



Environmental Consultancy Services

Balk Farm Court

Heritage Statement





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Heritage Statement

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Executive summary

WSP has been commissioned by Environmental Consultancy Services to prepare a Heritage Statement (HS) prior to the proposed sewage infrastructure works to the north of Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049) and Barn approximately 15 Metres to south-west of Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1192453) located in Birdwell, South Yorkshire. Both the assets are Grade II listed. The Proposed Development comprises:

- The construction of a new Sewage Pumping Station (SPS) to replace existing private septic tanks currently serving six dwellings at Balk Farm Court, Birdwell.
- a new access track to the SPS; and
- fencing around the new infrastructure.

This HS provides an understanding of the heritage significance of Balk Farmhouse and Barn and considers how setting contributes to that significance. It then assesses the likely impact of the Proposed Development on that significance. A non-designated barn to the south-east of the farmhouse has also been considered. This HS has been prepared in support of a planning application.

Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1151049)

The construction of a new SPS to replace existing private septic tanks will introduce new infrastructure to the rear of the Grade II listed Balk Farmhouse, thereby impacting views to and from the north elevation of the farmhouse. The proposed access track to the SPS, will have minimal impact on the setting of the heritage asset, given the sensitive use of Grasscrete which will allow for the track to be integrated with the landscape over time. The proposed fencing around the new SPS comprises wooden posts and rails, which is in keeping with the fencing to the south-west sections of the Balk Farmhouse grounds, notably along Sheffield Road. Overall, the Proposed Development will result in some visual harm (**low level of less than substantial harm**) to the heritage significance and setting of Balk Farmhouse.

Barn approximately 15 metres to south-west of Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1192453)

The Proposed Development will be glimpsed in the context of the heritage asset in views from the north and north-west. In this regard, it will result in some visual harm (**low level of less than substantial harm**) on the heritage significance and setting of the designated heritage asset.

Barn to the east of Former Farmyard: Non-designated Heritage Asset

The Proposed Development will result in **no harm** to the significance and setting of the heritage asset, given that there is limited intervisibility between the Site and the non-designated heritage asset.



Recommendations

In order to reduce the impact of the Proposed Development, it is recommended that a hedge be planted alongside the fencing, where possible, to allow for further integration of the SPS within the landscape. The colour finish to the new SPS and associated fencing will also require careful consideration to ensure that it is not overly garish in the landscape.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1. WSP has been commissioned by Environmental Consultancy Services to prepare a Heritage Statement (HS) to support a planning application for new sewage infrastructure works to the north of Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049, **Plates 1-3**) and the ‘Barn approximately 15 Metres to south east of Balk Farmhouse’ (NHLE 1192453, **Plates 1-3**), located in Birdwell, South Yorkshire (National Grid Reference/NGR SE 34438 02161: **Figure B-1**). It has been noted that the ‘Barn approximately 15 Metres to south-east of Balk Farmhouse’, is actually to the south-west of the farmhouse and will be referred to as such throughout this report. A request has been sent to Historic England to amend the title of the heritage asset (NHLE1192453) to reflect this.
- 1.1.2. Birdwell is a village in the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley (MBB) in South Yorkshire and is located approximately 6km south of Barnsley. Birdwell currently falls within the Rockingham Ward of MBB.
- 1.1.3. The Proposed Development comprises:
- The construction of a new Sewage Pumping Station (SPS) to replace existing private septic tanks currently serving six dwellings at Balk Farm Court, Birdwell;
 - a new access track to the SPS; and
 - fencing around the new infrastructure.
- 1.1.4. In accordance with Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Statement Framework (NPPF) and the requirement for applicants to describe the significance of heritage assets including contribution to setting, this report draws together available information on the heritage assets impacted by the proposal. The historic development of the Site and its immediate environs is discussed to inform this process.
- 1.1.5. The report enables relevant parties to assess the significance of the heritage assets, thus enabling potential impacts to be identified along with the need for mitigative strategies.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

- 1.2.1. The aim of this report is to understand the significance of the heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the Site, and to assess the impact of the proposal on that significance. This HS will support an application for planning permission.
- 1.2.2. The key outputs of the HS are as follows:
- Provide a summary historical background of the Site and its context within the immediate area.
 - Interpret the significance of the heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site and the contribution of setting to their significance.

- Assess the likely impacts on the significance and setting of the heritage assets from the Proposed Development.
- Provide recommendations on appropriate mitigation (where required).

1.3 Site Location and Description

- 1.3.1. The Site is located at Balk Farm Court in the north of Birdwell, off Sheffield Road (**Figures B-1 and B-2**). The Site is irregular in shape and occupies part of an existing field (**Plate 4**). There are open fields to the north of the listed Balk Farmhouse and Barn (**Plates 1-3**), with modern housing development to the south and east. The two listed buildings are contained within their own grounds with modern fencing following the original boundary (**Plate 3**). Balk Farmhouse is positioned at the north side of what was the farmyard, with its front (south) elevation overlooking it (**Plate 2**). The listed barn is to the west of the farmyard, and another later barn is to the east of the farmyard. The farmyard is gated to the south with modern metal gates. The listed buildings are located a short distance to the south of the Site.
- 1.3.2. The Grade II listed Balk Farmhouse and the Barn to the south-west of the farmhouse were built c.1800, with later additions. The barn to the south-east of Balk Farmhouse is not listed and is likely to date from the mid-to-late 19th century.



Plate 1: The north facing elevation of Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049 – centre left), and later extensions. The north (side) elevation of the Barn (NHLE 1192453) is indicated by the red arrow. Note that this image is taken looking south.



Plate 2: The front (south) elevation of Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049 – centre right) and the front (east) elevation of the Barn (NHLE 1192453), indicated by the red arrow. Note that this image is taken looking north.



Plate 3: The west elevations of Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049), indicated by red arrow, and the Barn (NHLE 1192453 - right). Note that this view is taken looking east.



Plate 4: Site of the proposed new SPS (red arrow), located to the north of Balk Farm.

2 Planning Framework

2.1 National Planning Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.1.1. The *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* sets out the legal requirements for the control of development and alterations which affect listed buildings or conservation areas (including buildings of heritage interest which lie within a conservation area). Grade I are buildings of exceptional interest. Grade II* are particularly significant buildings of more than special interest. Grade II are buildings of special interest.
- 2.1.2. Section 66(1) states:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 2.2.1. The Government issued a revised version of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) in 2024 and supporting revised *National Planning Practice Guidance* (NPPG) in 2019.
- 2.2.2. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, and the NPPF has a presumption in favour of such, where it meets needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is achieved within the context of economic, social and environmental objectives.
- 2.2.3. Section 16 of the NPPF deals with 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. The NPPF recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which '*should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations*' (paragraph 202).
- 2.2.4. The NPPF requires the significance of heritage assets to be considered in the planning process, whether designated or not. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking the:
- Delivery of sustainable development;
 - understanding the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment;

- conservation of England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance; and
 - recognition of the contribution that heritage assets make to our knowledge and understanding of the past.
- 2.2.5. Section 16 of the NPPF recognises that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term.
- 2.2.6. Paragraph 207 states that planning decisions should be based on the significance of the heritage asset, and that the level of detail supplied by an applicant should be proportionate to the importance of the asset and should be no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal upon the significance of that asset.
- 2.2.7. *Heritage Assets* are defined in Annex 2 as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- 2.2.8. *Designated Heritage Assets* comprise: World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas.
- 2.2.9. *Significance* is defined as: the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 2.2.10. *Setting* is defined as: the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset, and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
- 2.2.11. The NPPF is supported by the *National Planning Policy Guidance* (NPPG). Paragraph 18a-001 makes a clear statement that any decisions relating to listed buildings and their settings and conservation areas must address the statutory considerations of the Act, as well as satisfying the relevant policies within the NPPF and the Local Plan.
- 2.2.12. Paragraph 18a-013 outlines that the assessment of the impact of a proposed development on the setting of a heritage asset needs to take into account and be proportionate to the significance of the asset being considered, and the degree to which the proposed development enhances or detracts from the significance of the asset and the ability to appreciate the significance.
- 2.2.13. The NPPG outlines that although the extent and importance of setting is often expressed in visual terms, it can also be influenced by other factors such as noise, dust and vibration. Historic relationships between places can also be an important factor stressing ties between places that may have limited or no intervisibility with each other. This may be historic as well

as aesthetic connections that contribute or enhance the significance of one or more of the heritage assets.

