

Archaeology Wales

Womaston Castle Mound RD118, Summergil House, Watery Lane, Womaston, Powys

Setting Impact Assessment

RD118



By
Philip Poucher

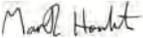
Report No. 1620

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Non – Technical Summary

In August 2017, Archaeology Wales was commissioned by The Interior Architectural Design Company Ltd, on behalf of their clients Orbis, to carry out an assessment of the impact of a proposed development on the setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (RD118) within the school complex at Summergil House, Watery Lane, Womaston, Presteigne. This assessment has been prepared as part of the submission of a planning application (P/2017/0653).

The methodology used follows the guidance and methodology offered in ‘Setting of Heritage Assets in Wales’ (Cadw 2017). This is laid out in a four stage approach.

Stage 1 identifies the historic assets, which in this case has already been agreed as the site and setting of RD118 (Womaston Castle Mound), a medieval motte and bailey castle.

Stage 2 defines and analyses the setting of the archaeological site. The main elements of the current setting of the site have been identified as the woodland cover, its location within the present complex of Summergil House School, and the presence of large modern agricultural sheds to the north. The main elements of its original setting have been identified as potential inter-visibility with Castle Nimble to the west, views towards Walton to the west and Ditchyeld Bridge to the east, and its relationship with a Roman road to the north, and Summergil Brook to the south. The presence of associated enclosures and/or settlement is also considered an important element, but this area is undefined. The main elements of its subsequent and changing setting have been identified as its function as a focal point for surrounding farmsteads, and its siting within the designed ground surrounding the Victorian country residence of Womaston House.

Stage 3 evaluates the potential impact of the proposed development. This development comprises twelve, adjoining, single-storey pods, timber framed and clad, adjoining the existing sports hall. The main potential negative impacts of the proposed development have been identified as increasing a sense of modern enclosure surrounding the monument, and affecting views to and from the monument to the west, associated with part of its original setting and subsequent setting within Womaston House grounds. However, the scale and appearance of the proposed development, the presence of more dominant features within the school complex and woodland cover on the site, suggests such an impact is considered to be Slight.

Stage 4 suggests mitigation measures. However, it is considered that appropriate mitigation measures are already in place and therefore no new measures are suggested. The proposed development does however offer potential offsetting measures. By bringing the monument closer into the school complex it offers the opportunity both for scrub and intrusive tree growth to be better managed, and also allows the site to be used as an educational facility, improving access to, appreciation of and understanding of the monument.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In August 2017 Archaeology Wales (AW) was commissioned by The Interior Architectural Design Company Ltd, on behalf of their clients Orbis, to carry out an assessment of the impact of a proposed development on the setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (RD118) within the school complex at Summergeil House, Watery Lane, Womaston, Presteigne (henceforth – the site), centred on NGR SO 26680 60554 (Figures 1 & 4, AW Project Number 2549).
- 1.2 This assessment has been prepared as part of the submission of a planning application. The local planning authority is Powys County Council (henceforth – PCC), the planning application number is P/2017/0653.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Assessment, which is detailed in the following report, is to provide PCC with the information they are likely to request in respect of the proposed development, the requirements for which are set out in Planning Policy (revised edition 9, 2016), Section 6.5 and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment (2017). The work is also designed to inform Cadw about the potential impacts on nearby designated archaeological sites.
- 1.4 Cadw responded to the planning application in a letter to PCC dated 27/7/17, requesting further information in respect of the proposed development. Within the letter Cadw state:

‘Welsh Government recently issued the document “Setting of Historic Assets” and it is recommended that the applicant should be requested to carry out an assessment of the impact of the development on the setting of scheduled monument MG118 [sic] following the guidance given in this document’
- 1.5 The proposed development comprises plans for the construction of auxiliary educational outbuildings. These comprise twelve, largely adjoining, single-storey pods, timber-framed and clad, with low roofs. The buildings will be attached to an existing modern sports hall.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 The methodology for this assessment follows the guidance and methodology offered in ‘Setting of Heritage Assets in Wales’ (Cadw 2017). This assessment also conforms to the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, as produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014).
- 2.2 This methodology sets out a four stage approach:

Stage 1: Identify the historic assets that might be affected by a proposed change or development and their significance.

Stage 2: Define and analyse the settings to understand how they contribute to the ways in which the historic assets are understood, appreciated and experienced.

Stage 3: Evaluate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on those settings.

Stage 4: Consider options to mitigate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on those settings.

- 2.3 Stage 1 has been established through consultation with Cadw, and an examination of sites recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record and historical research. As a result this assessment examines the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Womaston Castle Mound RD118.
- 2.4 As a Scheduled Ancient Monument this site, and its setting, is considered to be of High archaeological value. Following the evaluation of the potential impact, this impact will be assessed as either positive, neutral or negative. Positive or negative impacts will be described as severe, moderate, slight and very slight. Severe equates to a 'significant impact' in environmental impact assessment terminology.
- 2.5 This assessment has also utilised information from an archaeological assessment of the proposed development area, undertaken concurrently with this assessment (Hadley, 2017). As part of this assessment a site visit was undertaken on 20th September 2017.

3 Stage 1: Identifying the Historic Asset.

- 3.1 This assessment is primarily concerned with Scheduled Ancient Monument RD118 (Womaston Castle Mound). This has been identified through consultation with Cadw and research into historic assets in the vicinity. This site is further described below.

3.2 Site Description

- 3.2.1 Womaston Castle Mound is a flat-topped motte, *circa* 30m in diameter, and up to 4.4m high, surrounded by a water-filled moat. A detached line of banking around 147m long runs to the north and east, parallel to Watery Lane, which may be part of an original bailey defence. However the full extent of the bailey, and any features associated with this castle site, are unknown. The motte, and the area immediately surrounding the motte, are covered in mature tree and scrub growth. To the south, with the same belt of mature woodland, lies a pond, occupying lower ground adjacent to a brook that runs to the south. On the opposite side of Watery Lane to the east lies Lower House farm, comprising a stone-built farmhouse, backed by a range of traditional farm buildings. On the opposite side of Watery Lane to the north lies Upper House Farm, comprising a farmhouse surrounded by a large complex of modern large-scale aluminium agricultural sheds.
- 3.2.2 The proposed development lies outside the Scheduled Area, to the west. The proposed development site lies on the eastern side of the current complex of buildings that define the Summergil House school site, adjacent to a modern-built sports hall to the west, and poly-tunnel greenhouses to the east. The site occupies a lawned area on gentle south-facing slopes. A grassed-covered area of pasture extends to the south, separated by post-and-wire fencing, forming a generally open area to the south of the school complex buildings. This area is bounded on all sides by mature trees. Along the lower southern edge runs the Summergil Brook. Behind the trees on the eastern side lies the site of the motte and bailey

castle and an adjacent pond. The main access is via Watery Lane, which runs around the eastern and northern sides of the motte and bailey castle site.

