



HERITAGE STATEMENT

**Land to rear of Burston
Garden Centre
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL2 2DS**

**On Behalf Of:
CastleOak Group**

**Date
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by CgMs Heritage, part of the RPS Group, on behalf of Castleoak Group to assess the potential impacts on the historic built environment arising from the proposed retirement village on land to the rear of Burston Garden Centre, Chiswell Green in St Albans. This report has been prepared to accompany an outline planning application.
- 2 Whilst the Site comprises no built heritage assets it has been demonstrated in this report that the proposed development has the capacity to impact upon two designated built heritage assets. Any potential impacts on these heritage assets will arise through development within their settings. Specifically the Grade II* listed Burston Manor to the north of the Site will experience a minor degree of less than substantial harm to its significance. An outbuilding associated with the Manor (Grade II listed) will likely experience a minor degree of less than substantial harm.
- 3 Any less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets engages Paragraph 134 of the NPPF, requiring that harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.
- 4 This Built Heritage Statement meets the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy. It provides sufficient information to inform the Local Planning Authority in respect of impacts on built heritage assets arising from the proposed development on land to the rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans.
- 5 The findings of this report are based on the known conditions at the time of writing and all findings and conclusions are time limited to no more than 3 years from the date of this report. All maps, plans and photographs are for illustrative purposes only.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by CgMs Heritage, part of the RPS Group, on behalf of CastleOak Group to assess the potential impacts on the historic built environment arising from proposed development on land to the rear of Burston Garden Centre, near St Albans, Hertfordshire (**hereafter referred to as 'the Site'**). **The Site is centred on NGR TL 13664 03669 and is c.4 hectares in extent (Fig.1).**
- 1.2 There are no built heritage assets within the Site. The proposed development does, however, have the potential to have impacts on a number of surrounding designated built heritage assets arising from development within the settings of these assets. A search radius of 1km has been used in order to identify built heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed development. Within this search area there is one Grade II* listed building and six Grade II listed buildings. The Park Street Conservation Area falls in part within this search radius as do a number of buildings which are identified on the HER and are therefore potentially worthy of being buildings of local interest.
- 1.3 Accordingly, there is a requirement under paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework to identify and assess any heritage assets (both designated and non-designated) that may be affected by a proposed development and to assess the contribution that their settings, potentially including the Site, make to that significance. This enables an understanding of the likely impact that the proposed development will have upon the significance of the heritage assets identified in this Heritage Statement. This report makes reference to the relevant legislation contained within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and both national and local planning policy. In addition, relevant Historic England guidance, notably *The Setting of Heritage Assets* and *Conservation Principles*, has been consulted to inform the judgements made. Relevant information, including the listing descriptions for the relevant heritage assets have also been consulted in preparing this Built Heritage Statement.
- 1.4 The conclusions reached in this report are the result of historic research, a walkover survey of the Site and publicly accessible locations in the surrounding area, map studies and the application of professional judgement. A Site walkover was undertaken in April 2018.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The current national policy system identifies, through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that applications should consider the potential impact of **development upon 'heritage assets'**. This term includes: **designated heritage assets** which possess a statutory designation (for example Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas); and non-designated heritage assets, typically compiled by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) and incorporated into a Local List or recorded on the Historic Environment Record.

Legislation

- 2.2 Where any development may affect designated heritage assets, there is a legislative framework to ensure proposed works are developed and considered with due regard to their impact on the historic environment. This extends from primary legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 2.3 Section 66 (1) further states that special regard must be given by the authority in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing listed buildings and their setting.
- 2.4 The meaning and effect of these duties have been considered by the courts in **recent cases, including the Court of Appeal's decision in relation to Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northamptonshire District Council [2014] EWCA Civ 137.**
- 2.5 The Court agreed within the High Court's judgement that Parliament's intention in enacting Section 66 (1) was that **decision-makers should give 'considerable importance and weight' to the desirability of preserving (i.e. keeping from harm) the setting of listed buildings.**

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), March 2012)

- 2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the principal document that **sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.** It has been purposefully created to provide a framework within which LPAs and the local populace can produce their own distinctive Local

and Neighbourhood Plans respectively. Such Plans consequently reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

- 2.7 When determining planning applications, the NPPF directs LPAs to apply the **presumption in favour of sustainable development; the 'golden thread' that is expected to run through the plan-making and decision-making process.** Where a development plan is absent, silent or out-of-date, permission should be granted except where adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh those benefits, when assessed against NPPF policies as a whole; or where specific policies contained within the NPPF (including those with regard to designated heritage assets) indicate that development should be restricted to some degree.
- 2.8 The NPPF defines a heritage asset 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"*. This includes both designated and non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.9 Section 7 Requiring Good Design reinforces the importance of good design in achieving sustainable development by ensuring the creation of inclusive and high quality places. Paragraph 58 affirms the need for new design to: function well and add to the quality of the area in which it is built; establish a strong sense of place; and respond to local character and history, reflecting the built identity of the surrounding area.
- 2.10 Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment contains paragraphs which relate to development proposals that have an effect upon the historic environment. Such policies provide the framework that LPAs need to refer to when setting out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their Local Plans.
- 2.11 The NPPF advises LPAs to take into account the following points when drawing up strategies for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and preserving them in a viable use consistent with their conservation;
 - The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that the conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - The desirability of new development in making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

- Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
- 2.12 These considerations should be taken into account when determining planning applications and, in addition, the positive contribution that the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality.
- 2.13 In order to determine applications Paragraph 128 states that LPAs should require applicants to demonstrate the significance of any heritage assets likely to be affected by development proposals, including the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to each heritage **asset's significance and sufficient to understand what impact will be caused upon** their significance. This is supported by Paragraph 129 which requires LPAs to take this assessment into account when considering applications.
- 2.14 Paragraphs 132-134 consider the impact of development proposals upon the significance of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 132 states that where a development is proposed that would affect the significance of a designated heritage asset, **great weight should be given to the asset's conservation and that the greater an asset's significance, the greater this weight should be.** Paragraph 133 states that where a development would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that such harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits or certain criteria are met. Paragraph 134 emphasises that where a proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, bearing in mind the great weight highlighted in Paragraph 132.
- 2.15 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that *"Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably."* Paragraph 138 proceeds to state that *"not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance."*

National Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (DCLG)

- 2.16 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been adopted in order to aid the application of the NPPF. It reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle.
- 2.17 Key elements of the guidance relate to assessing harm. It states that substantial harm is a high bar that may not arise in many cases and that while the level of harm will be at the discretion of the decision maker, generally the degree of substantial harm will only be at a level where a development seriously affects a **key element of an asset's special interest. It is the degree of harm, rather than the scale of development that is to be assessed.**

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, April 2008)

- 2.18 **Conservation Principles outlines Historic England's approach to the sustainable management of the historic environment. While primarily intended to ensure consistency in Historic England's own advice and guidance, the document is recommended to LPAs to ensure that all decisions about change affecting the historic environment are informed and sustainable.**
- 2.19 The guidance describes a range of heritage values which enables the significance of assets to be established systematically, with the four main 'heritage values' being: evidential value; historical value; aesthetic value; and communal value.

Overview: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning

- 2.20 The PPS5 Practice Guide was withdrawn in March 2015 and replaced with three Good Practice Advice in Planning Notes (GPAs) published by English Heritage (now Historic England). GPA1: The Historic Environment in Local Plans provides guidance to local planning authorities to help them make well informed and effective local plans. GPA2: Managing Significance in Decision-Making includes technical advice on the repair and restoration of historic buildings and alterations to heritage assets to guide local planning authorities, owners, practitioners and other interested parties. GPA 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets replaces guidance published in 2011. These are complemented by the Historic England Advice Notes in Planning which include HEA1: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (February 2016), HEA2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (February 2016), HEA3: The Historic Environment and Site

Allocations in Local Plans (October 2015), and HEA4: Tall Buildings (December 2015).

GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition; December 2017)

- 2.21 This advice note focuses on the management of change within the setting of heritage assets. This document replaces GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (March 2017) and **'Seeing History in the View' (English Heritage, 2011)** in order to aid practitioners with the implementation of national policies and guidance relating to the historic environment found within the NPPF and PPG. The guidance is largely a continuation of the philosophy and approach of the 2011 and 2015 document and does not present a divergence in either the definition of setting or the way in which it should be assessed.
- 2.22 **As with the NPPF the document defines setting 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'. Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context.** The guidance emphasises that setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, and that its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. It also states that elements of setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.23 While setting is largely a visual term, with views considered to be an important consideration in any assessment of the contribution that setting makes to the significance of an asset, and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by other environmental factors including noise, vibration and **odour. Historical and cultural associations may also form part of the asset's setting, which can inform or enhance the significance of the heritage asset.**
- 2.24 This document provides guidance on practical and proportionate decision making with regards to the management of proposed development and the setting of heritage assets. It is stated that the protection of the setting of a heritage asset need not prevent change and that decisions relating to such issues need to be based on the nature, extent and level of the significance of a heritage asset, further weighing up the potential public benefits associated with the proposals. It is further stated that changes within the setting of a heritage asset may have positive or neutral effects. It is stated that the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets by their settings will vary depending on the nature of the heritage asset and its setting and that different heritage assets may have

different abilities to accommodate change within their settings without harming the significance of the asset and therefore setting should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Historic England recommend using a series of detailed steps in order to assess the potential effects of a proposed development on the setting and significance of a heritage asset. The 5-step process is as follows:

1. Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
2. Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset(s) or allow the significance to be appreciated;
3. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it;
4. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and,
5. Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

Local Policy and Guidance

- 2.25 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.
- 2.26 The Council is currently consulting on a draft Detailed Local Plan and Strategic Local Plan for St Albans City and District. Until its formal adoption the current Local Plan for the St Albans District is made up of the saved policies set out in the District Local Plan Review 1994. The relevant heritage related policies are set out below:

Policy 86 Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

- i) In considering any application for listed building consent for the demolition, alteration or extension of a listed building (and also any application for planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting), the Council will have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses.*

- 2.27 Draft policy within the Draft Strategic Local Plan 2016 relevant to the study site includes the following:

Policy SLP3 - Historic Environment and Townscape Character

The unique character of the District's historic environment, which greatly contributes to a distinctive local 'sense of place' and a high quality of life for residents, businesses and stakeholders, will be conserved and enhanced. This includes both designated and undesignated heritage assets, which all contribute to this unique character. Heritage assets will be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Great weight will be given to the conservation of the District's designated heritage assets, which include Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas. Currently undiscovered / undesignated heritage assets with equivalent interest will be similarly valued and conserved.

Heritage assets worthy of conservation also include the District's high level of above and below ground archaeology, locally listed buildings, locally listed historic parks and gardens and other locally recorded features of heritage significance.

Intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. Wherever possible, heritage assets will be put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation as long as this would not be in direct conflict with other policies in the Local Plan and/or national guidance/legislation.

Where development leads to unavoidable change to a heritage asset, or provides an opportunity to increase knowledge of the affected asset, conditions or planning obligations will be used to ensure effective recording and museum archiving of the records created.

New development must respect important views of the District's built heritage and landscapes and enhance townscape character.

3.0 HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT APPRAISAL

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The following section includes an appraisal of the historic development of the Site and surroundings, together with an assessment of the significance of those built heritage assets that have the potential to be impacted by the proposed development, including consideration of the contribution of their settings to their significance. Section 4 will assess how the development proposals may impact on that significance.