2.2.14. Paragraph 18a-013 concludes:

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time. When assessing any application for development which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

2.2.15. The key test in NPPF paragraphs 212-215 is whether a proposed development will result in substantial harm or less than substantial harm. However, substantial harm is not defined in the NPPF. Paragraph 18a-018 of the NPPG provides additional guidance on substantial harm. It states:

What matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

2.2.16. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF outlines that where a proposed development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm arising should be weighed against the public benefits accruing from the proposed development. Paragraph 18a-020 of the NPPG outlines what is meant by public benefits:

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.

2.2.17. In considering any planning application for development, the planning authority will be mindful of the framework set by government policy, in this instance the NPPF, by current Development Plan Policy and by other material considerations.

2.3 Local Planning Policy

2.3.1. The *Barnsley Local Plan* was adopted in January 2019. Policy HE2: Heritage Statements and general application procedures and Policy HE3: Developments affecting Historic Buildings are relevant to this assessment.

HE2 Heritage Statements and general application procedures

Proposals that are likely to affect known heritage assets or sites where it comes to light there is potential for the discovery of unrecorded heritage assets will be expected to include a description of the heritage significance of the site and its setting.

- *This description will need to include an appropriate but proportionate level of detail that allows an understanding of the significance of the asset but no more than is necessary to understand the impact of the proposal.*
- *For sites with significant archaeological potential, a desk-based assessment may be required in line with the provisions of Policy HE6.*

Applications made in outline form will not be accepted for proposals which will which affect a conservation area, a listed building or any other designated heritage asset. In such cases, sufficiently detailed plans and drawings to enable an assessment to be made of the likely impact of the development upon the significance of any heritage assets affected will be required.

Policy HE3 Developments affecting Historic Buildings

Proposals involving additions or alterations to listed buildings or buildings of evident historic significance such as locally listed buildings (or their setting) should seek to conserve and where appropriate enhance that building's significance. In such circumstances proposals will be expected to:

- *Respect historic precedents of scale, form, massing, architectural detail and the use of appropriate materials that contribute to the special interest of a building.*
- *Capitalise on opportunities to better reveal the significance of a building where elements exist that detract from its special interest.*

2.4 Relevant National Guidance

Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015)

2.4.1. The purpose of this document is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing

historic environment policy in the NPPF and NPPG. It outlines a six-stage process to the assembly and analysis of relevant information relating to heritage assets potentially affected by a proposed development:

1. Understand the significance of the affected assets.
2. Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance.
3. Avoid and mitigate impact in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF.
4. Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.
5. Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change.
6. Offset negative impacts on aspects of significance by enhancing others through recording, disseminating and archiving archaeological and historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice In Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England 2017)

- 2.4.2. Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 provides guidance on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets.
- 2.4.3. The document restates the definition of setting as outlined in Annex 2 of the NPPF. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context; while it is largely a visual term, setting, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by noise, vibration, odour and other factors. The document makes it clear that setting is not a heritage asset, nor is it a heritage designation, though land within a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what the setting contributes to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.4.4. The Good Practice Advice Note sets out a five-stage process for assessing the implications of proposed developments on setting:
 1. Identification of heritage assets which are likely to be affected by proposals;
 2. Assessment of whether and what contribution the setting makes to the significance of a heritage asset;
 3. Assessing the effects of proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset;
 4. Maximising enhancement and reduction of harm on the setting of heritage assets; and
 5. Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes



- 2.4.5. The guidance reiterates the NPPF in stating that where developments affecting the setting of heritage assets results in a level of harm to significance, this harm, whether substantial or less than substantial, should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

3 Methodology and Sources

3.1 Research

3.1.1. A range of data sources were used in the research for this report, all of which are referenced in the text and detailed in full in the bibliography in Appendix A. The table below provides a summary of the key data sources.

Table 1 – Data sources consulted.

Source	Data	Comment
Historic England	National Heritage List England (NHLE) with information on statutorily designated heritage assets	Statutory designations (scheduled monuments; statutorily listed buildings; registered parks and gardens; historic battlefields) can provide a significant constraint to development.
Groundsure	Ordnance Survey maps from the 1st edition (1860–70s) to present day	Provides a good indication of past land use and impacts which may have compromised archaeological survival. Provides an indication of the possible date of any buildings on the site.
Google	Satellite imagery and Streetview	General mapping and visual information of the site and surrounds.
Internet	Web-published local history	Many key documentary sources, such as local and specialist studies are now published on the web and can be used to inform the historical background.

3.1.2. This report sets out the history of Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049), the ‘Barn approximately 15 Metres to south west of Balk Farmhouse’ (NHLE 1192453) and the wider area around the Site (**Section 4**). It establishes the significance (**Section 5**) and assesses the impact of the Proposed Development on the heritage assets in the immediate vicinity of the Site, in relation to relevant policy (**Section 6**).

3.1.3. To provide historic background context for the farmhouse and barn and to inform the assessment of setting, a 250 metres radius study area from the centre of the Site was considered. The extent of the study area was defined using professional judgement to capture the historic setting.

3.1.4. **Figure B-2** shows the location of selected designated built heritage assets within 250 metres of the Site, as identified by the sources above, the site visit (27 August 2025), or during the course of research for this assessment.

3.2 Site Visit

3.2.1. A site visit was carried out on 27 August 2025 to assess the Site, the area around the listed buildings and to determine where changes have occurred over time. This involved a site walkover, which included photographing the Site and the area around the listed buildings.

3.3 Assessing Heritage Significance

3.3.1. The NPPF defines significance as ‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic. The determination of the significance is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against these values. The relevant heritage values are also identified in Historic England’s Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance – Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets 2019 (Advice Note 12).

3.3.2. Advice Note 12 identifies three areas of interest: architectural/artistic, historic and archaeological¹. The determination of the significance of these assets is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against the following values or areas of interest referred to in Advice Note 12:

- *Architectural/Artistic*: these are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest in the art of science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.
- *Historic*: an interest in past lives and events (including prehistoric). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of the nation’s history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.
- *Archaeological*: there will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some

3.3.3. The table below gives examples of the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Table 2 – Significance of heritage assets

Heritage asset description	Significance
World heritage sites	Very High
Grade I and II* listed buildings	High

Heritage asset description	Significance
<p>Grade II listed buildings which can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations, or which are clearly associated with heritage assets of high, national significance.</p> <p>Conservation areas containing very important (Grade I/II*) listed buildings</p> <p>Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens</p> <p>Non-designated heritage assets (above ground structures, landscape, townscape, buried remains) of national importance</p>	
<p>Grade II listed buildings which can be shown to have qualities in their fabric or historical association of regional importance only</p> <p>Conservation areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character (i.e. Grade II listed buildings)</p> <p>Grade II registered parks and gardens</p> <p>Non-designated heritage assets of regional importance Grade II listed buildings</p> <p>Conservation areas</p>	Medium
<p>Locally listed buildings</p> <p>Heritage assets with a local (i.e., parish) value or interest for education or cultural appreciation</p>	Low
<p>Item with no significant value or interest</p>	Negligible
<p>Heritage assets that have a clear potential, but for which current knowledge is insufficient to allow significance to be determined</p>	Uncertain

3.4 Assessing Harm

- 3.4.1. Professional judgement is used to consider the impact (the magnitude of change) of future development on the significance of a known or potential heritage asset. This is assessed in NPPF terms as ‘no harm’, ‘less than substantial harm’, ‘substantial harm’ or ‘total loss of significance’.

3.5 Assessing the Contribution of Setting

- 3.5.1. In relation to designated heritage assets, the assessment considers the contribution that setting makes to the overall significance of the assets.
- 3.5.2. The NPPF definition for setting is outlined in paragraph 2.2.10 above. It is the way in which the asset is understood (i.e. historical values) and experienced (architectural and communal values). It is not an asset in itself. It differs from curtilage (historic/present property boundary); context (association with other assets irrespective of distance) and historic character (sum of all historic attributes, including setting, associations, and visual aspects).
- 3.5.3. The Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in *Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets* produced by Historic England (2017) has been used to adopt a stepped approach for settings assessment. The former sets out five steps, of which the first four are relevant:
- *Step 1: asset identification.* The NPPF requires an approach that is proportional to the significance of the asset, and for this reason only the settings of the most sensitive (i.e., designated) heritage assets are considered in this assessment. A scoping exercise filters out those assets which would be unaffected, typically where there are no views to/from the site.
 - *Step 2: assess the contribution of setting.* This stage assesses how setting contributes to the overall significance of a designated asset.
 - *Step 3: assess change.* This considers the effect of the proposals on asset significance. It is noted however that it can be difficult to quantify such change to the overall significance of a designated heritage asset (for example, significance would rarely be downgraded from 'high' to 'medium' due to changes in setting). For this reason, the impact is reported in this assessment in terms of the extent to which the proposals would change how the asset is understood and experienced (in terms of no harm, less than substantial harm, substantial harm or total loss of significance).
 - *Step 4: mitigation.* This explores the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm. This is typically considered at the design stage (i.e., embedded design mitigation).
 - *Step 5: reporting.* Making and documenting decisions and outcomes. This reports the assessment of effects.
- 3.5.4. The assessment has considered the physical surroundings of the heritage assets identified, including topography and intervening development and vegetation. It also considers how the assets are currently experienced and understood through their setting, in particular views to and from the assets and the Site, along with key views, and the extent to which setting may have already been compromised.

