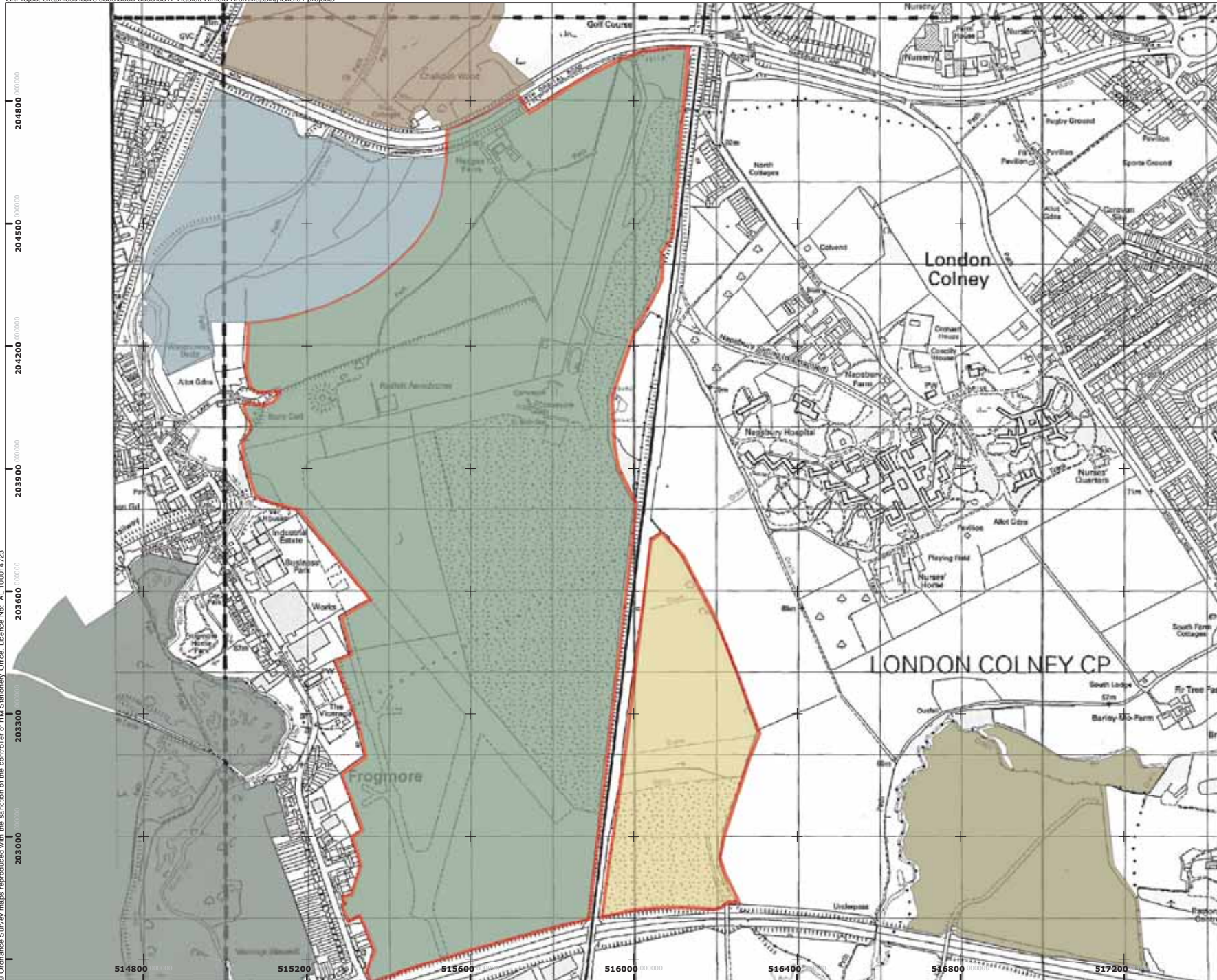
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Figure 3: Radlett Aerodrome (Plot 1) 1960



Key

Development Site Boundary

- Plot 1
- Plot 2
- Plot 3
- Plot 4
- Plot 5
- Plot 6
- Plot 7
- Plot 8




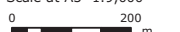
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Figure 5: Plot 1 & 2 Ordnance Survey Map 1999