3.2 Historic Development

- 3.2.1 It is noted in the HER and accompanying CgMs Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Ref JA/DH/JAC23515) that there was evidence of human activity in the area in prehistoric times. The area is perhaps best known for the Roman activity with the Roman settlement of *Verulamium* (St Albans) located to the north-east of the Site. It is likely that the Site formed part of a settled agricultural landscape (CgMs ref JA/DH/JAC23515).
- 3.2.2 Little is known about post-Roman St Albans (Niblett and Thompson in CgMs ref JA/DH/JAC23515), though it is likely that it focussed around the Saxon Church and subsequent St Albans Cathedral. Offa, King of Mercia, made a grant of lands and towns to the monastery of St Albans in c.795 which probably included the lands of Burston, which suggests that the manor of Burston originated during the Anglo-Saxon period (VCH 1908 in CgMs ref JA/DH/JAC23515).
- 3.2.3 Burston Manor is not recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) though this may be on account of it forming part of the wider landholdings for the monastery of St Albans. An historic settlement is recorded in the HER as having been located around Burston Manor though there is nothing to indicate a nucleated settlement or, if there was, no more than a hamlet (HER ref 1003, TL 135 037) (CgMs ref JA/DH/JAC23515).
- 3.2.4 In the post-medieval period a large farmstead was present immediately north of Burston Manor. The 1766 Andrews and Drury Map of Hertfordshire (not reproduced in this report) shows the Site as comprising open land south of the Manor. The trackway leading from the manor runs south-east across the westernmost reaches of the Site to connect with local roads beyond.

- 3.2.5 Bryant's Map of 1822 (not reproduced in this report) identifies the Site as being undeveloped and in probable agricultural use. It also shows the woodland, still presently seen in 2018, to the east and south of the Site. The 1838 St Stephens parish Tithe Map (not reproduced in this report), shows the retained woodland and identifies the Site as forming two field parcels in arable and pasture use.
- 3.2.6 The 1872 Ordnance Survey Map (Fig 2) shows the Site as forming part of three field parcels. The presence of Birchwood Farm immediately south of the Site within Birch Wood is also recorded. Boundary tree planting is noted between these parcels. The northernmost field parcel adjacent to Burston Manor has parkland tree planting with the moated enclosure seemingly forming the only boundary between the fields south of the Manor House and the curtilage of the manor. Whilst it has not been possible to confirm an association (functional and/or ownership) between the Manor House and the Site, the 1872 mapping suggests that by virtue of several trackways leading from Burston Manor Farm through the Site that there is some probable association. Little changes by the 1898 Ordnance Survey mapping (Fig 3).
- 3.2.7 By 1924 (Fig 4), the Site has not markedly changed, though a separate field parcel, immediately south of the moated enclosure of the Manor House has been created with tree planting within. This forms the extent of the Manor House grounds seen at the present time. This mapping shows the Burston Manor Farmstead at its greatest extent with several ranges and infill development.
- 3.2.8 The 1938 Ordnance Survey mapping (Fig 5) shows the new road serving St Albans to the north of Burston Manor, which later becomes the A405 North Orbital Road. Feeding off this are areas of sporadic housing development. To the south-east of the Site Birchwood Bungalow is now noted adjacent to Birchwood Farm. The Burston Manor Farmstead has reduced in size with the removal of a number of ranges and outbuildings.
- 3.2.9 The 1960 Ordnance Survey mapping (Fig 6) shows the progressive development of land in the wider surrounds of the Site including to the north and south of the Site. The Site does not largely change however.
- 3.2.10 The 1972-78 (Fig 7) Ordnance Survey mapping shows the Burston Nurseries for the first time to the south-west of the Manor House, comprising several glasshouses and outbuildings. The Site remains undeveloped and likely in broader agricultural use or as unmanaged grassland. The wider surrounds have been

heavily developed for housing estates including to the north and south beyond Birch Wood.

3.2.11 1995 Aerial imagery (not reproduced in this report) shows the use of much the western reaches of the Site for horticulture with extensive planting beds and polytunnels and glass houses. The remaining eastern reaches of the Site remain as unmanaged grassland. The full extent of the wholesale and retail nursery is noted spreading west of the Site. The aerial view also shows new areas of tree planting within the Site including east of Burston Manor. The farmstead associated with Burston Manor has been further reduced in size by this time with only remnant farm buildings of a later date retained. The Site and surrounds remain as seen here through until the present day (2018) (Fig 8).

3.3 **Site Assessment**

3.3.1 The broadly rectangular Site is situated to the south-west of St Albans near to the settlement of Chiswell Green (Plates 1-11). The principal part of the Site (less proposed access road) is broadly level and in horticultural use with the eastern extent unmanaged grassland. The horticultural element comprises planting beds, polytunnels and glass houses, and a number of late twentieth-century industrial style buildings located against the boundary of the Manor House gardens. There is no definable boundary between the eastern and western extent of the Site. Consequently the eastern extent appears as part of the wider nursery operations.

3.3.2 The Site is heavily enclosed on the east and southern flank with mature woodland limiting any onward visibility beyond this. The western flank abuts the Burston nurseries outside of the Site and comprises glasshouses and planting beds. To the north the Burston Manor House curtilage abuts the Site. The majority of the boundary is formed with mature trees. Together with mature tree planting within the private gardens of the Manor House, much of the Manor House is screened from the Site. To the east of the Manor House curtilage a further belt of mature tree planting (outside of the Site) screens views in this direction from the northern reaches of the Site. A two-metre boundary fence runs the entire length of the eastern boundary separating the Site from a public bridleway. To the south, temporary Heras fencing separates the Site from Birch Wood. The Site seamlessly flows into the wider nursery complex with glass houses and outbuildings on the **Site's western edge**.

3.3.3 The proposed access drive and entrance element of the Site presently comprises ongoing nursery activities, including external storage, single storey post-war

buildings and glasshouses. Much of the Site here is bounded by fencing with some palisade style security fencing present. The interface between the Site and the A405 road presently comprises an access for the nursery and garden centre, and a separate access for the Manor House and other nearby buildings. Further security fencing provides some enclosure around additional car parking for the retail nursery which sits to the immediate north of the Burston Manor House grounds.

- 3.3.4 In the wider surrounds, views from the Site are largely restricted to the existing nursery complex. It is contained to the east and south by the mature woodland planting. Slightly longer views are granted west over parts of the wider nursery outside of the Site, though contained by tree screening beyond this. To the north views are granted, in places, into the gardens of Burston Manor House (with some views of the listed buildings within also). Further to the north-east views feed into the curtilages of later post-war housing, though partially screened by mature tree planting along the northern boundary.
- 3.4 In return views the Site cannot be easily seen from the wider surroundings although some filtered views are likely obtained from the limited number of dwellings which back onto the Site to the north and from within the wider nursery. The woodland with boundary fencing, in parts, limits views from the south and east.