- 3.2.3 Beyond the Summergil House school site, and the adjacent farmstead developments, the surrounding landscape is a largely mixed-agricultural one. The site lies within an undulating landscape known as the Walton Basin, formed by the three watercourses of Summergil Brook, Knobley Brook and Riddings Brook. The brooks meet approximately 1.5km to the east, forming the Hindwell Brook which continues eastward to eventually meet the River Lugg near Presteigne. The landscape opens out across the valley base to the south, through which runs the Summergil and Riddings Brooks. To the north the land rises in a series of low but prominent hills separating the site from Knobley Brook. The sides of the Basin rise sharply in a series of high hilltops. Evenjobb is the nearest nucleated settlement *circa* 1.7km to the north. The larger settlements of Kington lie 4.5km to the southeast, and Presteigne *circa* 6km to the northeast. The site lies within 300m of the English/Welsh border.
- 3.2.4 The underlying geology of the area comprises mudstones, siltstones and sandstones of the Wenlock Rocks formation, overlaid with Devensian Till (BGS 2017).

3.3 Previous archaeological studies

- 3.3.1 The Scheduled Area of RD118 has not been previously archaeologically investigated. The site was recorded in the Radnorshire Inventory after a site visit in 1911 (RCAMHW 1913). Within the Inventory the motte is described as:

A fine mount-and-bailey castle within the grounds of a private residence; consequently, the mound has been transformed into an ornamental feature. It still stands about 15 feet high, and its summit diameter is about 50 feet from north to south. The moat is eight feet wide, and filled with water, though this feature is probably an innovation. The enclosure is traceable at its furthest point from the moat, and the area thus indicated is so considerable that it is probable there were two enclosures, an inner and an outer, of which the latter is now the orchard, while the banks of the former have given way to the house and gardens. The area of the outer enclosure is about 1½ acres, and on the south and south-east its moat is still visible.

- 3.3.2 The Inventory also states that 'If the identification of the Domesday Ulfelmestune with Womaston may now be accepted, we have here without question the mount-castle of King Edward the Confessor, who held the manor before the Conquest'. However, Ulfelmestune has since been equated with Welson in Herefordshire, some 9km to the south of Womaston.
- 3.3.3 Running concurrently with this assessment, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the footprint of the proposed development area (Hadley 2017). Two 20m long trenches were excavated, but no finds, features or deposits of archaeological interest were noted. The evaluation demonstrated significant deposits of made ground across the site, up to 1.2m deep in places, along with a number of service trenches. Modern material contained within the made-ground suggest ground levels have been significantly altered, presumably associated with the more recent development of the adjacent Sports Hall and other school developments. No evidence of medieval activity was uncovered.

- 3.3.4 The only other recorded event within close proximity to the site was a photographic survey of the former Coach House building associated with Womaston House, undertaken in 2002 (PRN 95150).

3.4 Historical and archaeological background

- 3.4.1 Womaston sits within the Walton Basin, and this area has been subject to a study by CPAT undertaken in 2012-13 (Jones 2013). This study demonstrates that beyond the proposed development site and its immediate surrounds, the Walton Basin area has a rich and varied archaeological background. Large numbers of scattered Neolithic and Bronze Age flint artefacts have been found throughout the area, with a significant complex of Neolithic monuments a short distance to the west. The earliest of which would appear to be the Hindwell cursus, built at some point after 3950-3520 BC and before 2870-2247 BC. Two parallel ditches runs for 4.6km, and effectively divide the Walton Basin in two. Seemingly contemporary with it is the Womaston causewayed enclosure (lying *circa* 600m to the northwest of the proposed development site), dated to around 3660-3340 BC, lying on a low hill overlooking the cursus. After the cursus fell out of use three large palisaded enclosures were built, two at Hindwell and one at Walton, in the period between around 2800 – 2400 BC, possibly in sequence. A large ring-ditch, 100m in diameter, is also recorded at Walton Court Farm, dated to between 2570-2300 BC. Associated settlement in the area is likely, although direct evidence remains elusive. The surrounding area is likely to have contained cultivated land and managed woodland.
- 3.4.2 Bronze Age activity in the area is represented by scatters of flints finds, numerous standing stones within the basin, and a series of burial mounds occupying the high ground surrounding the basin. Iron Age activity can be seen in the large hillforts on high ground overlooking the basin, including the large hillfort of Burfa Bank, some 1.5km to the east (Jones 2013).
- 3.4.3 During the Roman period an auxiliary fort was established at Hindwell, *circa* 800m to the west, possibly during the early Roman campaigns into Wales in the 50s AD. A civilian settlement and a bath house have also been discovered nearby. Roman roads have been identified on all four sides of the fort. One such road has been traced leaving the eastern side of the fort, with settlement alongside it between the fort and a small stream to the north of Summergil Brook. The projected route of this road takes it to the north of the proposed development area through Upper House Farm. This route would appear to be represented by the farm track that runs east from Upper House Farm, and to the west towards New Radnor. Further afield a number of marching camps, signal stations and other activity has been identified. Little is currently understood about activity in the area following the collapse of Roman administration in the early 5th century AD. The only recorded monument of this era in the area is Offa's Dyke, which lies just over 1km to the east (Jones 2013).
- 3.4.4 A number of medieval castle sites are recorded in and around the Basin, of which Womaston Mound is one, reflecting the turbulent history of the area during the medieval period. The castle sites largely comprise motte and bailey castles, typically dating to between the 11th and 13th centuries. Many were built in the Welsh Marches, both to secure the local area and for use as a base of operations for incursions into Wales. Castles in the Welsh Marches did not require royal approval, hence the large number of such sites in the area. 1km to the northeast of Womaston lie Bogs Mound Castle (SAM RD057, PRN 311) on the banks of the Knobley Brook, and Barland Castle (SAM RD143, PRN 304) on higher ground 1.8km to the northeast. Just over 2km to the southwest lies Castle Nimble (SAM RD046, PRN 360) on the

banks of the Riddings Brook. Further afield a castle site lies at Evenjobb, 2km to the north (SAM RD058, PRN 301), Kinnerton, 3.5km to the northwest (SAM RD045, PRN 1071), Kington, 4km to the southeast (SAM HE174, PRN 350) and New Radnor, 5.5km to the west (SAM RD033, PRN 1075). Medieval settlements have been recorded at Old Radnor, close to Castle Nimble, Kinnerton, potentially in association with the castle there, and Kington. A larger settlement, subsequently defended by a town wall, was established adjacent to the major regional castle at New Radnor (Jones 2013). There is currently no clear evidence of settlement associated with the Womaston Mound castle site, although the RCAHMW (1913) suggest the site may have been associated with large enclosures and the motte had become a focal point for a small hamlet, comprising three farmsteads, by the late post-medieval period.