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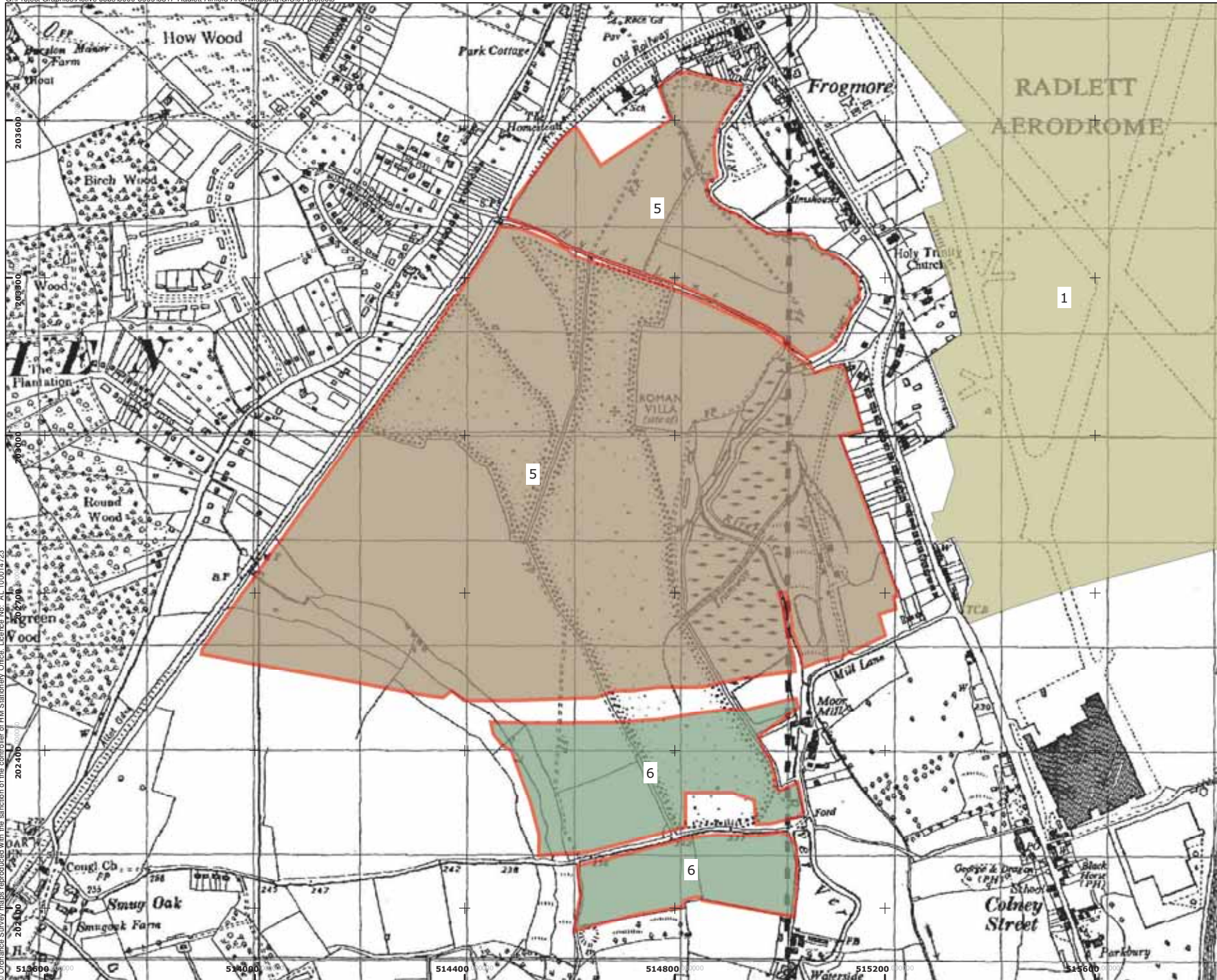
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Figure 6: Plot 1 aerial photograph 2003