Assessment of Heritage Assets

- 3.4.1 This report only considers above ground, built heritage assets. Any below ground archaeological assets are considered in a separate CgMs report (July 2017 ref. JA/DH/JAC23515). A 1 km search area was established for the purpose of the site walkover survey to identify built heritage assets potentially affected by the proposed development of the Site. The contained nature of the Site, its immediate surrounds and relatively level topography meant that it was not deemed appropriate to assess any built heritage assets beyond this search area. Within this search area there are seven listed buildings, all of which are Grade II listed except the Grade II* Burston Manor House. The Park Street Conservation Area falls in part within the search area. The remnant farm buildings associated with Burston Manor Farm are noted in the HER, though they are heavily screened from the Site and have been heavily altered so much so that it is suggested in this report that they are of the lowest significance, if any, with any interest largely in the contribution that they make to the setting of the Manor House itself. The surviving farm buildings also have planning consent for residential conversion

which has already commenced. Elsewhere, other built heritage assets are noted on the HER including Tenterden House, a nineteenth-century country house (now care home) some 650 metres south-west of the Site.

3.4.2 The site walkover survey and associated research demonstrates that of these built heritage assets the majority share no intervisibility with the Site and also bear no historic ownership or functional associations with the Site. The site walk-over survey also included Park Street Conservation Area, listed buildings south-east in How Wood and Tenterden House. Additionally it also includes the remnant farm complex associated with Burston Manor Farm, which, given their alterations and the limited intervisibility will not be considered individually. These farm buildings will however form part of the wider consideration in respect of Burston Manor House.

3.4.3 It is considered that the following built heritage assets may be affected by the proposed development on Site, and are detailed below and at Appendix 1:

- **Burston Manor** (NHL ref 1102862) Grade II* listed. Located c.60 metres north of the Site (Plates 12-14); and
- **Outbuilding Immediately to East of Burston Manor House** (NHL ref. 1347270) located c.60 metres north of the Site (Plate 12-14).

3.4.4 Given the close proximity and associations between the Manor House and the immediately adjacent and separately listed outbuilding it is considered that in the interests of avoiding repetition these two heritage assets will be assessed under the combined assessment under the title of '**Burston Manor Grouping**'.

Burston Manor Grouping

3.4.5 **Significance:** Given the degree of screening and the private ownership of the Grouping it was difficult to obtain full views of the heritage assets, instead relying on those glimpsed views from the surrounds, images available online and detail within text based resources. Burston Manor House, now a private dwelling, originates from the first half of the twelfth century. The two-storey heritage asset has been much altered since this time including in the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries and was re-cased in the early-mid nineteenth century (listing citation). The building is timber framed with white painted weatherboarding to parts. To the rear the re-casing has resulted in a largely red brick rear elevation facing onto the

Site. A plain tile roof is present as are sash windows on the front elevation (listing citation). Notable architectural detailing from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries includes a diamond mullion window, a four-centred arch door and original fifteenth century wall (listing citation). Elsewhere a gabled seventeenth-century projection to the rear is noted. Internally the building has fifteenth-century screens and evidence of geometrical relief plasterwork dating from the seventeenth century.

- 3.4.6 The Manor House presents important aesthetic and evidential value as a small Manor House with twelfth century origins derived through its materials usage, scale and the differing approaches to design as the building evolved over the centuries. Of particular note: the taste for re-casing timber framed buildings, reflecting the perceived desire to have brick rather than timber framed buildings as a symbol of wealth. Internally there exists important architectural detailing which also help to reinforce the relative importance of the house. The Grouping may share an historic functional association with the Site given its proximity to the heritage assets, and the probable occupancy or ownership of the Site when previously in agricultural use and as part of a wider estate. Any possible association could not however be confirmed.
- 3.4.7 The Manor sits close to the separately listed outbuilding to its east. This outbuilding was originally built as a granary and dovecote. It is single storey and built in the seventeenth century and later altered in the early nineteenth century. It is constructed in red brick with a plain tile pyramidal roof with a wooden ventilator at the pinnacle. The brick eaves are dentilled. A seventeenth-century wall running from this building also falls within the listing. The wall has saw-toothed corbels and saddleback coping (listing citation). A twentieth-century garage door has been inserted into the south elevation (listing citation) which has negatively impacted upon the overall significance. It could not be confirmed whether the building is in its original use.
- 3.4.8 Like the principal Manor House, the Outbuilding exhibits a high historic value as a component of a small gentry house through its design and materials used, but also through its use as a dovecote and granary which provides a visual identifier as to the relative wealth of the manor. It shares a strong and important group

value with the Manor House in supporting its role and relative wealth as a Manor House.

3.4.9 Both buildings have been altered throughout their existence, which has included the removal of original fabric. More recent detrimental alterations include inserting a garage door in the separately listed outbuilding, and, to a degree, changes to the setting including the cessation of farm operations and neighbouring uses (discussed below).

3.4.10 **Setting:** The Burston Manor Grouping is primarily experienced within its immediate and intermediate setting of the surrounding former farmstead and private gardens including, importantly the remains of the moated enclosure within these grounds. The remnant farmstead buildings have been heavily altered, having been converted to a single residential unit. These buildings, in themselves are of very low significance. Consequently they make a very limited contribution to the overall significance of the Burston Manor grouping. These buildings are no longer in agricultural use and that any contribution they make to **the assets'** setting relates to the residual historic functional role in the overall former manor and farmstead complex comprising house, dovecote/granary, moated enclosure and location of the farmstead.

3.4.11 The setting of the Manor House has changed over centuries, including the construction of the farmstead to the north and the separately listed outbuilding. The Manor House was likely to have previously existed in relative isolation and in a largely rural context. The Outbuilding derives much of its setting contribution from its immediate surrounds of the Manor House to which it was once functionally associated to. The wider surrounds are more inconsequential to its significance, though the once rural surrounds would have reinforced its role as part of a manorial estate and would have been a positive visual addition.