4 Historical Development of the Site and Immediate Environs

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1. The following section presents a more recent historical development of the Site and wider area through the results of a map regression exercise and review of relevant background documentation.

Birdwell Settlement and Site

- 4.1.2. Birdwell was a small hamlet within the Parish of Worsbrough St Mary's, which is an 11th century church situated less than 1 km away in nearby Worsbrough Village, historically the principle settlement within the area. The origins of Birdwell are unclear, however it is first mentioned at the time of the English Civil War c.1642 (MBB, 2025).
- 4.1.3. Worsbrough was largely a farming and agricultural settlement prior to the 19th century. As a settlement it appears to have been relatively dispersed around the Worsbrough district before becoming concentrated in the Valley at Worsbrough Bridge, following the opening of the Dearne and Dove Canal and the Worsbrough canal basin in 1804. While bell pits indicate that shallow coal and ironstone mining took place at Worsbrough during the late medieval and early post-medieval periods, it was deep coal mining that dominated the area from the mid-19th century. The railway, canal system and better road links between Barnsley and Sheffield, led to increased industry and migration in the area. The better transport connections aided not only the growing coal mining industry, but also iron foundries and quarries across the Worsbrough District (MBB, 2025).
- 4.1.4. A railway station was commissioned to serve the villages of Birdwell, Tankersley, Pilley and Hoyland Common. However, the original site that was chosen was moved half a mile closer to Barnsley to serve the purposes of the Earl of Wharnccliffe who was, at that time, sinking Wharnccliffe Silkstone Colliery nearby. This move away made the station less convenient for most of the population. The station was opened in February 1855 and was closed on 7 December 1953. (D. L. Franks, 1971).
- 4.1.5. In the years following the Second World War, open cast mining took place on much of the land to the northern end of Birdwell, and in some areas the remains of the quarries can still be found. Much of the land was subsequently restored to agriculture, mainly pasture with a little low key arable production, and since the 1970s was owned by a local farming company. (The Woodland Trust, 2017).
- 4.1.6. Birdwell Wood is a 25-hectare plantation to the east of Balk Farm on the opposite side of the A61, was one such area used for open cast mining, and after its return to agriculture it was bought in the 1990s by the Woodland Trust.
- 4.1.7. Balk Farm is depicted on the 1st edition small scale county series Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping of 1855 (**Figure B-3**). The lane to the south of the farm is named Balk Lane, which

suggests the name of the farm originates from this. There is a footpath (**Plate 5**) depicted to the north of the farm, which leads directly to Worsbrough and a 'pump' depicted to the south of the farm, likely the source of the farm's water supply.



Plate 5: View along public footpath to the North of Balk Farmhouse (visible centre of image). Note that this view is taken looking south-east

- 4.1.8. The farm, as depicted on the 1855 OS map, is made up of several buildings, with the Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049) and Barn (NHLE 1192453) also evident at this time. To the east of the farmhouse are three buildings, which create an enclosed farmyard, the largest of which is a building in the south-east corner that is irregular in plan terms. There are a further three buildings to the west, within the grounds/garden of the farm, with a potential orchard to the north.
- 4.1.9. In the 1893 large scale OS map (**Figure B-4**) the footpath skirts around the farmhouse to join a footpath to the south. The three buildings on the east of the farmyard are now one large building, and one of the buildings in the grounds has been removed. The area which was inscribed 'pump' on the earlier map is now marked as a 'well', with what appears to be a pond beside it. It is clear on this map that the buildings to the east are in fact a separate property, with a boundary between it and the farm, and they sit within their own separate

grounds. Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049) appears as three separate, albeit connecting buildings, and the Barn (NHLE 1192453) is one large building. The farm building in the eastern part of the farmyard is now a large building, which is C in plan.

- 4.1.10. The 1906 OS map (**Figure B-5**) shows expansion of all of the main farm buildings. Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049) is now made up of six interconnected buildings, two of which are small buildings attached to the east side of the group. The Barn (NHLE 1192453) also has a small extension to the north-east corner and the C-in-plan farm building opposite has now been infilled, thereby becoming more irregular in plan terms.
- 4.1.11. By 1931 (**Figure B-6**), Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049) has seen little change. However, the Barn (NHLE 1192453) has now been split into two buildings. The farm building to the east of the farmyard has had significant extensions to its east and north elevations. A new barn type structure, likely with open sides, is now depicted to the south of the farm complex, to the immediate east of the well and pond.
- 4.1.12. By 1962 (**Figure B-7**) there is very little change to the farm buildings. However, there has been development to the south and south-east with the establishment of modern housing estates, although there is still some open land surrounding the farm buildings to the south. This land had been developed by the 1970s (**Figure B-8**).

4.2 Heritage Assets located in vicinity of the Site

Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1151049)

- 4.2.1. Balk Farmhouse is on the northern fringe of Birdwell but was originally located within the township of Worsbrough. In a Topographical Dictionary of Yorkshire 1822 Balk Farmhouse is described as;

'Balk, f. h. in the township of Worsbrough, and parish of Darfield; 3 miles from Barnsley, 9 from Rotherham'. (Langdale. T. 1822).

- 4.2.2. Birdwell expanded during the 20th century, extending towards the southern borders of the farmyard and incorporating it into the Village of Birdwell.

- 4.2.3. The Grade II listed Balk Farmhouse was designated on 4 December 1986. The NHLE list description states:

'Balk Farmhouse GV II Farmhouse. c1800, later additions. Roughcast sandstone, stone slate roof. 2 storeys, 3 bays. Plinth; large, exposed quoins. Central C20 door with 3-pane overlight in ashlar surround with swept shoulders and corbelled cornice. Ground-floor sill band links C20 casements with glazing bars in original square-faced surrounds. 3 similar windows to 1st floor. Hipped roof with rendered brick end stacks. Later addition set back on right not of special interest. Rear: very tall stair window with glazing bars; flanking 5-light, square-faced, mullioned windows have 3-light windows over.'

- 4.2.4. The farmhouse today is no longer associated with a farm and is a private house. It has a render face finished in cream, with exposed lintels and quoins. On the north facing elevation the original farmhouse has mullioned windows, whereas the extension has stone lintels and sills (**Plate 1**). The large extension to the eastern part of the original farmhouse was evident in mapping by 1893. However, a single storey extension aligned north-south has been built after the 2003 OS map was published (not reproduced in this report).
- 4.2.5. The front (south) elevation overlooks what was the farmyard with the two barns flanking to the east and west. Both barns have now been converted into houses (**Plate 2**). There is a small wall to the front of the farmhouse, which separates it from the other properties, and it has been in place from at least 1893, as it can be seen on the OS map from that year (**Figure B-4**).
- 4.2.6. To the rear (north) of the farmhouse is a garden, which retains the line of the original garden boundary wall as can be seen in a curve within it. The garden seems to have been extended as it now continues to the west as far as Sheffield Road.

Barn approximately 15 Metres to south-west of Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1192453)

- 4.2.7. The Grade II listed Barn was designated on 4 December 1986. The NHLE list description states:
- 'Barn approximately 15 metres to south-east¹ of Balk Farmhouse GV II Barn now warehouse. c1800. Coursed, squared rubble sandstone, stone slate roof. 2 storeys, 3 bays (externally). Large quoins. Central quoined waggon entrance with segmental organ, boarded doors. Stable door on left beneath plain lintel. 3 rows of slit vents (mostly blocked). 3 square hatches to 1st floor have C20 casements in square-faced surrounds. Hipped roof. Rear: similar; archway walled up and small door inserted. Interior: pattern-book king-post trusses to each end, others are light-scantling, collared principal-rafter trusses.'*
- 4.2.8. The barn building is contemporaneous with Balk Farmhouse and has now been converted into a house. Unlike the farmhouse the stone face to the barn building remains unrendered. The east elevation faces the former farmyard, and the three squared hatches to the 1st floor and the waggon entrance have now been glazed, with the front door located within an entrance door opening, to the south of the waggon entrance. There is now a small garden plot to the front of the barn building (**Plate 2**).