Key

Development Site Boundary

- Plot 1
- Plot 2
- Plot 3
- Plot 4
- Plot 5
- Plot 6
- Plot 7
- Plot 8




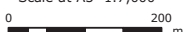
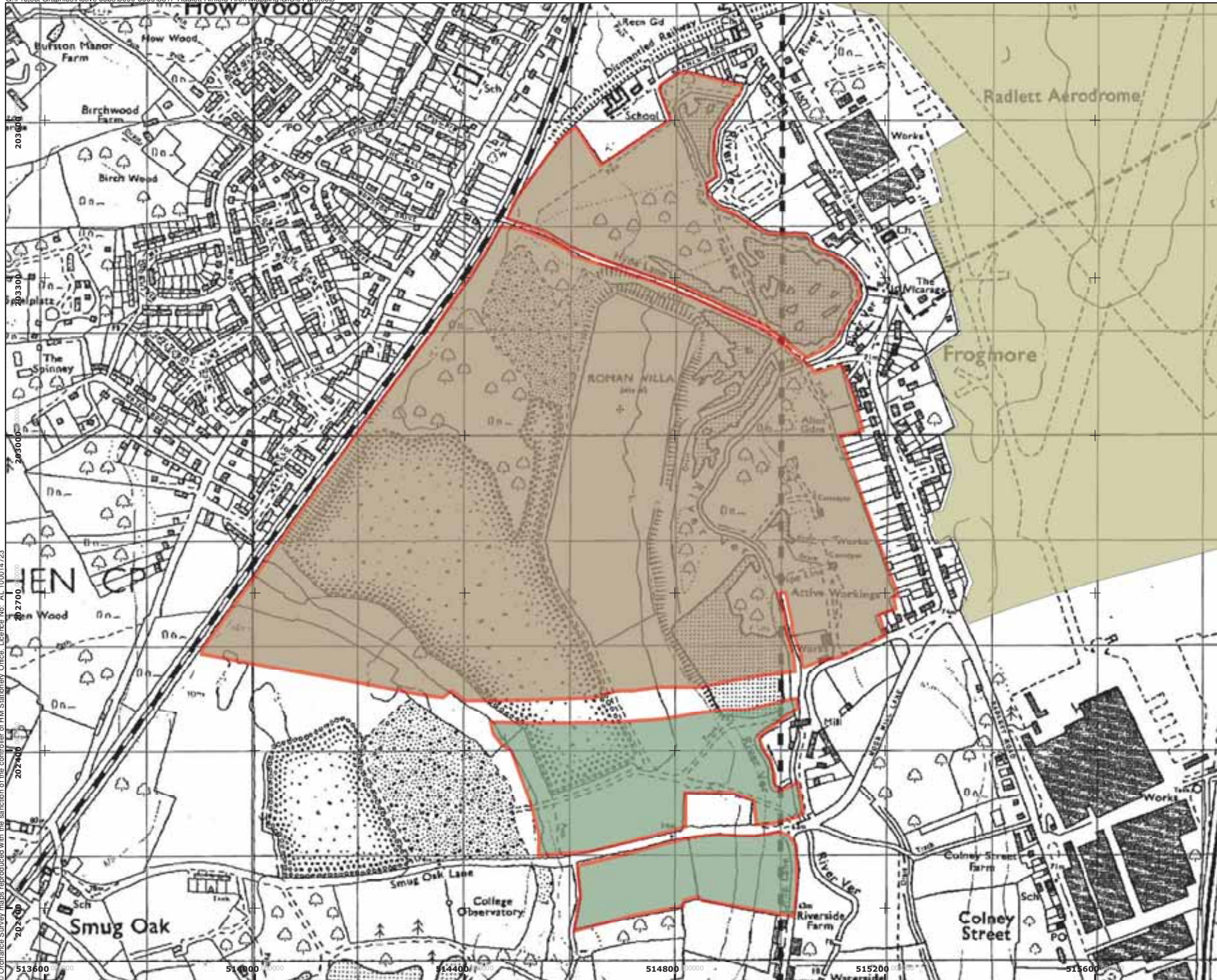
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Figure 7: Plot 5 & 6 Ordnance Survey Map 1960