3.4.12 The post-war period has seen the greatest change to the surrounds, including the development of the nursery around much of its flank and the wider residential development. Its present context is therefore much altered from its pre-twentieth century surrounds. The Grouping is heavily screened from much of the surrounds by mature tree planting though there are glimpsed views of the Manor House and upper reaches of the outbuilding from the nursery and Site to the south and immediate west of the Manor House boundary. The moated enclosure cannot be seen, and any glimpses from the Site of the former farm complex behind are limited to parts of the roof. The experience of the assets are inconclusive as to their role, associations with the manor or any relative interest. From the Site it

remains relatively difficult to fully appreciate the significance of the Manor House with it appearing as a large detached dwelling in landscaped grounds. From closer surrounds around the boundary, there appear later twentieth century alterations, including to one of the prominent chimney stacks which alter the perception of the building as a Manor House with twelfth century origins also.

3.4.13 Return views from the upper reaches of the Manor House are likely to be defined by the mature woodland around much of the Site with glimpses of the planting beds, greenhouses and polytunnels. The loss of an agricultural use within the Site and surrounds in the middle of the twentieth century has markedly changed these **parts of the assets' setting**. Additionally, the commercial activity associated with the nursery operations including plant movements has also altered the once rural surrounds. They are also now set close to the busy North Orbital immediately to the north. Further traffic movements within their setting are derived from the retail garden centre. It is recognised that at night that much of the Site will be non-illuminated which will present a perceived isolation when viewed from the south. The main body of the Site to the south of the Grouping, whilst largely brownfield in use, is relatively undeveloped with few buildings upon it. In this context the Site presents an openness that accords loosely with an undeveloped open landscape which once surrounded the entire Grouping.

3.4.14 The Site makes an overall negative contribution to the overall significance of the Grouping through the loss of the agricultural use and the visibility of the nursery complex from within the gardens. This is offset by the degree of screening which are likely to limit views from within and around the Manor House to only the private grounds. The changes to the surrounding landscape around the Grouping, and the visual separation between the curtilage of the Manor House and the Site mean that the contribution that setting now makes to significance is now much reduced, with the extended setting providing the most minimal contribution to significance. Setting overall, in terms of the grounds and the surviving elements of the moat, is considered to make an important, yet secondary contribution to the overall significance given the changes seen to the surrounds over the centuries.

3.4.15 **Significance and Setting Summary:** The Burston Manor House Grouping comprises heritage assets of high national significance as recognised by their Grade II* and Grade II listed status. This significance is primarily derived from their architectural and historic special interest of the buildings in the Grouping and their attendant group value. The buildings within the Grouping have evidently

been altered over time, which has removed some original fabric. Some of these changes have been detrimental to the overall significance including. The assets' wider setting has been heavily altered over time, including the use of the Site and near surrounds as a commercial nursery, but also the development of housing estates in the near surrounds. Consequently, though setting remains an important contributor, primarily the immediate and intermediate setting of the Manor House grounds, it makes a secondary contribution to the overall significance of the Grouping. The Site makes a negative contribution to the overall significance of the Grouping.

4.0 PROPOSALS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

4.1 Proposals

4.1.1 Reference should be made to other accompanying plans and documentation which have been prepared to accompany the planning application for the retirement village on the Site. These accompanying documents include the Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement and illustrative masterplan. This section sets out a summary of the broad development proposals:

- Construction of a retirement village comprising primarily sheltered housing units, assisted living flats and a care home. Additional features will include a club house and open space;
- Off-street private parking spaces are provided for all of the single storey dwellings with dedicated car parking areas for assisted living and care home accommodation;
- The assisted living flats will be 2.5 storeys, the care home will be to 2 storeys and the sheltered housing units; single storey;
- The broad development layout is in a grid pattern throughout the Site;
- Vehicular access will be from the A405 at the present entrance to the retail garden centre, north-west of Burston Manor. A dedicated access road will run along the western boundary of the Manor House curtilage before tapering into the principal part of the Site below the Manor House grounds. This new entrance will also serve Burston Manor House and adjacent properties to the north east of this heritage asset. Additional landscaping and planting will be provided where the present parking immediately adjacent to the Manor House entrance is located. Pedestrian access will also be provided from footpaths south and east of the Site adjacent to Birch Wood and How Wood; and,
- Dedicated areas of open space including a central village green and a number of courtyard gardens will be provided. Throughout the Site there will be high levels of tree planting and native hedgerow planting along roadways and around open spaces and car parking.

4.2 **Assessment of Impact:**

- 4.2.1 The below assessment considers the likely impacts upon the significance of the previously identified built heritage assets arising from the proposed development. This assessment has been made in accordance with Historic England guidance ***GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets***. Mitigation measures will be proposed where required as a means of minimising harm.

Burston Manor Grouping

- 4.2.2 Any functional associations with the Site have been previously largely lost with the use of much of the Site as a commercial nursery and both Site and Manor House Grouping are in separate ownerships now, meaning that any functional associations are historic only. It remains unclear whether the Site was owned or tenanted by Burston Manor. The remnant unmanaged grassland on the eastern reaches of the Site represents a last vestige of the **asset's historic** pastoral landscape setting, though the changes to the surrounds of the Manor House through the mature and in places dense garden planting essentially create a visual enclosure to the Manor House when viewed in the context of the surrounds and removes any visual connections which might previously have been seen with the Site.
- 4.2.3 The upper elements of Burston Manor House are visible from parts of the Site including from the south-eastern reaches and, more closely, along the route of the proposed access road along the heritage asset's western boundary. From other parts of the Site, including the southern reaches, there is robust screening which limits any views of the Grouping. From within much of the Site the views granted of the Manor House do not enable the viewer to experience the special interest of the heritage asset or indeed that of the Outbuilding. There is no visual evidence or clues as to the existence of the moated enclosure from within the Site given the degree of screening **around the Manor House's grounds**.
- 4.2.4 Stronger views from along the proposed access road enable better views of the heritage asset, though still through boundary planting and therefore notably filtered. The proposed development will likely be partly visible from views south-east from the house, through the break in mature planting evident within the gardens of the Manor House. Currently these views would likely incorporate polytunnels and planting beds. Whilst the Site is predominantly brownfield land, the present horticultural activity on Site comprises relatively low rise development. The proposed development will introduce into views roofscapes

from the single-storey dwellings closest to the southern boundary with probable longer distant views of the 2.5 storey assisted living buildings further south within the Site. The mature woodland planting marking the edge of the Site will still likely be visible. The proposed planting within the Site will, over time, provide some degree of screening and softening of the wider massing of the Site, though the planting will be fairly ordered in its layout and is unlikely to provide a robust screen on the boundary of the Site abutting the southern edge of the Manor House curtilage meaning intervisibility will likely remain between the Grouping and the proposed built development on the Site.