3.5 Map Regression (Figures 6 & 7)

- 3.5.1 Subsequent to the abandonment of Womaston Castle, the date of which is unknown, there is little recorded history of the site and its immediate environs. Subsequent maps of the area are typically rather general and do not show the castle site. It appears again on the Ordnance Survey original surveyors drawings of the Presteigne area in 1815. The map gives little accurate detail as to the layout of the site, but a circular feature is marked, presumably the motte, and Watery Lane takes a distinctive curvilinear course around the eastern side of the feature. Three farmsteads are shown clustered around the motte, on the roadside, all labelled simply as Womaston. These farmsteads presumably comprise Upper and Lower House Farms, and Womaston itself. They sit in an enclosed rural landscape, with a settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads and hamlets. Watery Lane provides the main access to the site, connecting the road through Walton Green and Lower Harpton to the south, and an east – west road immediately to the north, now represented by a farm track, but presumably running along the course of a former Roman road.
- 3.5.2 The area is shown in more detail on the Old Radnor Parish tithe map of 1841 (Figure 6). The section depicting the castle itself is missing, but it lies within a large irregular field comprising lower ground along the northern banks of the Summertil Brook. This field is labelled as ‘moat’ in the accompanying tithe apportionments, indicating the presence of the castle site. Unfortunately no features immediately surrounding the castle are depicted, although the line of Watery Lane can clearly be seen to curve around to the east and north of the castle. The farmsteads of Upper and Lower House are depicted to the north and east. To the west lies a courtyard arrangement of buildings typical of later post-medieval designed farmstead layouts, with the farmhouse possibly lying adjacent to the site to the southwest. Overlaying later maps would indicate the courtyard arrangement has since been removed, and now lies under the car park area of the current layout. Farmland surrounds the area, with field enclosures aligned on the route of the east – west road to the north.
- 3.5.3 The detailed Ordnance Survey map of 1889 (Figure 7) is the first to depict the site in accurate detail, but also shows a degree of change in the landscape to the west of the castle site. The motte is depicted, with some tree cover, surrounded by a moat and accessed via a footbridge to the west. To the southeast lies a pond, with both castle and pond lying within a wooded area of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees. To the west lies Womaston House,

this appears to be a new build in an area previously depicted as undeveloped on the tithe map. The main house has an attached range of buildings to the east, with outbuildings to the northeast. The courtyard arrangement of farm buildings depicted on the tithe map has been removed, the area now crossed by the main drive to Womaston House with flanking woodland. The original house may have been incorporated into either the attached range or outbuildings adjacent to the new house. Woodland also extends to the west of the house, and encloses the open ground in front (to the south) of the house. The field enclosures depicted on the tithe map surrounding Womaston House appear to have been re-arranged and removed to accommodate the new house and its grounds, with extensive woodland planted to the north. The remaining surrounding farmstead and field enclosures show little change from the tithe map.

3.5.4 The subsequent Ordnance Survey maps of 1903 and 1928, and even 1977, show little change to the site other than the gradual expansion of Upper House Farm and gradual removal of the planted trees in the field to the north of Womaston House.

3.5.5 This map evidence would appear to cast doubt on the description of Womaston House as a Regency period house (NPRN 31040), it would appear instead to be a Victorian house. The layout visible on the Ordnance Survey mapping would also appear to be the layout visible to the RCAHMW inspectors on their visit in 1911. Comparing their description (section 3.3.1) with the Ordnance Survey map (Figure 7), it is difficult to be certain which areas they are indeed describing as the 'inner' and 'outer' enclosures, and whether the proposed development site lies in such an area, as no obvious enclosure of 1½ acres, or orchard area, lies adjacent to the castle within the grounds of Womaston House.

3.6 *Extent of Scheduled Ancient Monument RD118*

3.6.1 As stated in the Scheduling description, the motte and bailey castle is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of medieval defensive organisation. The well-preserved monument forms an important element within the wider medieval context and the structure itself may be expected to contain archaeological information relating to chronology, building techniques and functional detail. The Scheduled Area encompasses the motte and its surrounding moat, along with the visible above-ground remains of the embankment that runs alongside Watery Lane to the north and east of the motte. This encompasses an area within which related evidence may be expected to survive.

3.6.2 As stated in the site description, the full extent of any associated bailey or further enclosures have not been accurately defined. To the southeast lies a pond, which, as is noted by the Cadw inspectors, is paralleled in other motte and bailey sites in the Walton Basin area (Knighton being an example). It is possible therefore that the pond is directly associated with the motte and bailey castle although its functional connection is unclear as it is located on lower-lying land on the edge, and possible within within the former floodplain of the Summergil Brook. It may also be a later creation within an original enclosure as it is likely to have been at least modified by 19th and 20th century landscaping associated with Womaston/Summergil House.

- 3.6.3 As noted above (3.3.1 & 3.5.5) the RCAHMW inspectors in 1911 considered that associated enclosures extended beyond the motte. They describe an ‘inner’ enclosure encompassing a house and gardens, and an ‘outer’ enclosure, 1½ acres in extent, encompassing an orchard, with remains of a moat defining the south and south-east sides. Despite these descriptions however, it is not clear exactly which areas they are referring to.

4 Stage 2: Define and Analyse the Setting

4.1 *Identifying the extent of monument settings*

- 4.1.1 The setting of a monument such as Womaston Castle Mound includes ‘the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surrounding evolve’ (Cadw 2017). As such it often extends beyond the physical boundaries of the monument itself. This may include physical elements in its surroundings, such as boundaries and other structures, relationships with other historic assets and natural features, or associated agricultural, industrial or other surroundings. Less tangible elements are also included, such as function, sensory perceptions, historical, artistic, literary and scenic associations.

4.2 *Present setting (Photos 1-8)*

- 4.2.1 The site itself is currently lying under relatively dense mature tree growth and scrub coverage. As a result the site is not readily visible or appreciated from any distance except in the immediate vicinity, and even within its immediate environs the height of the mature trees disguises the dominance of the motte on the surrounding landscape. The site also currently lies in a marginal area on private land, off a little used road, and therefore receives few visitors. The site is however well-preserved, but has the appearance of being enhanced and altered in association with the establishment of the nearby Victorian house and grounds. These now form a school complex, and the site is accessible for the school, and has the potential to provide a useful educational facility.
- 4.2.2 Large agricultural buildings lie to the north, and these buildings, along with the activities associated with them, provide the dominant visual and aural experience of visitors to the area. Similarly the school site to the west dominates the visual setting within which the motte is located. The mature trees that define the school and its grounds, which were established when the Victorian house was built and have since been maintained, enclose the area, marginalise the monument, and makes the school (and former house) the dominant element in this setting.

4.3 *Original setting (Photos 9-13)*

- 4.3.1 When the castle was first constructed, possibly in the 11th or 12th century, it likely formed part of a network of similar such sites in the area, controlling and dominating certain aspects of the surrounding landscape as well as providing a defensible position. It is unlikely

therefore to have stood in isolation, and visual and physical connections with surrounding sites are likely to have formed important parts of the original setting of such a site. As stated in section 3.4.4 a number of similar castle sites lay in relatively close proximity. This proximity would suggest an ease of communication between these sites, although rising ground to the north of Womaston would have prevented a direct visual connection with most. Castle Nimble (RD046) however, lies just over 2km to the southwest of Womaston, comprising a motte with an adjacent sub-rectangular bailey on the banks of the Riddings Brook. The relatively flat nature of the floodplain of the Riddings/Summertil Brook area, with a gentle fall to the northeast, suggest a potential inter-visibility between these two sites, although current tree and building cover makes such an inter-visibility difficult to directly appreciate.