Key

Development Site Boundary

- Plot 1
- Plot 2
- Plot 3
- Plot 4
- Plot 5
- Plot 6
- Plot 7
- Plot 8




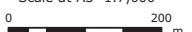
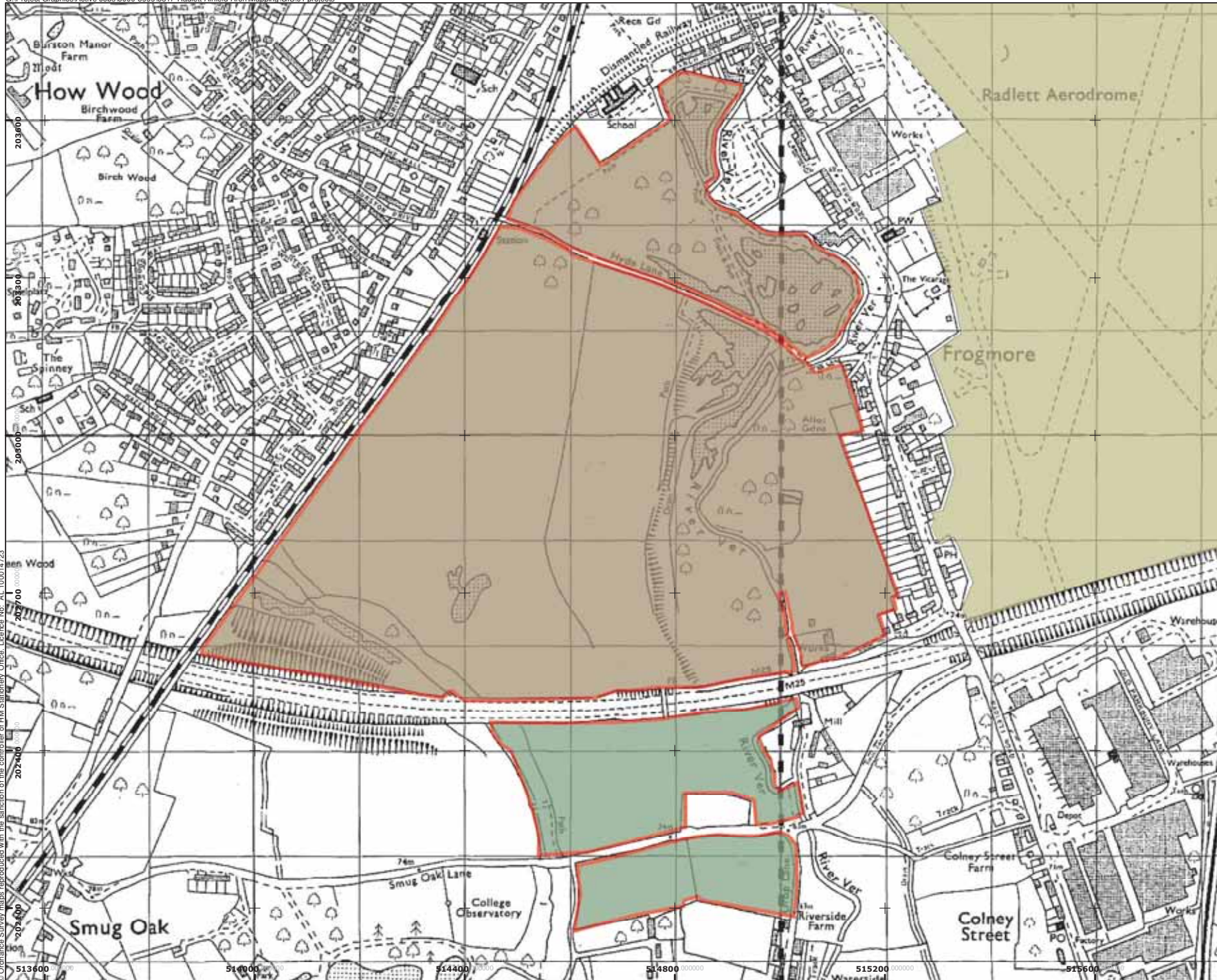
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Figure 8: Plot 5 & 6 Ordnance Survey Map 1975