¹ It has been noted that the 'Barn approximately 15 Metres to south east of Balk Farmhouse', is actually to the south-west of the farmhouse. A request has been sent to Historic England to amend the title of the heritage asset (NHLE1192453) to reflect this.

- 4.2.9. The rear (west) elevation has three windows to the 1st floor which directly mirror those to the east elevation. The waggon entrance which was described as blocked in the NHLE description is now glazed, and a further glazed window can be seen to the north of the waggon entrance. There is also a small garden to the rear of the barn building, which is fenced along Balk Court Road (**Plate 3**).
- 4.2.10. The north elevation has a small square window to the first floor, and eight infilled slit window openings in three rows. The high-level openable window may have been introduced in place of the ninth slit window (**Plate 6**). To the south elevation there is single story extension not described in the listing and of unknown date, but it is shown on the 1898 OS Map (**Figure B-4**). The courtyard to the front of the barn building is gated.



Plate 6: North facing elevation of the Barn (NHLE 1192453). Note that this view is taken looking south and shows the infilled slit window openings and modern high-level window.

Barn to East of Former Farmyard: Non-designated Heritage Asset

- 4.2.11. The barn or farm building to the east of former farmyard dates from the mid-to-late 19th century. Elements of this building are likely present in some form on the OS map of 1855 (**Figure B-3**), although it has been altered and extended in the decades following as described in the map regression above (paragraphs 4.1.8 to 4.1.12). It is now in use as a private house and is constructed of coursed sandstone, with window lights to the first floor and two to the ground floor with a central door opening. The lintels to the windows all appear to be have been replaced recently. There is a single storey contemporary garage extension to the north elevation, and a further single storey extension to the south. The front (west) of the property has a small garden plot, with other gardens to the rear.

5 Significance of Heritage Assets

5.1 Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1151049)

5.1.1. Balk Farmhouse is a designated heritage asset of **medium significance** as a Grade II listed building. The significance of this designated heritage asset is outlined below.

Architectural Value

5.1.2. It has architectural value as a very early 19th century farmhouse, with distinctive double-height stairwell window to the rear (north) elevation of the original part of the farmhouse. There have been several sensitive extensions to the farmhouse, with most evident in the 1893 (the exception being the modern extension to the north).

Historic Value

5.1.3. The farmhouse also has historical significance in part due to its early 19th century origin but also due its location within the wider area. A public footpath runs adjacent to the grounds of the farmhouse and leads directly to Worsbrough, the original settlement in the area. The farmhouse also shares its name with Balk Road. The farm has been a prominent feature in the local landscape for several generations.

Contribution of Setting

5.1.4. The setting of Balk Farmhouse comprises its enclosed grounds and associated farm buildings, which have remained relatively unchanged, including the layout of the farmyard, which is still intact albeit no longer in use as a farmyard. The wider setting of the farmhouse comprises the farmland with which it was historically associated, which still exists to the north, although the farmland to the south and east has been redeveloped as modern housing estates. Balk Farmhouse's immediate setting, and the relatively unaltered views out towards the fields to the north, make a positive contribution to its heritage significance.

5.2 Barn approximately 15 metres to south-west of Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1192453)

5.2.1. The Grade II listed Barn was designated on 4 December 1986. As a Grade II listed building it is a heritage asset of **medium significance**. The significance of this designated heritage asset is outlined below.

Architectural and Historic Value

5.2.2. The barn has architectural and historic significance as an example of early 19th century barn, and also through its association with Balk Farmhouse.

5.2.3. The NHLE description states that the barn was included in the listing for its group value and has since been converted into a house. The architectural merits of the early 19th century

barn include a number of exterior features still intact, such the waggon entrance and stable door openings although both have been infilled with glazing.

Contribution of Setting

- 5.2.4. The barn building has an historical association with the other former farm buildings. Although no longer in agricultural use, they can still be identified as former farm buildings in terms of their architecture and built form. The former farmstead setting therefore makes a positive contribution to the barn's heritage significance.

5.3 Barn to the east of Former Farmyard: Non-designated Heritage Asset

- 5.3.1. The former barn building is a non-designated heritage asset of **low significance**.

Architectural and Historic Value

- 5.3.2. The former barn building has historic and architectural value as a remnant 19th century agricultural building. Although no longer in use as a farm building, its architectural style and close proximity to the Grade II listed Balk Farmhouse and Barn adds group value. The building has seen some change over time.



Plate 7: View looking north from Balk Close. Note that the non-designated barn to the east of the former farmyard is shown in the right of the image (indicted by red arrow).

6 Proposed Development and Potential Impacts on Heritage Assets

6.1 Proposed Development

6.1.1. The Proposed Development comprises:

- The construction of a new SPS to replace existing private septic tanks currently serving six dwellings at Balk Farm Court, Birdwell;
- a new access track to the SPS; and
- fencing around the new infrastructure.

6.2 Potential Impacts on Heritage Assets

6.2.1. The significance of the heritage assets has been assessed in **Section 5**, and the Proposed Development lies outside their boundaries. Therefore, there will be no direct physical impact to any of the heritage assets identified. The potential visual impacts associated with the Proposed Development are discussed below.

Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1151049)

- 6.2.2. The construction of a new SPS, to replace the existing private septic tanks, will add new infrastructure to the north of the garden (north side) to the Grade II listed Balk Farmhouse, thereby impacting views to and from the farmhouse. As it will be situated on farmland historically associated with the farmhouse, there will be some impact to its setting.
- 6.2.3. One of the principal views from the farmhouse is to the south towards its historical farmyard and associated farm buildings, and this will be unaffected by the proposed siting of the SPS and new access track, which will be to the north of the farmhouse garden (north side). The northern garden to Balk Farmhouse overlooks the Site and has hedges along the boundary it shares with the Site, thereby providing some screening between the listed building and the proposed SPS. The terrain of the land dips slightly to the north and the west, away from the listed building and towards Sheffield Road (A61) (**Plate 8**). This, combined with the set-back from Sheffield Road, will assist in reducing the visual prominence of the SPS, which will sit at approx. 1.35 metres in height at its highest point. In this regard, the SPS will be glimpsed from the field to the north of the Site (**Plate 9**) and Sheffield Road (**Plate 10**). The proposed fencing around the new SPS comprises wooden posts and rails, which is in keeping with the fencing to the south-west sections of the Balk Farmhouse grounds, notably along Sheffield Road.
- 6.2.4. The proposed access road to the SPS is to be constructed from Grasscrete, consisting of a grid of concrete blocks or open-cell structures with voids that allow grass or other vegetation to grow. Therefore, after the initial construction it will slowly integrate with the landscape, which will minimise the impact to the heritage asset's setting.

6.2.5. With the above in mind, the Proposed Development will result in some visual harm (**low level of less than substantial harm**) to the heritage significance and setting of Balk Farmhouse.



Plate 8: View looking west along the northern boundary of Balk Farmhouse (fence line in left of image) towards the A61 Sheffield Road (arrowed).



Plate 9: View towards the listed Balk Farmhouse (left) and Barn (marked by arrow) taken from field to the north looking south. Note that the SPS and associated infrastructure would be evident in this view.



Plate 10: View of the listed Balk Farmhouse (centre-right) and Barn (far-right) taken from Sheffield Road. The Site is evident in centre of image (arrowed). Note that this view is taken looking south-west.

Barn approximately 15 metres to south-west of Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1192453)

- 6.2.6. The location of the listed Barn to the south-west of Balk Farmhouse, and the alignment of its longer principal east and west elevation away from the Site, will ensure that its key features, such as its main waggon doors entrance openings (which face east and west), are not visually evident in the context of the Proposed Development. The setting of the Barn includes the former farmyard to the east and the associated former farm buildings around it, which reflects that it was built for its functionality rather than any outward views.
- 6.2.7. While the former barn building is now in use as a residence, its wider historic setting is still partially discernible, particularly in views from the field to the north. The Proposed Development will sit to the north of the heritage asset, but it will not be visually prominent in views of the latter from the north. In this regard, the Proposed Development will be glimpsed



in this context and it will result in a **low level of visual harm (less than substantial harm)** on the heritage significance and setting of the designated heritage asset.