- 4.3.2 Communication routes are likely important elements in the siting and setting of this monument. It has been noted that the farm track to the north of the site, running east to west, appears to follow the line of a Roman road, and is therefore likely to have been an active communication route during the lifetime of the castle. It is also probably of significance that this route can be traced west all the way to the major medieval settlement of New Radnor. The flat valley floor to the south of Womaston Castle Mound is also likely to have provided a more general route through this area, and the castle may also have been sited to help control movement through this area. As such, views and access both up and down the valley are likely to be important elements in the siting of the castle and therefore part of its original setting. Views to the west could incorporate not just Castle Nimble, but also the crossing of the brook at Walton (and potential medieval house/settlement there). Views to the east are likely to have encompassed a similar crossing of the brook at Ditchyeld Bridge and section of Offa's Dyke that runs adjacent to it.
- 4.3.3 There is no clear indication of medieval settlement in closer association with Womaston Castle Mound. An area of ridge and furrow (PRN 33150) is marked to the south of the motte, which is described as medieval, although this is an assumed date. The ridge and furrow runs across lower-lying floodplain on the banks of the Summertil Brook. Although difficult to date, it does not bear the curvilinear signature typical of medieval ridge and furrow. It has been suggested that associated enclosure encompassed the proposed development area to the west of the motte, which would have been large enough to accommodate associated settlement. No evidence of this has been identified within the archaeological evaluation (Hadley 2017), and it is possible associated settlement would have utilised more direct access to the main communication route to the north. Indeed, Upper House Farm, when viewed on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 7), lies within an enclosure that extends between the motte and the routeway to the north, in an area that could be considered more suitable for associated settlement or bailey activity.
- 4.3.4 The main physical feature dictating the location of the site is likely to be the presence of Summertil Brook, which, along with its associated floodplain, has defined the southern edge of the site. The brook would have provided both a useful resource, but also a natural defensive feature.

4.4 Changes to the setting (Photos 14-19)

- 4.4.1 The castle site was abandoned, and it may not have had a long period of occupation as there appears to be few, if any, historical references to the site. It likely remained a prominent feature of the landscape however, and is marked on early 19th century maps. By this period the landscape surrounding it had become largely agricultural, although it is clear that it acted as a focal point with three farmsteads clustered around it (Womaston, Upper House and Lower House).
- 4.4.2 The establishment of Womaston House as a Victorian Country residence at some point in the mid to late 19th century provided a new, but important element to the setting of the monument. The castle site appears to have become incorporated into the designed ground surrounding the house, and the current form of the monument may be the result of landscaping works associated with this event. Woodland planting would shield the monument from exterior view, and interrupt any previous viewpoints, but the monument would now become an important element in the enjoyment and appreciate of the house and its grounds.
- 4.4.3 Although the country residence has since become a private school, the physical boundary to the grounds, in the form of property boundaries and woodland defining an area to the south of the house, has been retained. The monument itself however has become marginalised, and no longer forms an important element of views from the house and grounds, nor does it play a similar role in an appreciation of the grounds surrounding the house as it is no longer incorporated into the active management of the grounds nor in designed walks around the grounds.

4.5 Other factors

- 4.5.1 No further historic, artistic, literary or scenic associations, intellectual relationships or non-visual factors forming part of the setting have been identified.

4.6 Views

- 4.6.1 Views to and from the monument may have shifted dramatically over its lifetime. During its lifetime as a castle it would appear important viewpoints would have encompassed views to the west towards Walton and Castle Nimble, and view to the east towards Ditchyeld Bridge.
- 4.6.2 Since being incorporated into the grounds of a Victorian country residence views to and from the monument would have become more restricted. Distant views were blocked, and remain blocked, by woodland growth on and around the monument. The site would rather have formed an element of the grounds surrounding the house, and therefore views that include both the house and the monument are of significance. The monument formed part of the walks throughout the grounds, and therefore views from the house, and from walks around the grounds are of significance.

4.7 Summary

4.7.1 The elements of the setting of the Womaston Castle Mound (RD118) outlined above can be summarised as followed:

- Present setting – woodland cover
- Present setting – school complex
- Present setting – nearby agricultural buildings
- Original setting – Inter-visibility with Castle Nimble
- Original setting – control of movement in valley (views to Walton and Ditchyeld Bridge)
- Original setting – association with the Roman road
- Original setting – associated settlement?
- Original setting – association with Summergil Brook
- Changes in setting – focal point for farmsteads
- Changes in setting – element within designed grounds of Womaston House
- Viewpoints – illustrating above

5 Stage 3: Evaluation of the Potential Impact of Change/Development.

5.1 The proposed development comprises plans for the construction of auxiliary educational outbuildings. These comprise twelve, largely adjoining, single-storey pods, timber-framed and clad, with low roofs. The development covers an overall area of approximately 40m northwest to southeast, by 18m northeast to southwest. The buildings will be attached to an existing modern sports hall to the northwest, extending out into what is currently a lawned area to the southeast (Figures 2 & 3).

5.2 Extending to the west of the proposed development is an area of mixed modern school buildings and former 19th century country house and agricultural buildings that have been converted for use in the school. Buildings styles comprise a mix of single and two-storey structures, in a mix of styles with stonework, timber framing and smooth rendered walls all visible. Roofs are largely slate, but again in a mixture of styles. An area of lawn and rough grass extends southward from the main building ranges, across falling ground onto the grass covered former floodplain along the north banks of Summergil Brook. This area is sub-divided with post and wire fencing, with both new and mature trees growth dotted along the northern edge of the area, including the area of proposed development. A car park area lies to the north of the proposed development area, and a large wooden shed and polytunnel lie to the east, with fenced animal enclosure in between. The whole site is backed by thick mature tree growth that defines the former western boundary to the school site, lines the brook to the south, and runs behind the shed and polytunnel to the east, hiding and disguising the motte and bailey and adjacent pond from view.

- 5.3 As a single-storey structure with a broken profile and low roof the proposed development will not overshadow the motte and bailey site, or reduce the scale and impact of the motte. In terms of affecting the present setting of the monument, it will not in itself affect the woodland covering on the site. Indirectly, the increased awareness of the monument brought about through the development may result in improved management of the site, to make it a more accessible and visible part of the current school complex. However, due to the nature of the mature tree cover, with large mature trees and dense cover, it is unlikely that tree cover will be altered dramatically or to an extent that will alter the impact of the woodland setting on more distant views of the monument.
- 5.4 The school complex itself forms part of the present setting. The complex comprises a mix of structures and styles, and therefore the proposed development is not unusual in incorporating a new design and appearance. Along with large agricultural buildings in the neighbouring farmstead to the north, modern building have however been encroaching towards the monument, the proposed development continues this trend and does reduce the open area surrounding the motte and bailey adding to a sense of enclosure surrounding the monument. It does however form an extension to the existing structures in this area, and one that is smaller in scale to these existing structures. The appearance and finish of the development is also designed to reduce its visual impact, allowing it to blend into the surrounding woodland cover. Sheds and polytunnels to the east have already increased the extent of the built school complex towards the monument. The proposed development will also be overshadowed by mature tree cover, which adds more to the sense of enclosure around the monument.
- 5.5 The original setting of the monument incorporates views to more distant points, of which Castle Nimble and Walton to the west, and Ditchyeld Bridge to east, are noted. These views are severely impacted upon by the current tree cover. The density of the cover is likely to affect these views throughout the year. The site is visible from these locations, but the monument is not recognisable nor understood from these views due to the tree cover. The proposed development will not affect the current tree cover. Even without the tree cover the proposed development is of a scale and positioning that will not interfere with these views from the motte. The proposed development may affect views westward from lower levels surrounding the motte, but at such a level it is unlikely that the distant points noted would have been originally visible.
- 5.6 There has been the suggestion that the proposed development may lie with enclosures associated with the motte and bailey. Further research has not been able to verify this. Historic mapping suggests subsequent settlement was concentrated to the north and east, and the presence of a routeway to the north may also indicate any associated settlement would have been concentrated to the north. An archaeological evaluation also uncovered no evidence of medieval activity within the proposed development area. Based on this evidence it would therefore appear unlikely that the proposed development will impact on any former associated settlement.
- 5.7 Other identified elements of original features that formed part of the setting of the monument include the former Roman road to the north, and the presence of Summergil Brook to the south. Neither of these elements of the setting will be affected by the proposed development.