- 4.2.5 Elsewhere the removal of the post-war buildings and palisade fencing up against the western boundary of the Manor House grounds as part of the proposed development will represent an enhancement given their scale and poor aesthetic qualities. The removal of the wider storage space along this edge will also represent a visual improvement and will likely see a consequent reduction in the movement of plant accessing the storage. The proposed access drive to replace the current development and storage space along the western boundary of the Manor House grounds will be set away from the boundary of the Manor House with boundary planting located on the nursery side of the road. The road into and though the Site broadly follows historic trackways which were set out in the nineteenth century. The proposed screening along the access drive will, over time, help to screen the remaining nursery complex. It will however likely still provide intervisibility of the access road from within the Manor House grounds with associated noise and activity.
- 4.2.6 It is likely that there will be lighting along the course of the access drive and dependent upon the type of lighting this will introduce light spill from a location which historically has likely had very little, if any light sources. Further, there will be additional light spill within the main built development area of the Site where presently no lighting exists. This will lessen any presently perceived openness and relative 'tranquillity' arising through no activity within and around the Site at night.
- 4.2.7 The reordering of the access junction off the A405 including the removal of parking immediately north of the Manor House grounds and adjacent to the entrance drive to the Grouping has the potential to represent an enhancement through removing hardstanding for parking and palisade gates and fencing. The realigning of the access road to the Manor House into the Site to a small roundabout will also present opportunities to provide further screening in the

location of the present dedicated access off the A405 into the Manor House grounds. This may reduce noise and visual impacts of the road from within the northern reaches of the Manor House Grouping.

4.2.8 Overall, and taking into consideration the scope for some enhancement set against the detrimental impacts it is considered that the proposed development will likely give rise to a **minor degree of harm** to the significance of the Manor House which is less than substantial in degree. In respect of the Outbuilding, the proposed development will result in a minor degree of harm. The proposed development on Site will increase the extent and density of built form and activity immediately south of the Manor House grounds. This harm will also be less than substantial in degree. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF is engaged which requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. This impact recognises that the historic setting of the Manor House has been much eroded already and that the Site, whilst not fully developed upon is not in agricultural use and is considered brownfield land.

4.2.9 **Mitigation:** Any additional tree planting along the northern edge of the Site where it abuts up to the rear garden of the Manor House would help to, over time reduce intervisibility between the proposed development on Site and the Grouping. Similarly whilst additional planting is proposed along the western edge of the access road, this should also be provided up against the eastern edge alongside the boundary of the Manor House grounds so that over time it can also provide some screening in views towards the access road itself and the associated noise, light spill and activity.

4.2.10 Where possible, illumination along the access road should be bollard-style lighting to minimise light spill over the boundary into the grounds of the Manor House. This will help retain the present situation with limited light sources around this eastern edge of the nursery. Elsewhere in the main body of the Site any column lighting should, as far as possible be carefully sited behind built development so that it is not visible when viewing from the upper reaches of the Manor House or indeed within the curtilage at ground level. Column lighting should have lighting cowls to contain and direct light down to the ground. On the northern edge of the Site up against the boundary of the Manor House any required lighting should be bollard lighting to bring illumination down to a level behind the proposed and existing planting around the Manor House and site boundaries. The careful use of facing and roofing materials will help to minimise the visual dominance of

buildings including slate or slate substitute roofing materials and the avoidance of light toned/coloured renders on buildings.

4.2.11 Whilst no detailed designs of the new landscaping and road layout at the entrance to the Site from the A405 have been reviewed as part of this assessment, this element of the proposed development will have scope, if sensitively undertaken, to further enhance the setting of the Manor House Grouping in providing additional screening from the busy A405 and also in removing present hard standing car parking and palisade gates and fencing immediately adjacent to the entrance and northern boundary of the Manor House.

4.2.12 The perceived level of harm is unlikely to be reduced in entirety with the use of these mitigation measures.

5.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 This Built Heritage Statement has been researched and prepared by CgMs Heritage, part of the RPS Group, on behalf of Castleoak Group to assess the potential impacts on the historic built environment arising from the proposed retirement village on land to the rear of Burston Garden Centre, near St Albans in Hertfordshire. This report has been prepared to accompany a planning application.
- 5.2 Whilst the Site includes no built heritage assets it has been demonstrated in this report that the proposed development has the capacity to impact upon two built heritage assets. Any potential impacts on these heritage assets will arise through development within their settings. Specifically, the Grade II* listed Burston Manor House and Grade II listed and associated Outbuilding within the grounds of Burston Manor both lying to the north of the Site. Both heritage assets are considered likely to experience a minor degree of less than substantial harm to their significance arising from the proposed development.
- 5.3 Mitigation measures have been suggested within the report as a way of minimising harm though it is considered that the harm will not be reduced in entirety following the use of the mitigation measures.
- 5.4 Any less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets engages Paragraph 134 of the NPPF, requiring any harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposed development.
- 5.5 This Built Heritage Statement meets the requirements of the NPPF and local planning policy. It provides sufficient information to inform the Local Planning Authority in respect of impacts on built heritage assets arising from the proposed development on land to the rear of Burston Garden Centre, Hertfordshire.