Key

Development Site Boundary

- Plot 1
- Plot 2
- Plot 3
- Plot 4
- Plot 5
- Plot 6
- Plot 7
- Plot 8




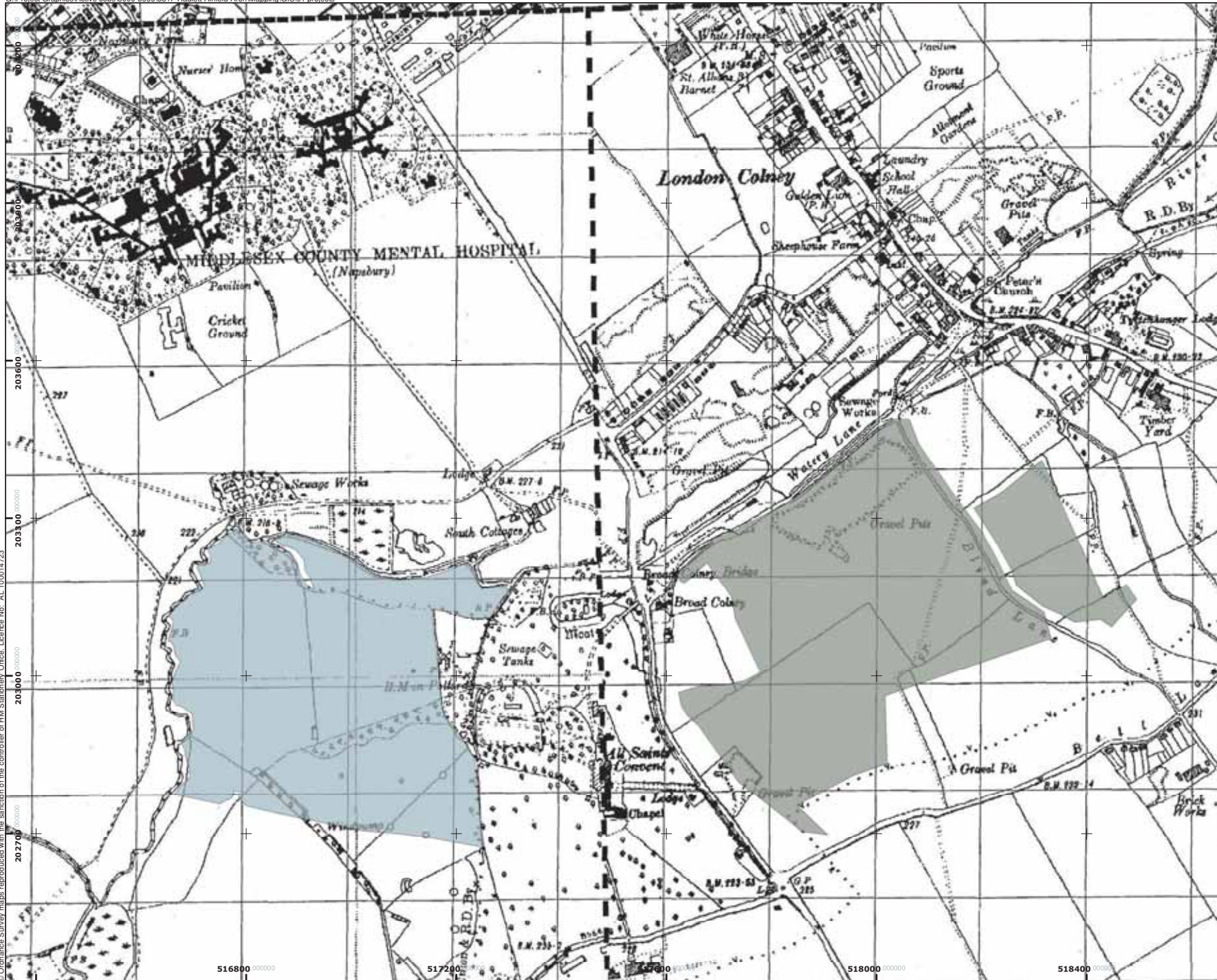
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Figure 9: Plot 5 & 6 Ordnance Survey Map 1990



Key

Development Site Boundary

- Plot 7
- Plot 8




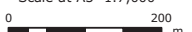
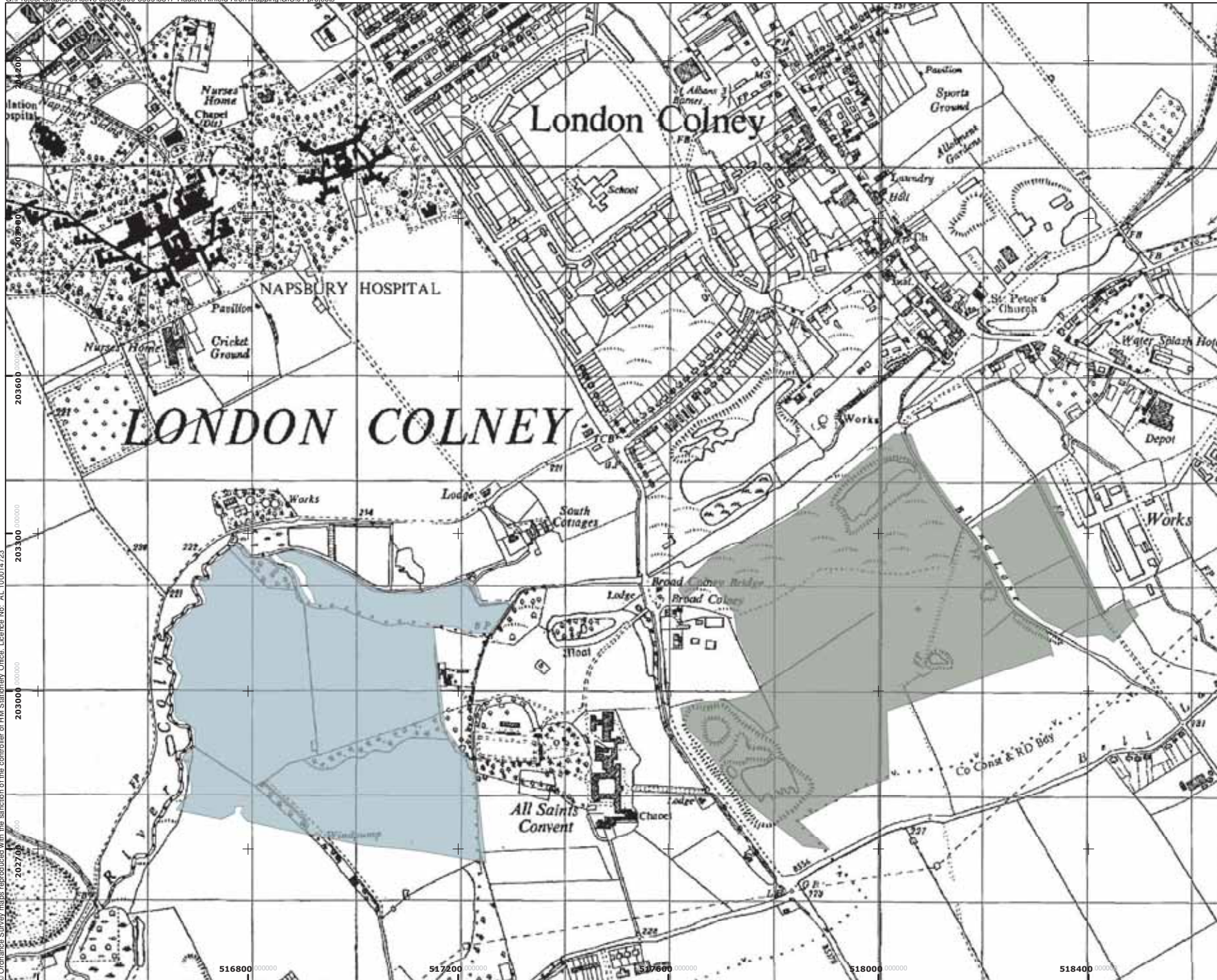
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Figure 10: Plot 7 & 8 Ordnance Survey Map 1951