- 5.8 In the subsequent life of the monument it provided a focal point for the development of surrounding farmsteads. Therefore the presence of the farmsteads form part of the setting of this monument, but these will not be affected by the proposed development. One of these farmsteads was subsequently to develop into a Victorian country residence, and as the monument formed part of the designed grounds of this house, therefore these grounds also form part of the setting of the monument. The proposed development encroaches into the open area in front of the house, and into viewpoints from the main house, and into eastward views from the western edge of the grounds. However, the proposed development does not physically affect the house or other traditional buildings, no does it directly affect tree planting or designed walks through the grounds. As a single storey structure, largely hidden by the Sports Hall, it will not block views of the motte, which itself is not currently visible from the viewpoints mentioned above due to the woodland cover. The appearance is also designed to blend into the woodland background. As mentioned previously, the proposed development may also improve access to and management of the monument, thereby enhancing this part of its setting.
- 5.9 Other potential impacts include the lifespan of the proposed development. This is unknown, but such structures could be removed at a later date without affecting the physical remains or setting of the motte and bailey. Night-time views will not be affected. Non-visual elements will not be affected. The scale and appearance of the proposed development can be absorbed into the surrounding landscape. It will not be visible from beyond the school complex, it does not remove any boundaries, and does not impede any known views of the asset.
- 5.10 In summary the main potential negative impacts of the proposed development on the setting of Womaston Castle Mound RD118 are through increasing a sense of modern enclosure surrounding the monument, and affecting views to and from the monument to the west, associated with part of its original setting and subsequent setting within Womaston House grounds. However, the scale and appearance of the proposed development, the presence of more dominant features within the school complex and woodland cover on the site, suggests such an impact is considered to be Slight.

6 Stage 4: Mitigation Options.

- 6.1 As the scale and design of the proposed development is already considered to keep visual impact to a minimal, no related mitigation measures are suggested. Any associated planting schemes to reduce the visibility of the structure further is likely to increase the sense of encroachment upon the monument.
- 6.2 The site has also been assessed for archaeological potential already, and found to be negative, therefore no further archaeological mitigation measures are suggested.
- 6.3 The site offers the opportunity to enhance the appreciation and maintenance of the monument. By bringing the monument closer into the school complex it offers the opportunity both for scrub and intrusive tree growth to be managed on the site, and also allows the site to be used as an educational facility, improving access to, appreciation of and understanding of the monument.

7 Conclusions

- 7.1 This report assesses the impact of the proposed development upon the site and setting of Scheduled Ancient Monument RD118, which lies in close proximity to the proposed development site. This impact has been assessed using the guidance and methodology outlined in the 'Setting of Heritage Assets in Wales' (Cadw 2017), which outlines a four stage approach.
- 7.2 Stage 1 identifies the historic assets. Through consultation with Cadw and research into historic assets in the vicinity this study is primarily concerned with Scheduled Ancient Monument RD118 (Womaston Castle Mound). This comprises a medieval motte with surrounding moat, and remains of an earthwork bank to the north and east. During the mid to late 19th century the site was incorporated into the grounds of a Victorian county residence (Womaston House), and may have been enhanced as part of the general landscaping associated with the house.
- 7.3 Stage 2 defines and analyses the setting of the archaeological site. The main elements of the present setting of the monument include its dense woodland cover, and its location within the present complex of Summergil House School. The presence of large modern agricultural buildings surrounding the site to the north are also an element of its present setting. The main elements of its original setting include potential inter-visibility with Castle Nimble to the west, as well as views towards Walton and Ditchyeld Bridge as part of a perceived control of movement along the valley to the south. The presence of a Roman road to the north and Summergil Brook to the south are also important elements in the original setting. It is possible settlement or associated activity may have lain within the vicinity of the castle, which would be another important element in the original setting, but the precise nature and extent of this is unclear. Subsequently the site became a focal point for the establishment of surrounding farmsteads to the north and east, before forming part of the designed grounds surrounding Womaston House. As such the house, and its grounds became an important element of the setting of the monument. These setting elements are illustrated in Photos 1-19.
- 7.4 Stage 3 evaluates the potential impact of the proposed development. This development comprises twelve, adjoining, single-storey pods, timber framed and clad, adjoining the existing sports hall. They will occupy a lawned area between the sports hall and existing sheds and polytunnels to the west of the monument. The main potential negative impacts of the proposed development have been identified as increasing a sense of modern enclosure surrounding the monument, and affecting views to and from the monument to the west, associated with part of its original setting and subsequent setting within Womaston House grounds. However, the scale and appearance of the proposed development, the presence of more dominant features within the school complex and woodland cover on the site, suggests such an impact is considered to be Slight.
- 7.5 Stage 4 suggests mitigation options associated with the proposed development. However, it is considered that mitigation has been incorporated into the design scheme in an attempt to reduce the visual impact, and further archaeological work has been undertaken in association with the development to better understand the archaeological resource. The site does also offer the potential to offset any negative impact by enhancing the appreciation

and maintenance of the monument. By bringing the monument closer into the school complex it offers the opportunity both for scrub and intrusive tree growth to be better managed, and also allows the site to be used as an educational facility, improving access to, appreciation of and understanding of the monument.

10 Sources

- Cadw 2017 *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*
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Maps

- Anon 1841 *Old Radnor Tithe Map & Apportionments*
- British Geological Survey 2017 *Geology of Britain Viewer* - (accessed 24/08/17)
- Ordnance Survey 1815 *Original Surveyors' Drawings, Presteigne*
- Ordnance Survey 1889 *1st edition 1:2500 map, Radnorshire/Herefordshire*
- Ordnance Survey 1903 *2nd edition 1:2500 map, Radnorshire/Herefordshire*
- Ordnance Survey 1928 *3rd edition 1:2500 map, Radnorshire/Herefordshire*
- Ordnance Survey 1977 *1:2500 plan*
- Ordnance Survey 1980-86 *1:10000 plan*