6.0 REFERENCES

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Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record

Historic England Archive, Swindon (HEA)

National Heritage List England (NHLE)

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

St Albans District Council District Local Plan Review 1994 (Saved Policies)

St Albans District Council Draft Detailed Local Plan (2016)

St Albans District Council Draft Strategic Local Plan 2016

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Cartographic

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1822 Bryant Map of Hertfordshire

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Ordnance Survey Map extract 1872

Ordnance Survey Aerial Imagery 1924

Ordnance Survey Map extract, 1938

Ordnance Survey Map extract, 1960

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Historic England - <http://list.historicengland.org.uk/>

Images of England - www.imagesofengland.org.uk

National Archives - www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

British Library - <http://explore.bl.uk>

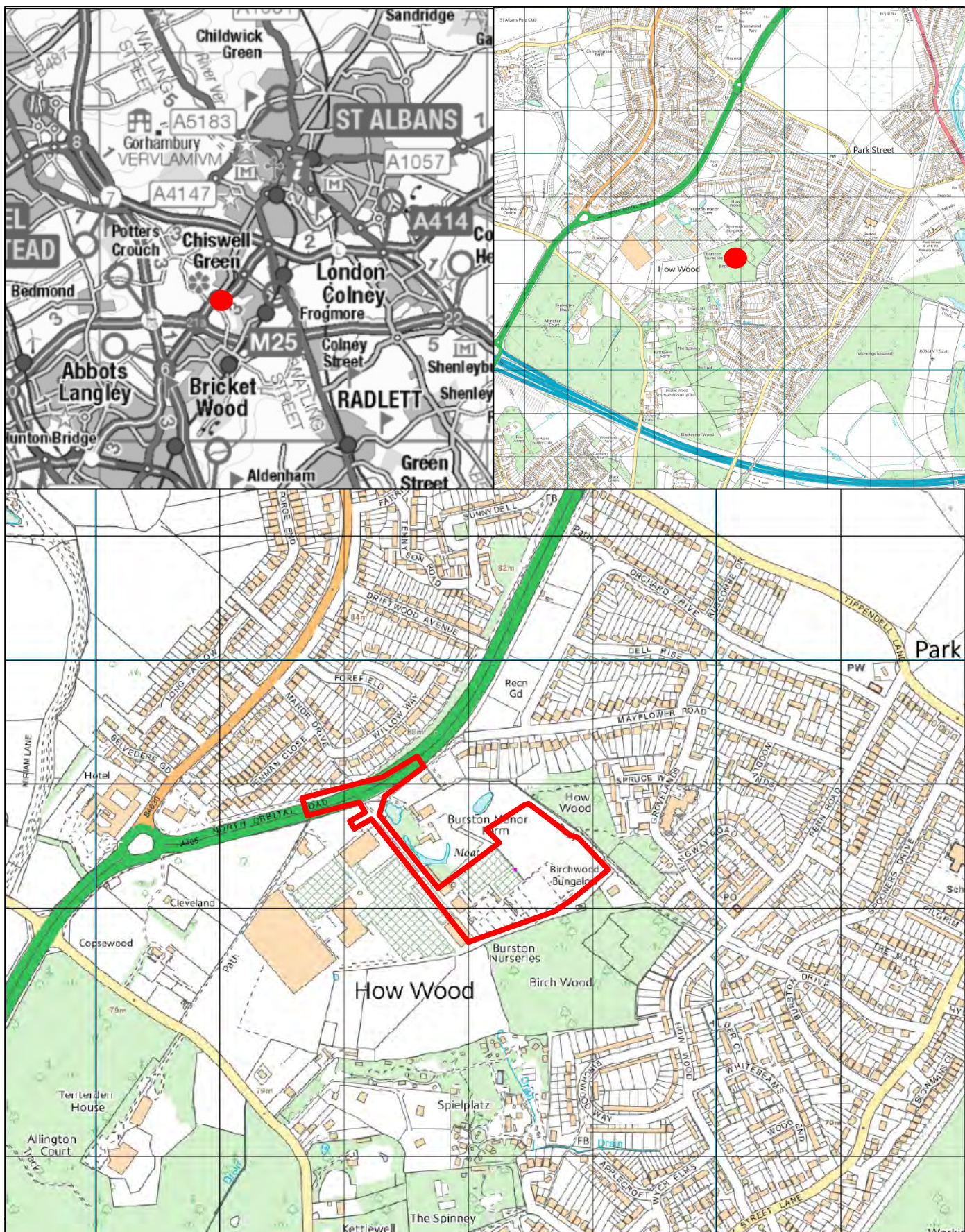
Vision of Britain - <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk>