Barn to the east of Former Farmyard: Non-designated Heritage Asset

- 6.2.8. The late 19th century barn's location to the south and east of the former farmyard, with Balk Farmhouse between the non-designated heritage asset and the Site, which limits intervisibility between them. Therefore, the Proposed Development will result in **no harm** to the significance and setting of the heritage asset.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Summary

- 7.1.1. This HS has been prepared following the principles set out in the NPPF and in line with relevant local and national guidance and best practice. It has assessed the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site. These comprise the Grade II listed Balk Farmhouse (NHLE 1151049), the Grade II listed Barn (NHLE 1192453) and the non-designated former barn building to the east of the farmyard.

7.2 Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1151049)

- 7.2.1. The construction of a new SPS to replace existing private septic tanks will introduce new infrastructure to the rear of the Grade II listed Balk Farmhouse, thereby impacting views to and from the north elevation of the farmhouse. The proposed access track to the SPS, will have minimal impact on the setting of the heritage asset, given the sensitive use of Grasscrete which will allow for the track to be integrated with the landscape over time. The proposed fencing around the new SPS comprises wooden posts and rails, which is in keeping with the fencing to the south-west sections of the Balk Farmhouse grounds, notably along Sheffield Road. Overall, the Proposed Development will result in some visual harm (**low level of less than substantial harm**) to the heritage significance and setting of Balk Farmhouse.

7.3 Barn approximately 15 metres to south-west of Balk Farmhouse: Grade II Listed (NHLE 1192453)

- 7.3.1. The Proposed Development will be glimpsed in the context of the heritage asset in views from the north and north-west. In this regard, it will result in some visual harm (**low level of less than substantial harm**) on the heritage significance and setting of the designated heritage asset.

7.4 Barn to the east of Former Farmyard: Non-designated Heritage Asset

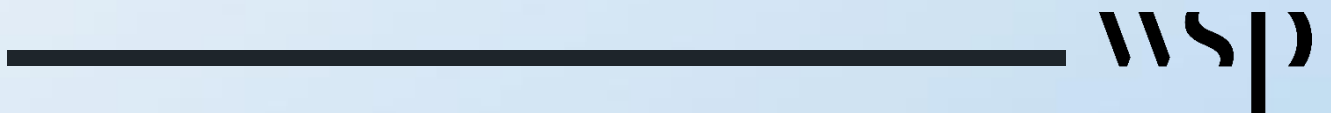
- 7.4.1. The Proposed Development will result in **no harm** to the significance and setting of the heritage asset, given that there is limited intervisibility between the Site and the non-designated heritage asset.

7.5 Recommendations

- 7.5.1. In order to reduce the impact of the Proposed Development, it is recommended that a hedge be planted alongside the fencing, where possible, to allow for further integration of the SPS within the landscape. The colour finish to the new SPS and associated fencing will also require careful consideration to ensure that it is not overly garish in the landscape.

Appendix A

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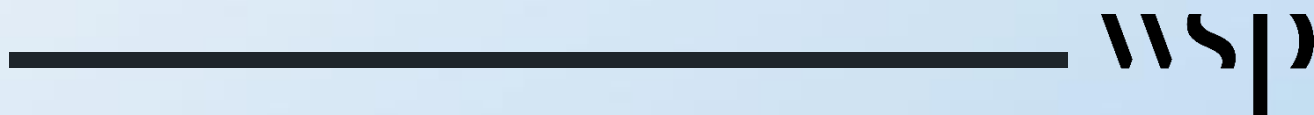
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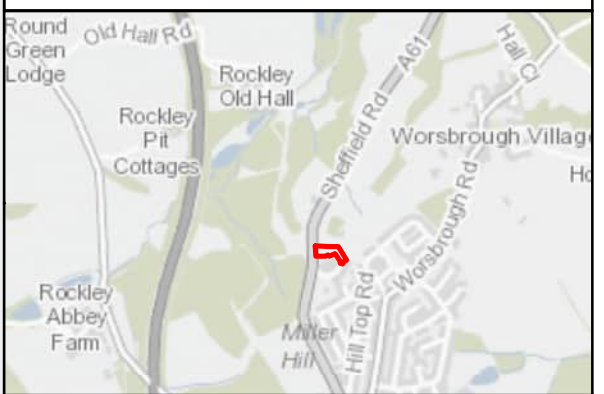
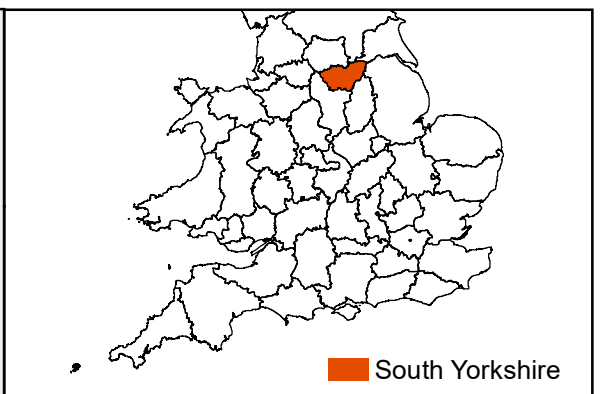
CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Ordnance Survey mapping from the 1st edition to the present day.


Appendix B

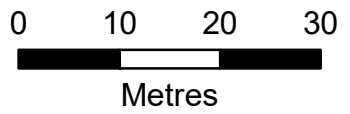
Figures





Key

 Site Boundary



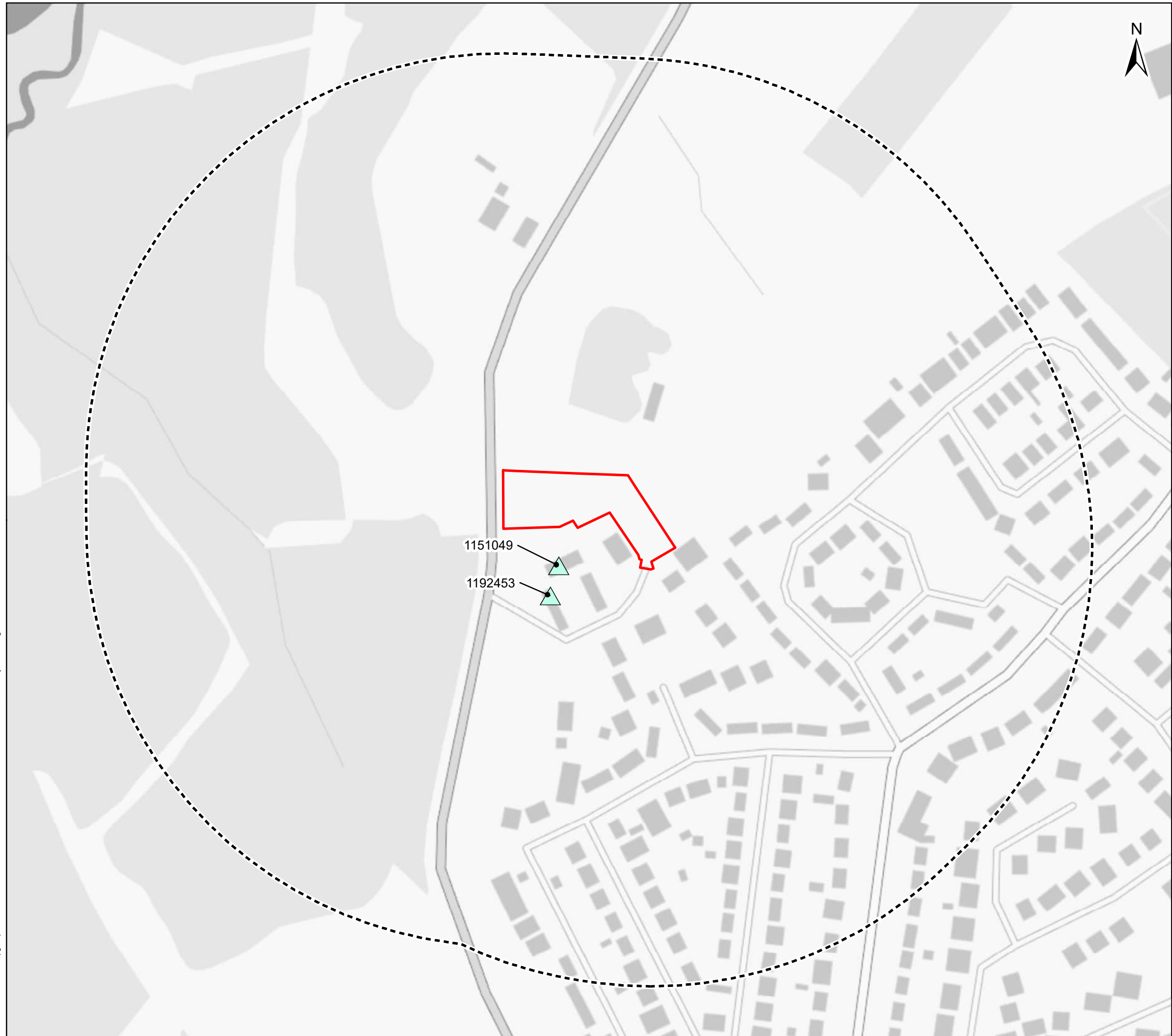
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Environmental Consultancy Services