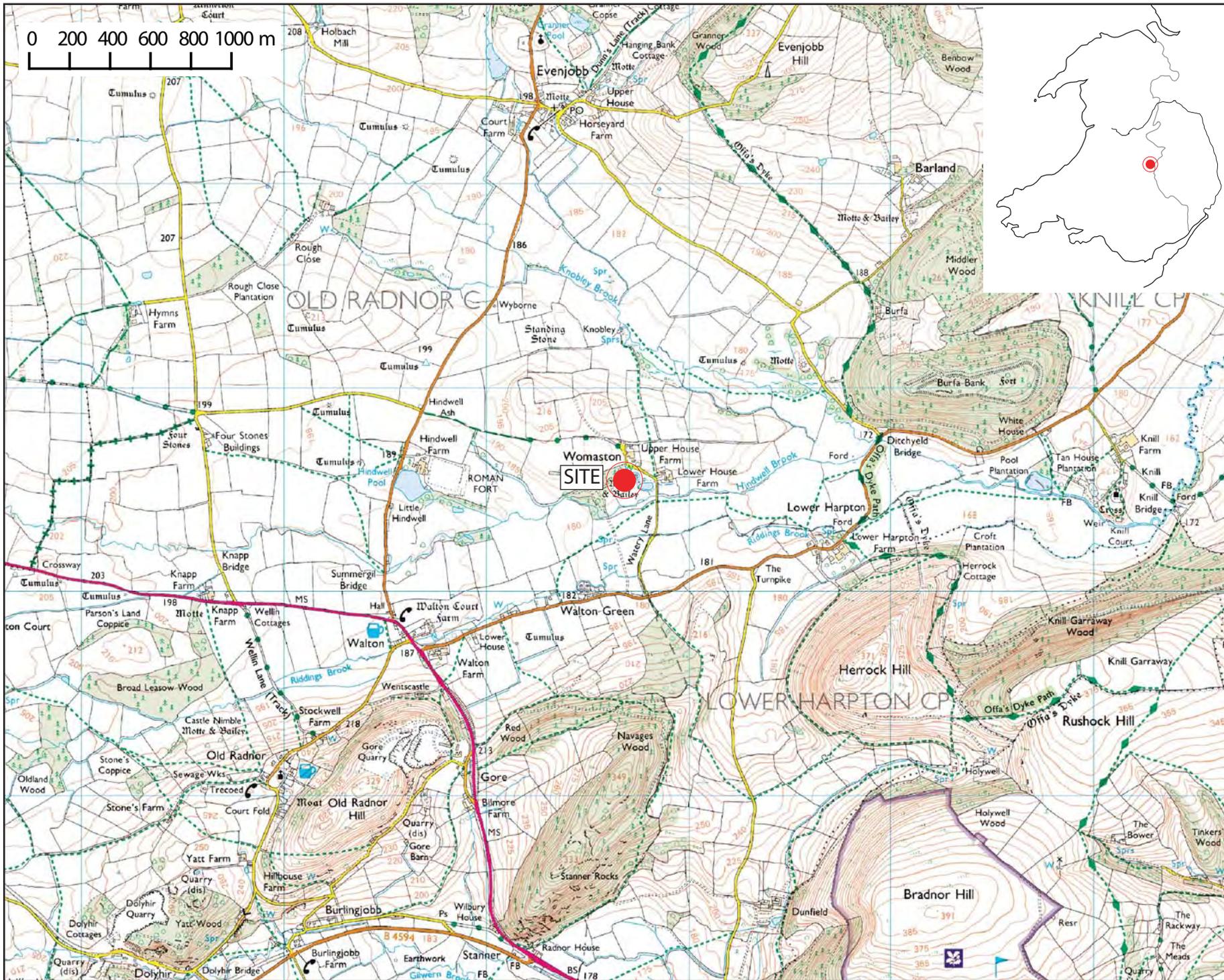


Figure 1: Location map, 1:25 ,000 @ A4

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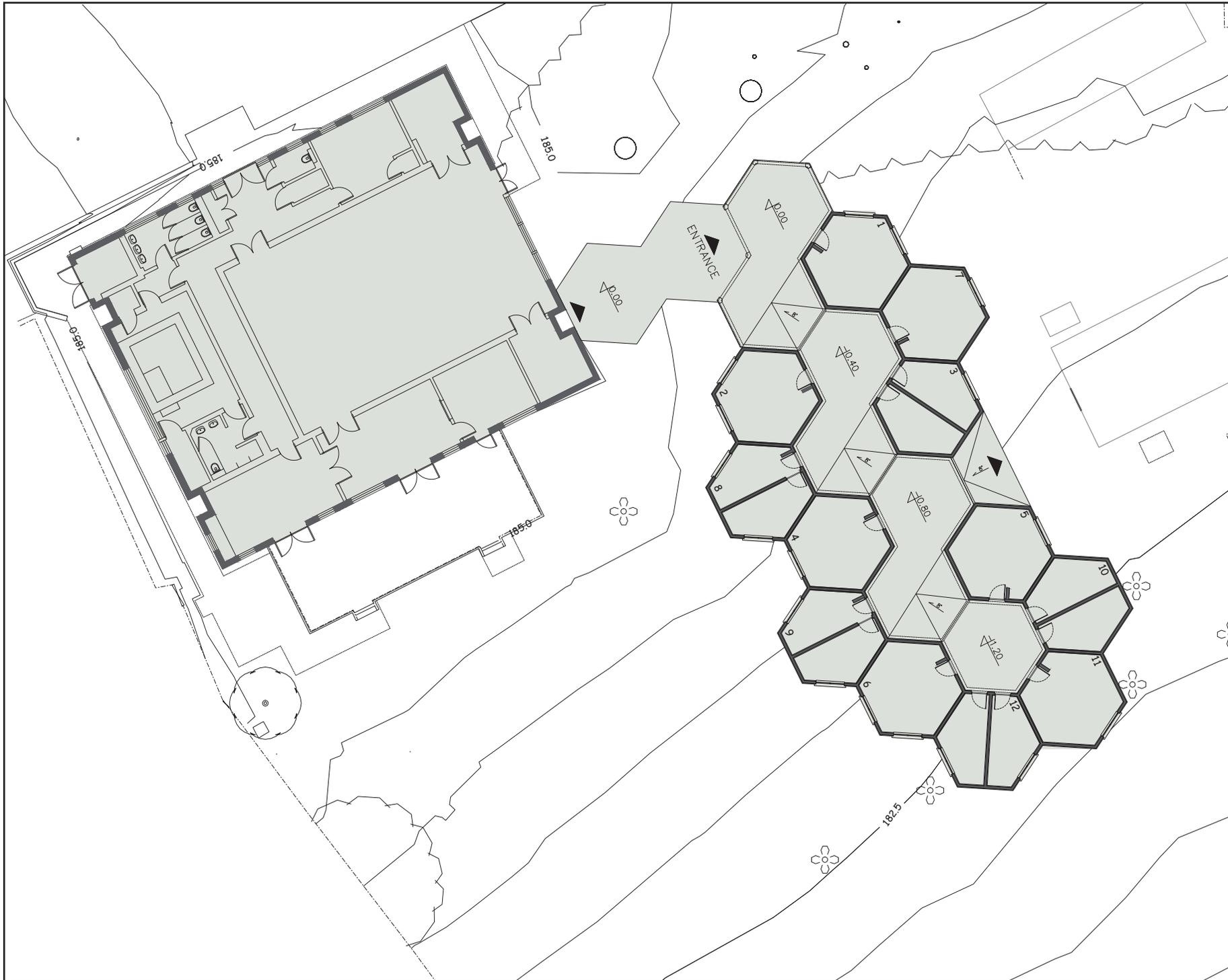


Figure 2: Proposed development plan, produced by The Interior Architectural Design Company Ltd, drawing #2, May 2017. Not reproduced to original scale.