Key

Development Site Boundary

Plot 7

Plot 8




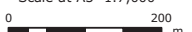
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Figure 11: Plot 7 & 8 Ordnance Survey Map 1960



Key

Development Site Boundary

Plot 7

Plot 8




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Figure 13: Plot 7 & 8 Ordnance Survey Map 1985



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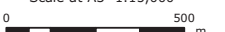
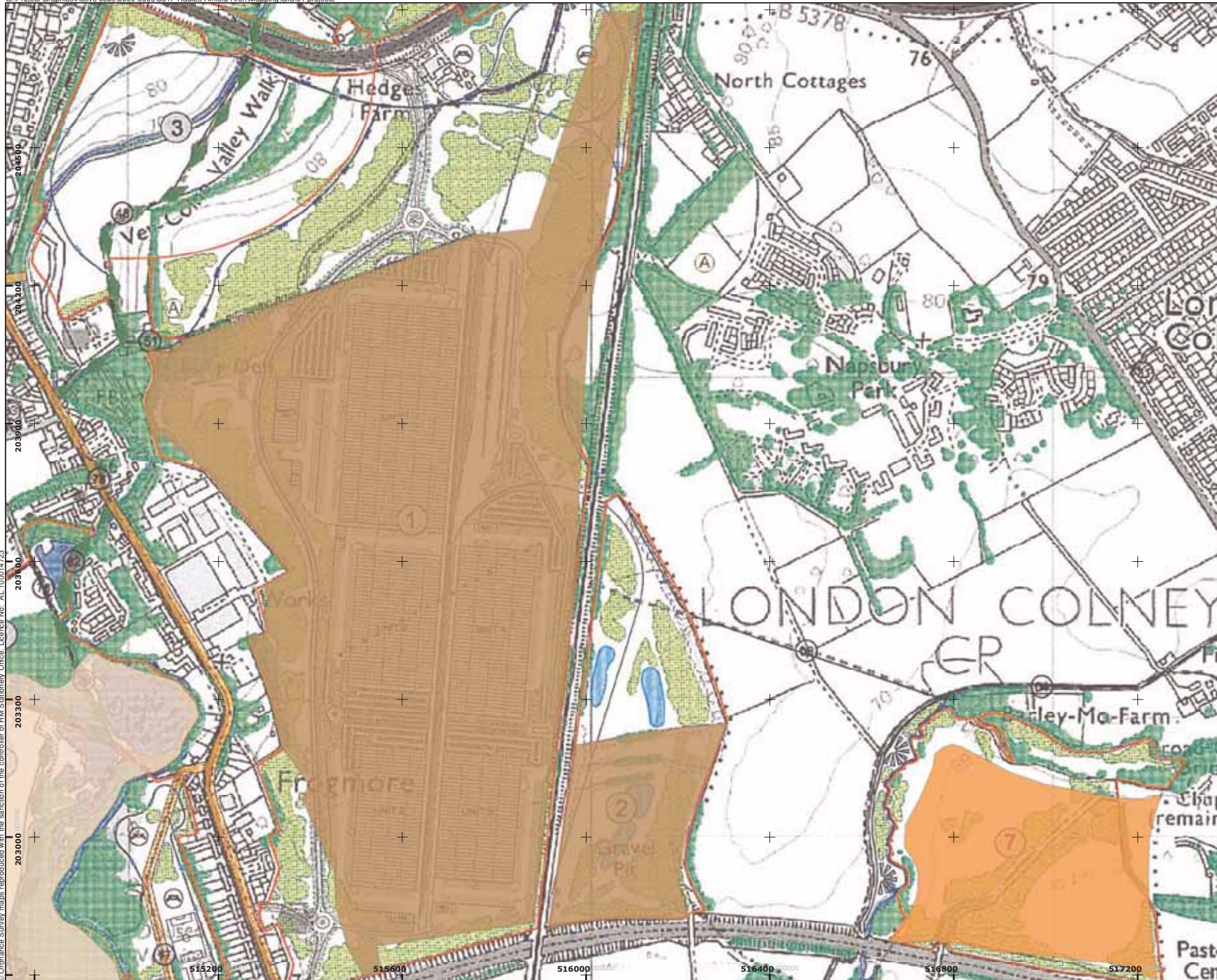
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Figure 14: Proposed development