Project:
Balk Farm Court

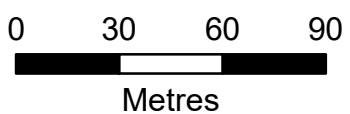
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Site location and Extent**

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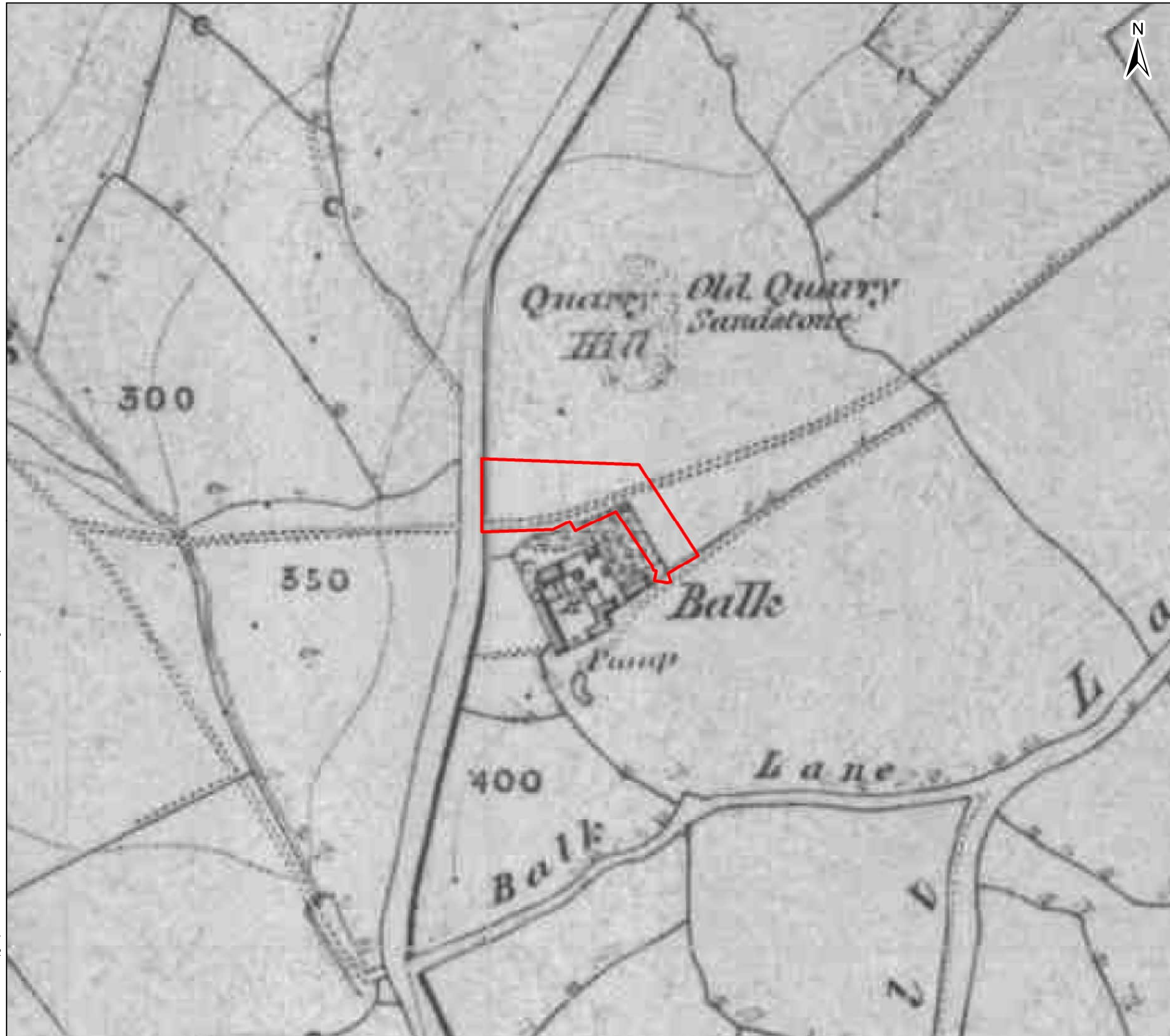
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 Date Saved: 10/29/2025



- Key**
- Site Boundary
 - Study Area (250m)
 - ▲ Grade II Listed Buildings

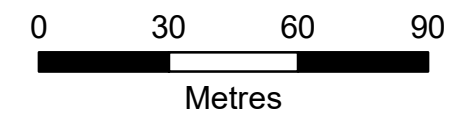


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Project:	Balk Farm Court
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Drawn: MH	Checked: PH Approved: CC



Key

Site Boundary



Client:

Environmental Consultancy Services

Project:

Balk Farm Court

Title

Figure B-3: Ordnance Survey Map of 1855

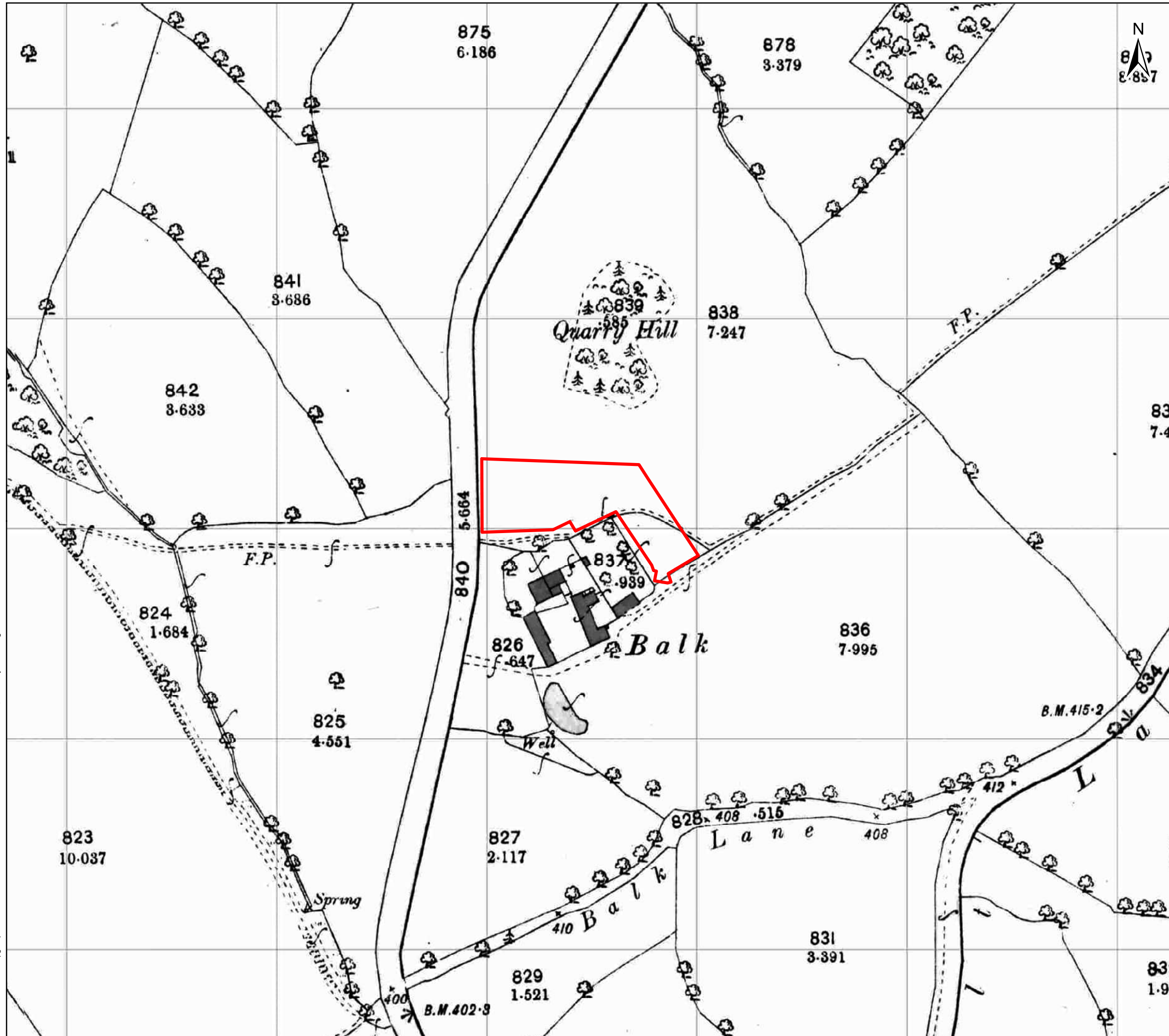
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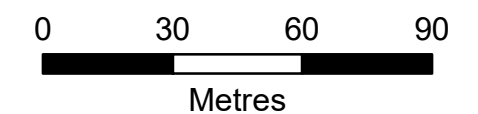
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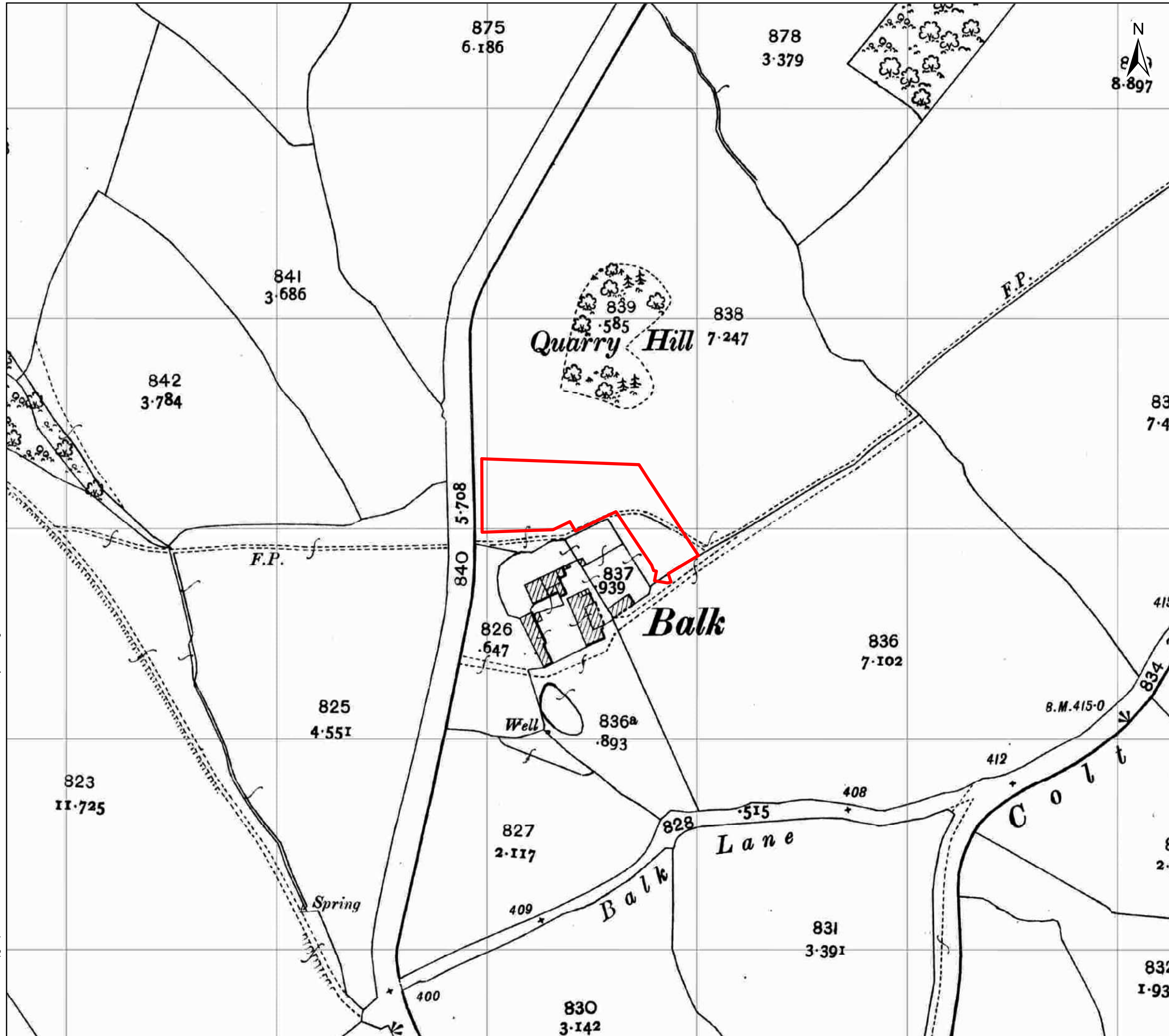
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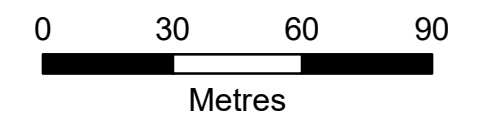
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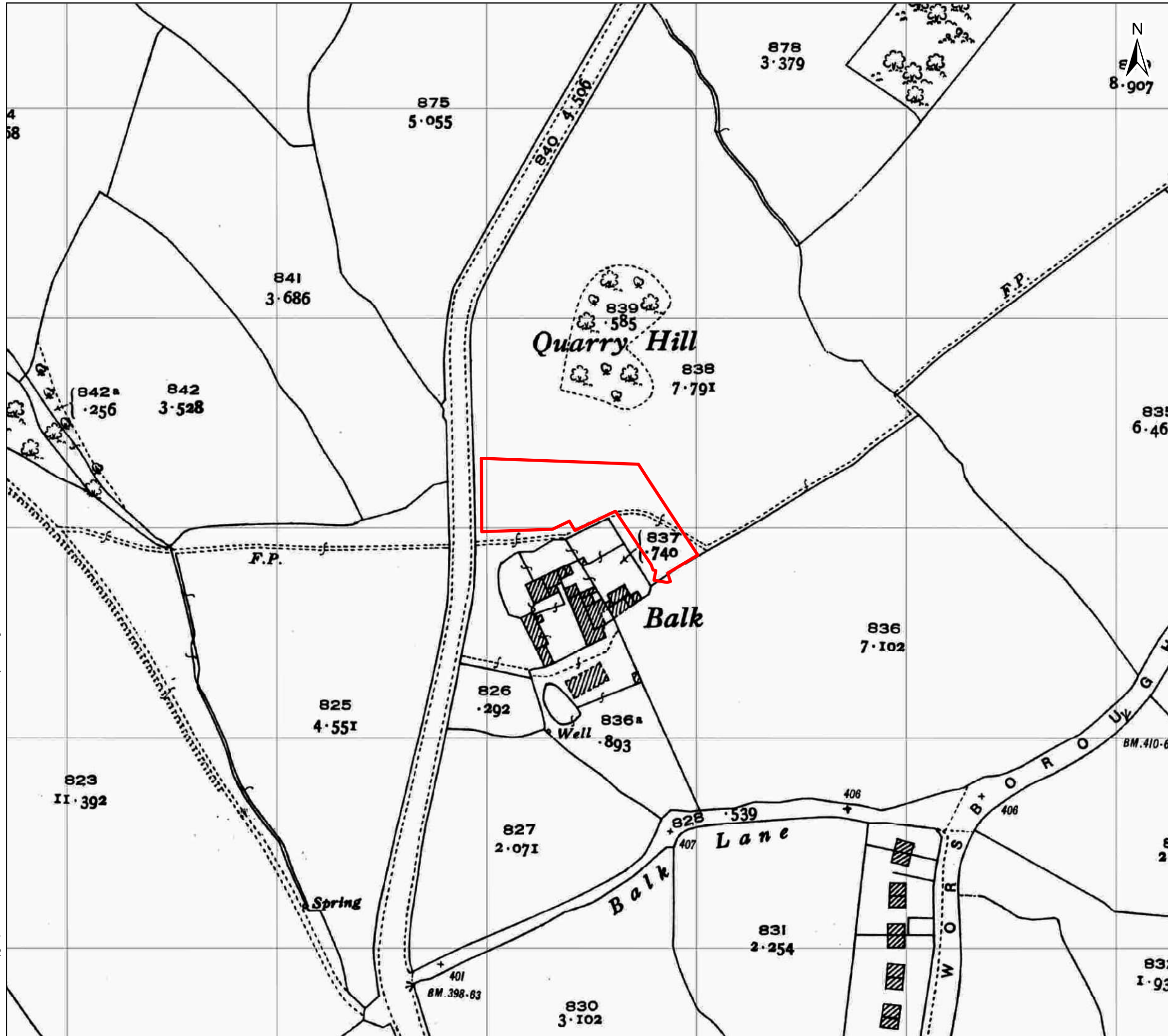
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Approved:	CC