Figure 3: Proposed development elevations, produced by The Interior Architectural Design Company Ltd, drawing #6, May 2017. Reproduced at 1:200.

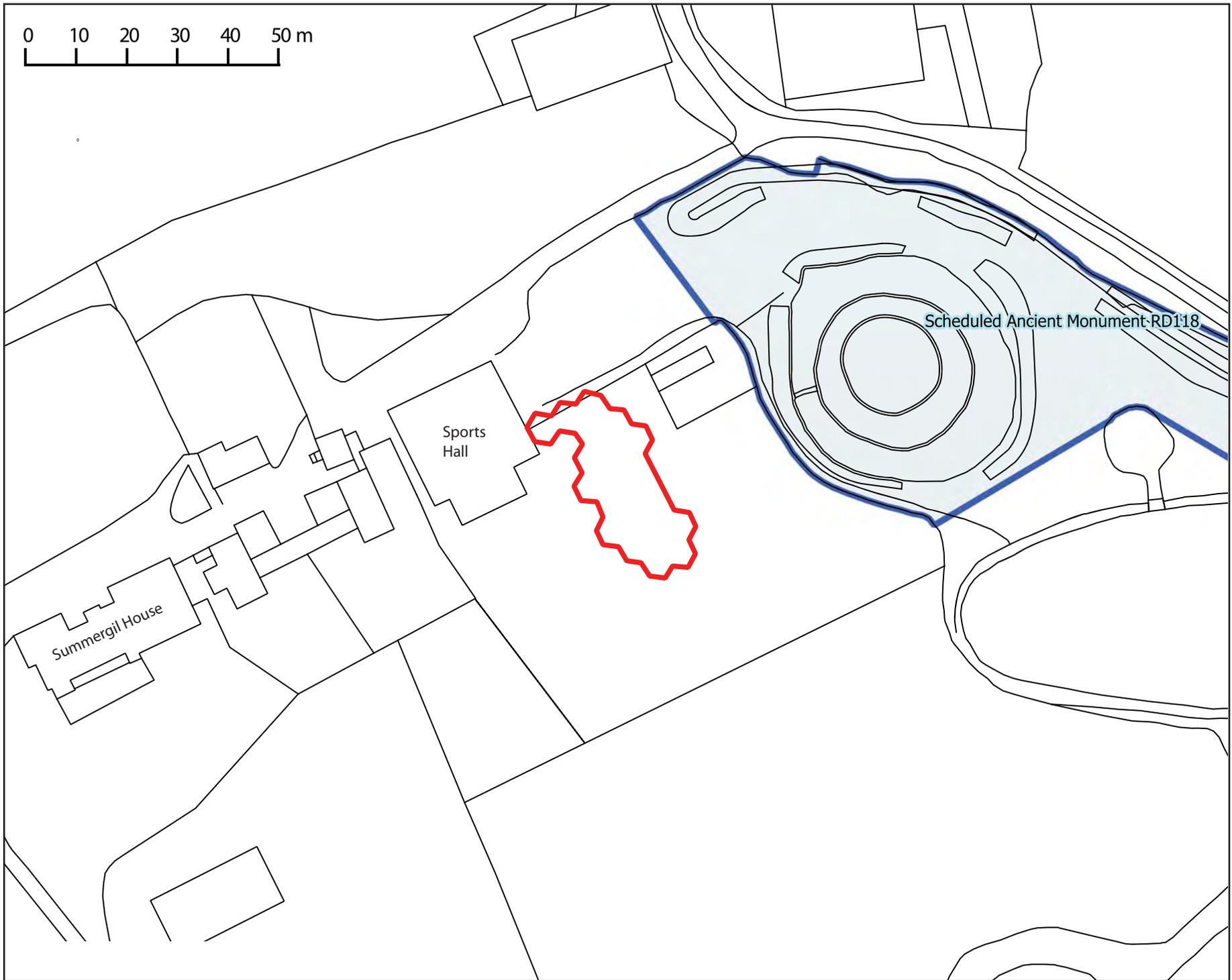
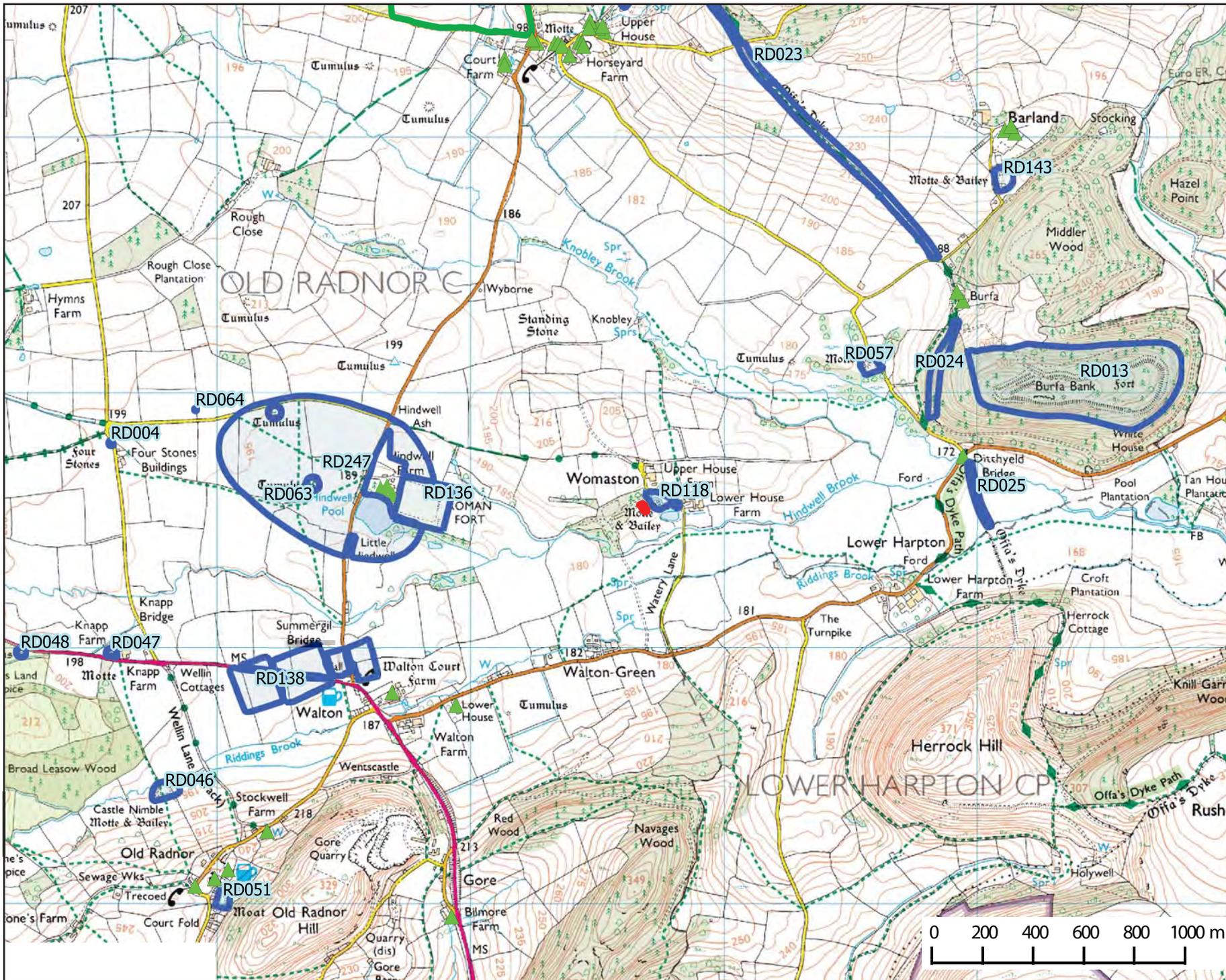


Figure 4: Site plan showing relationship to Scheduled Ancient Monument. 1:1000 @ A4



- Proposed development site
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Labelled by ref.no.
- Listed Buildings
- Registered parkland

Figure 5: Map showing designated archaeological sites in the surrounding landscape.