Key

Extracted areas

- 1 & 2
- 5 & 6
- 7 & 8




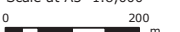
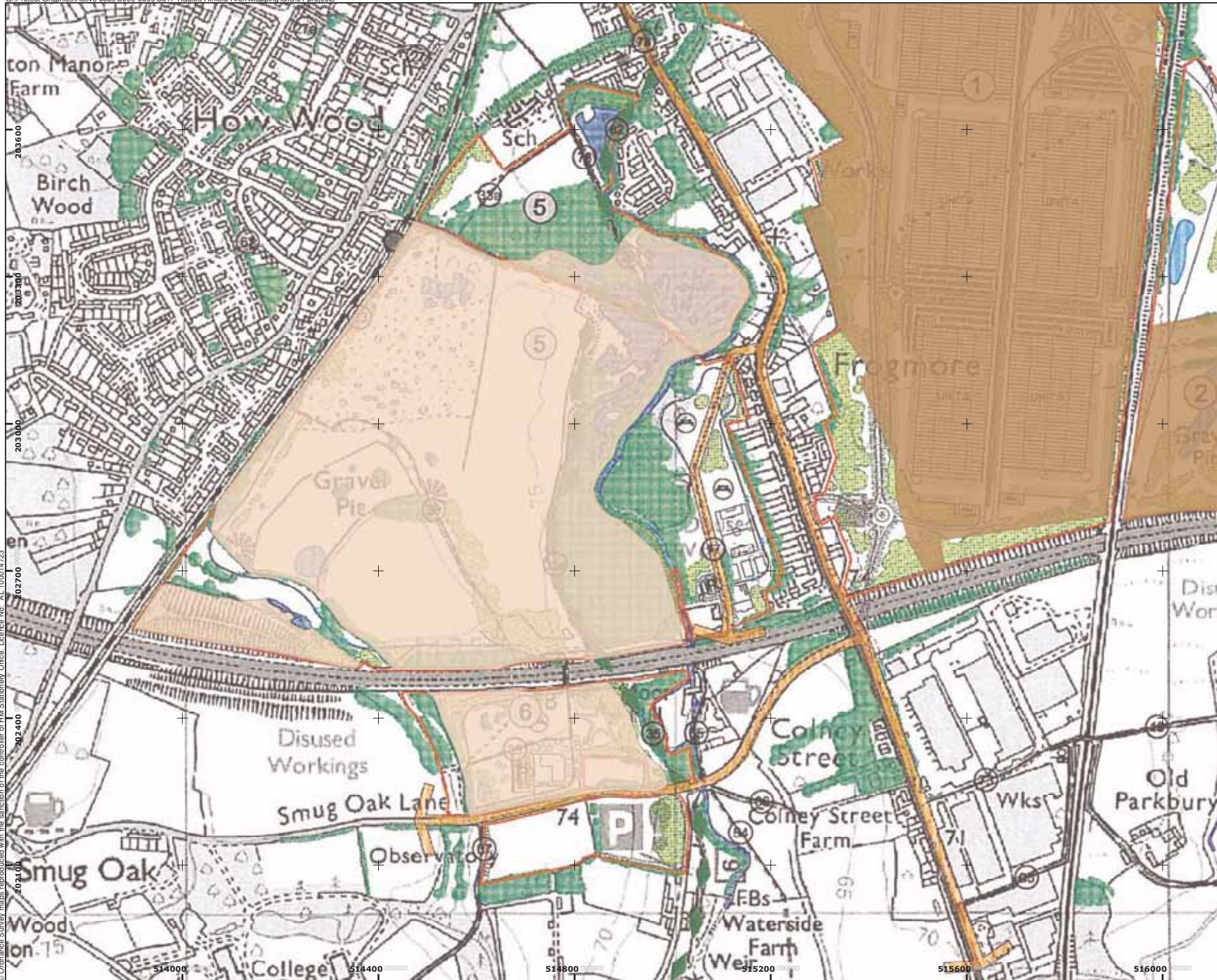
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Figure 15: Plot 1 & 2 - proposed development overlain with extracted areas