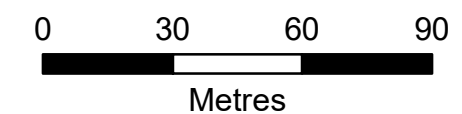
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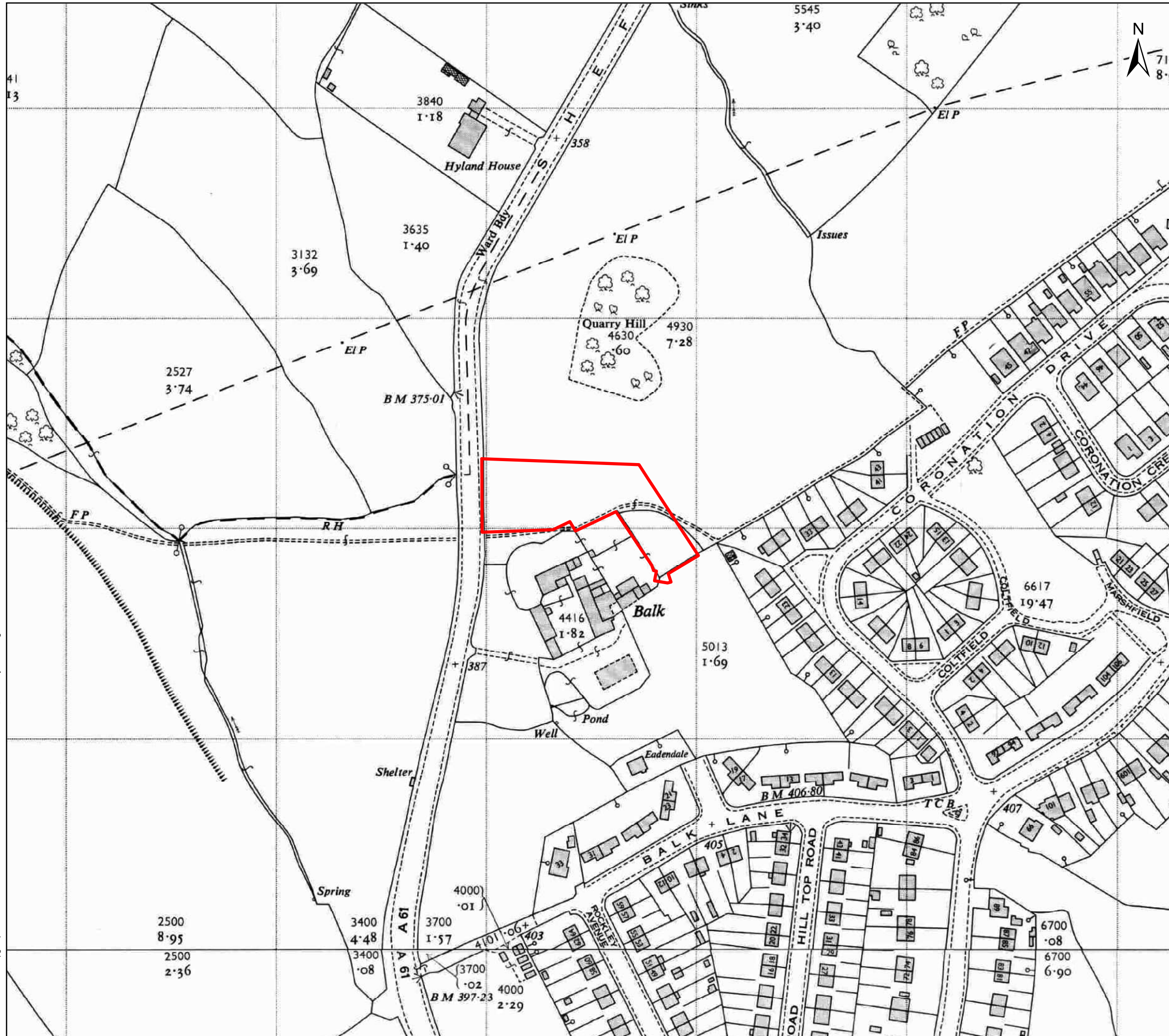
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Approved:	CC



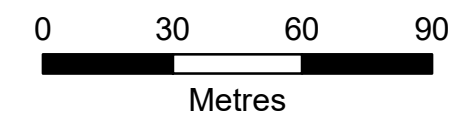
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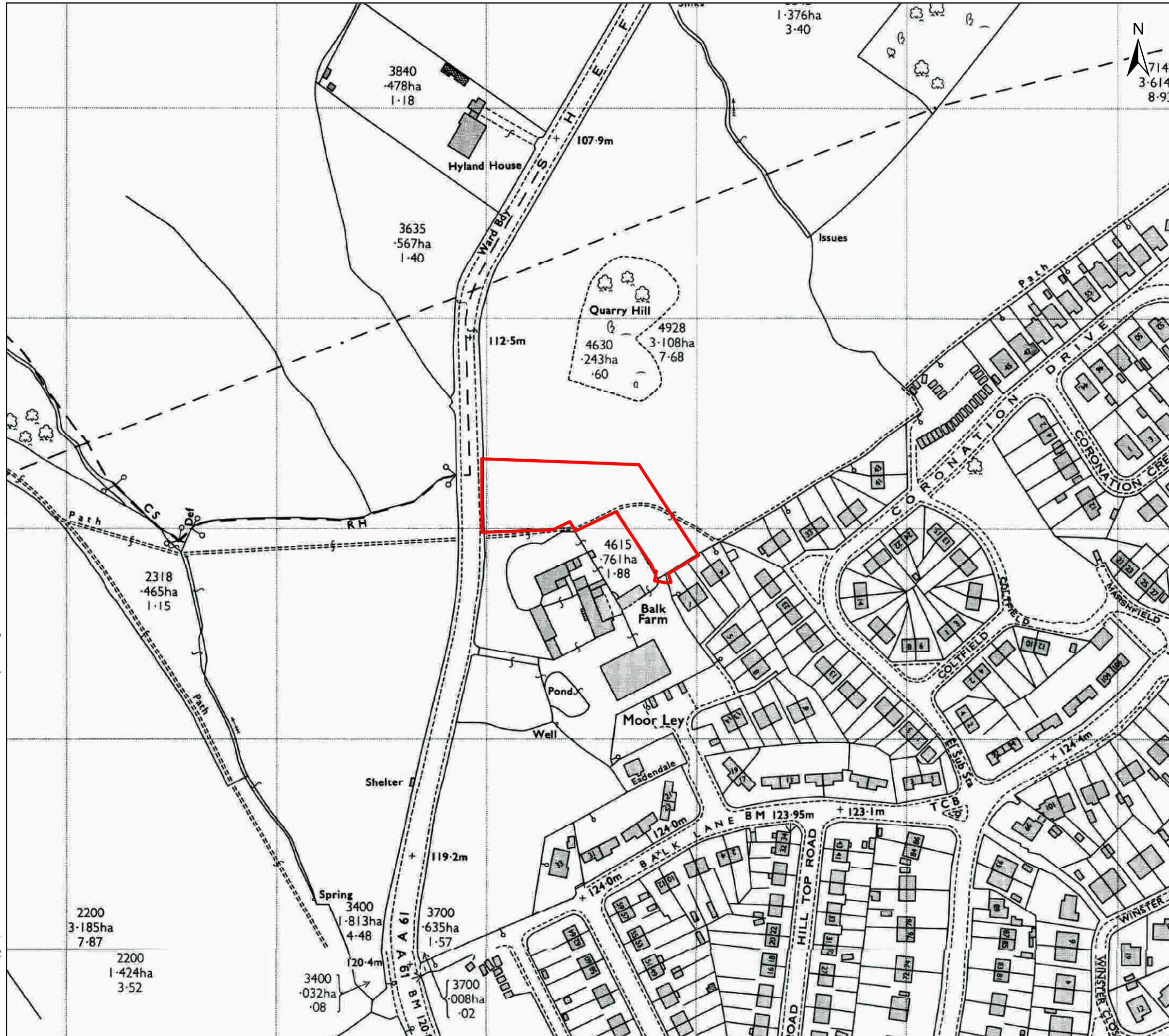
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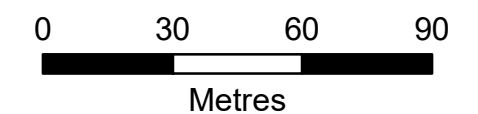
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Key
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Project:	Balk Farm Court	
Title:	Figure B-8: Ordnance Survey Map of 1970 -73	
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