1:20,000 @ A4

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Figure 6: Extract from the Old Radnor Parish Tithe Map of 1841. Approximate location of proposed development site marked in red.

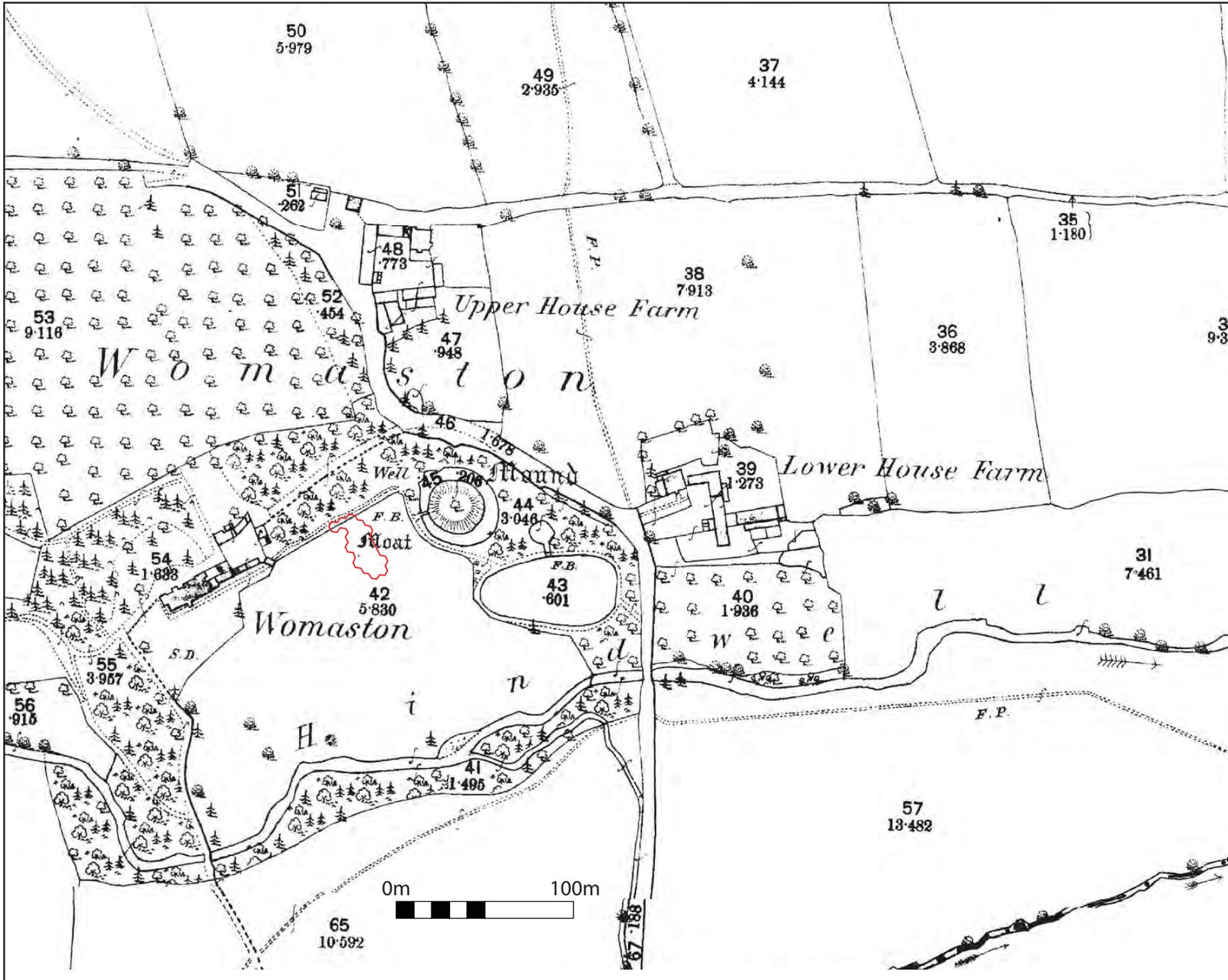


Figure 7: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1889. Approximate location of proposed development site marked in red.



Photo 1: General view towards monument RD118 from the access to Summergil House, looking southeast. The monument is lost within the tree cover.



Photo 2: General view towards the monument, as seen looking northeast from the lawned area to the west of the monument. The proposed development will sit in the foreground, the monument itself is lost in the trees to the rear.



Photo 3: General view looking northeast at the motte, as seen from within the surrounding tree cover, showing the density of tree and scrub cover.



Photo 4: View looking southeast along the water-filled moat surrounding the motte.



Photo 5: View west from the southern edge of the Scheduled Area (defined by the fenceline in the foreground), looking towards the house and school complex. The proposed development will extend across the centre of the view.



Photo 6: View of the mixture of buildings that comprise the school complex, looking southwest from the entrance to the school site off Watery Lane. The proposed development will be built adjoining the modern sports hall to the left.



Photo 7: View north from just outside the northern edge of the Scheduled Area, showing the buildings and activity associated with Upper House Farm.



Photo 8: View northeast of the large modern agricultural buildings at the southern edge of Upper House Farm.



Photo 9: View west from top of the motte, incorporating potential original views towards Castle Nimble and Walton, and demonstrating the lack of current visibility.



Photo 10: As above, viewed from the southern edge of the Scheduled Area. The proposed development will extend approximately halfway into this view from the right.



Photo 11: View east from the main road through Walton, approximating a view towards the monument from Castle Nimble and Walton.



Photo 12: View west from Ditchyeld Bridge (foreground), a possible medieval crossing point, towards the monument.



Photo 13: View west from the top of the motte towards Ditchyeld Bridge, demonstrating the lack of visibility due to tree cover.



Photo 14: View south from the top of the motte, overlooking the pond area.



Photo 15: View west from the motte overlooking the proposed development area.



Photo 16: View west from the treeline adjacent to the scheduled area, looking past the existing shed and polytunnel towards the proposed development area.



Photo 17: View southeast down the western edge of the scheduled area (defined by the fenceline) along a former garden path, looking down towards Summertil Brook.



Photo 18: View west from a former garden path close to the southern extent of the scheduled area, looking across the grounds towards Womaston/Summertil house.



Photo 19: View southeast across the proposed development site, with the tree-lined Summergil Brook to the rear.

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