Key

Extracted areas

- 1 & 2
- 5 & 6





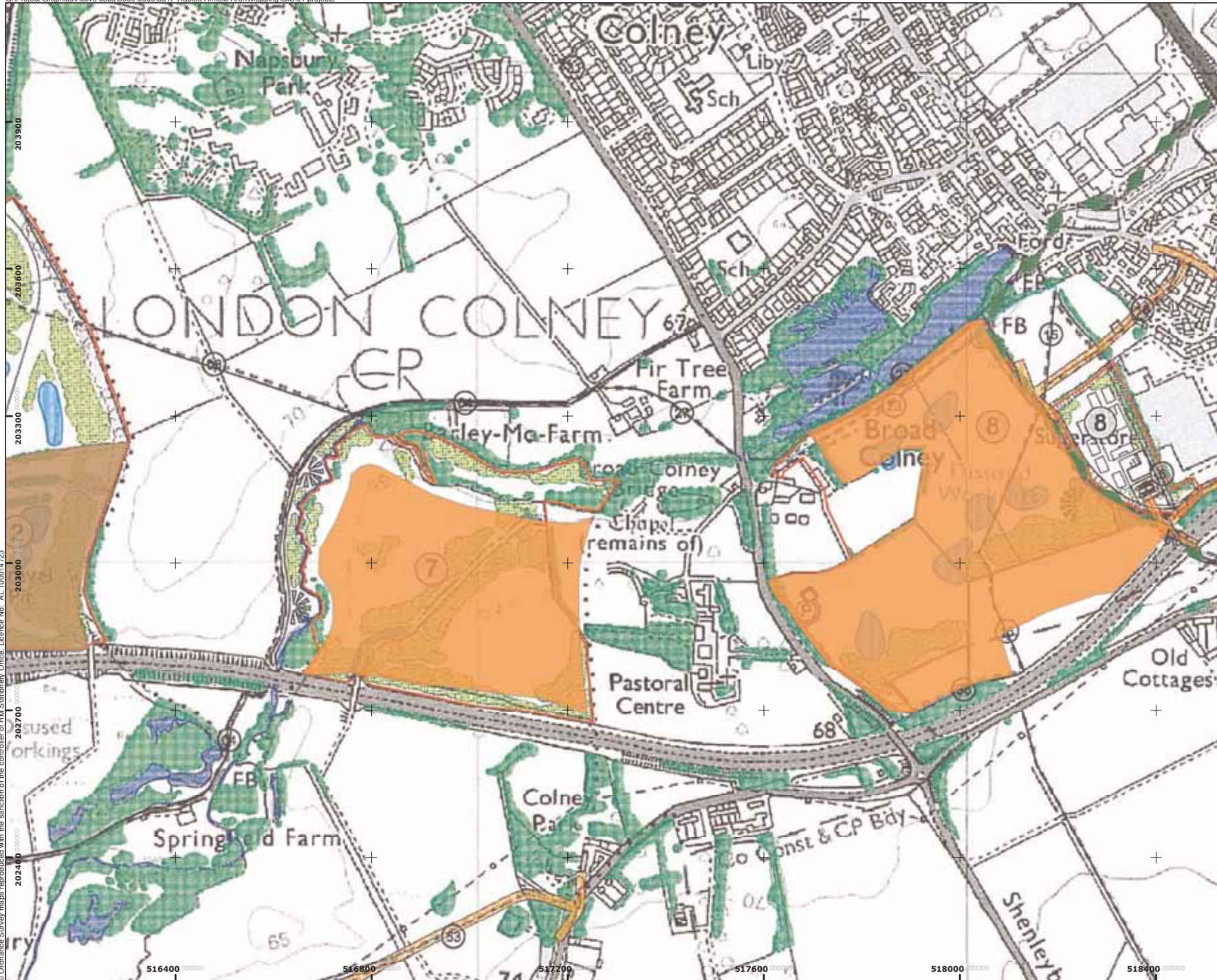
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Figure 16: Plot 5 & 6 - proposed development overlain with extracted areas



Key

Extracted areas

- 1 & 2
- 7 & 8





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Figure 17: Plot 7 & 8 - proposed development overlain with extracted areas