MAGIC - www.magic.gov.uk

Pastscape- www.pastscape.org.uk

Street Map— www.streetmap.co.uk

FIGURES

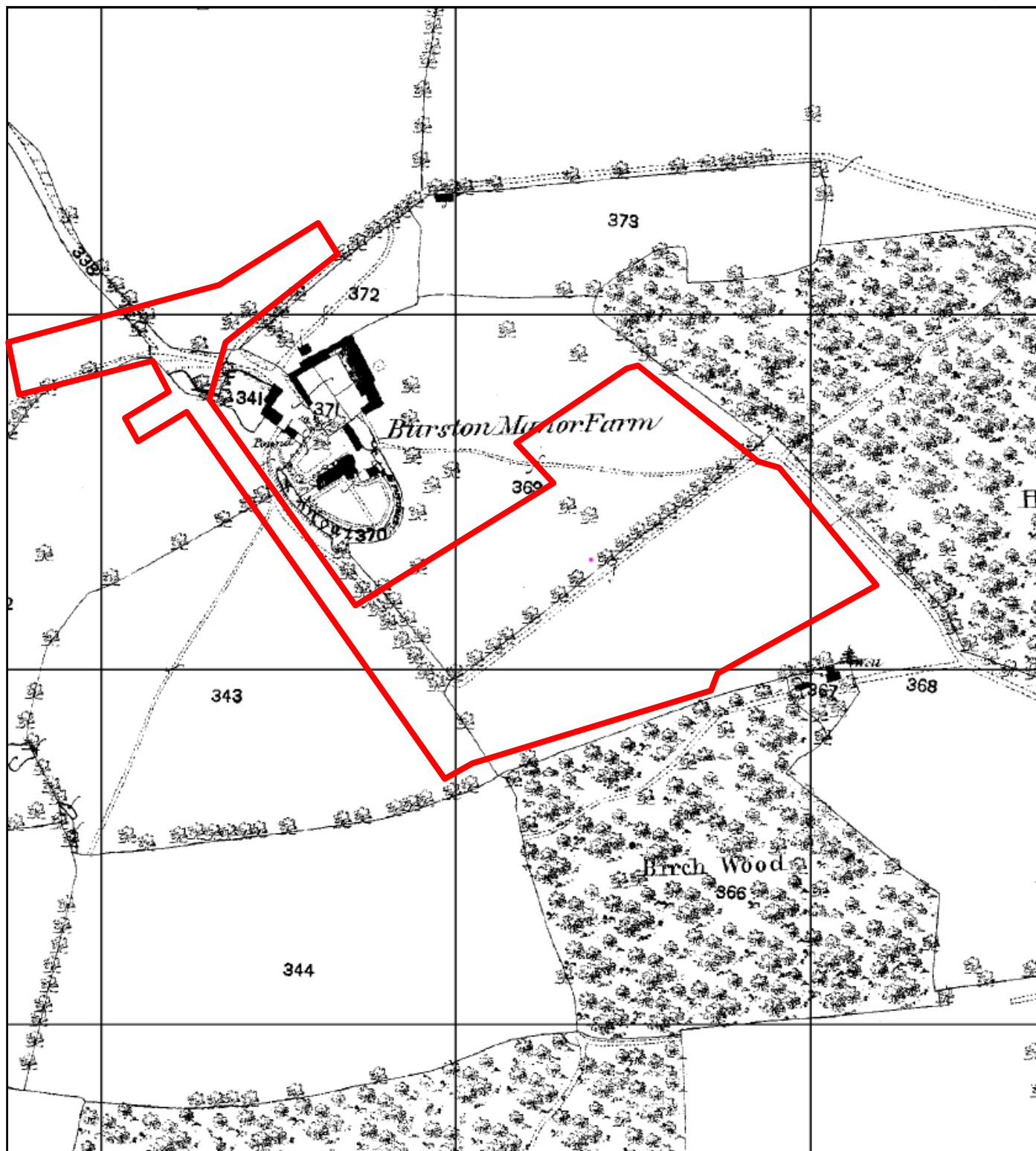


Site:
Land to Rear of Burston Garden Centre



Not to Scale: Illustrative Only

Figure 1:
Site Location

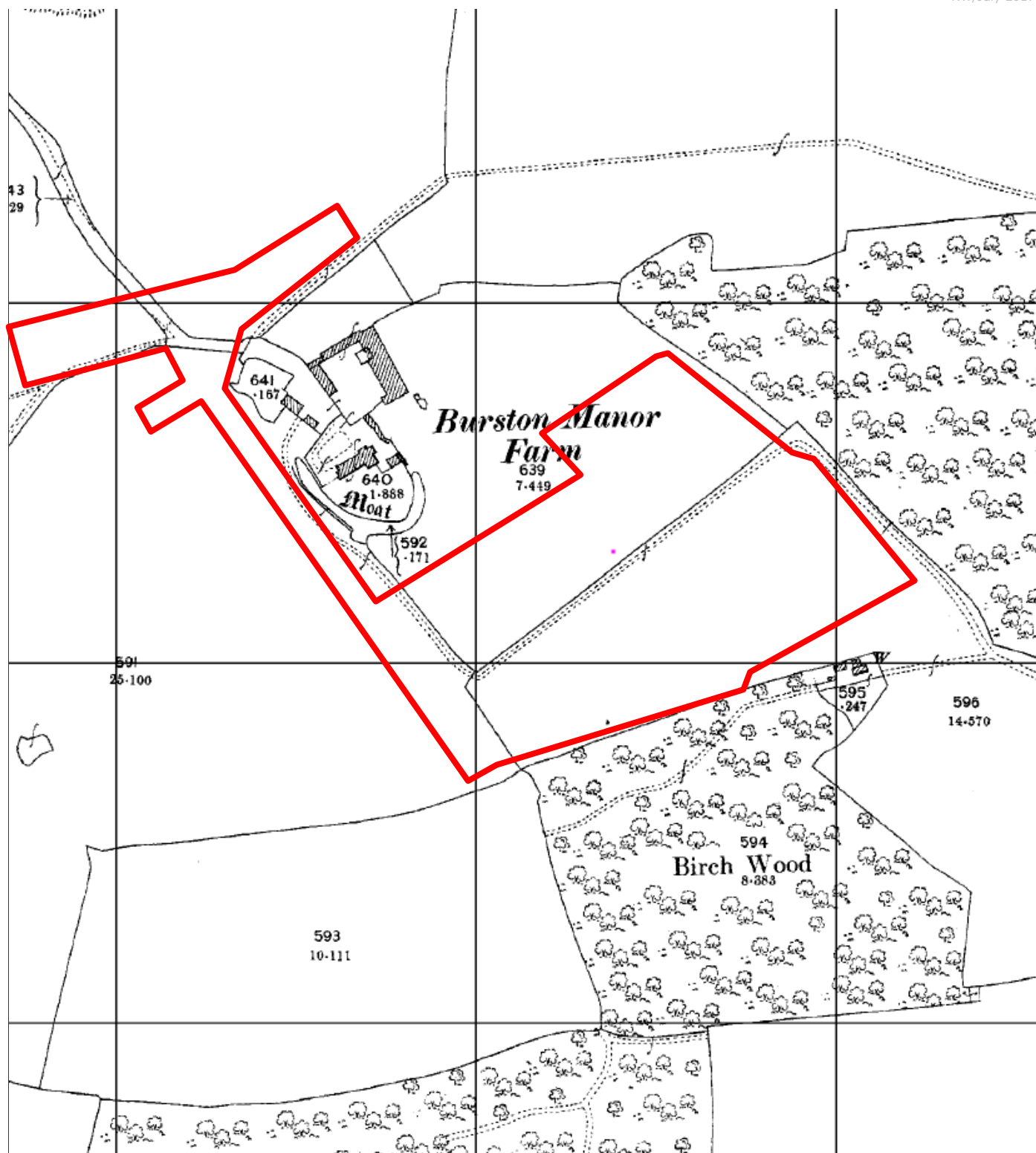


Site:
Land to rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans



Not to Scale: Illustrative Only

Figure 2:
Ordnance Survey
Map 1872

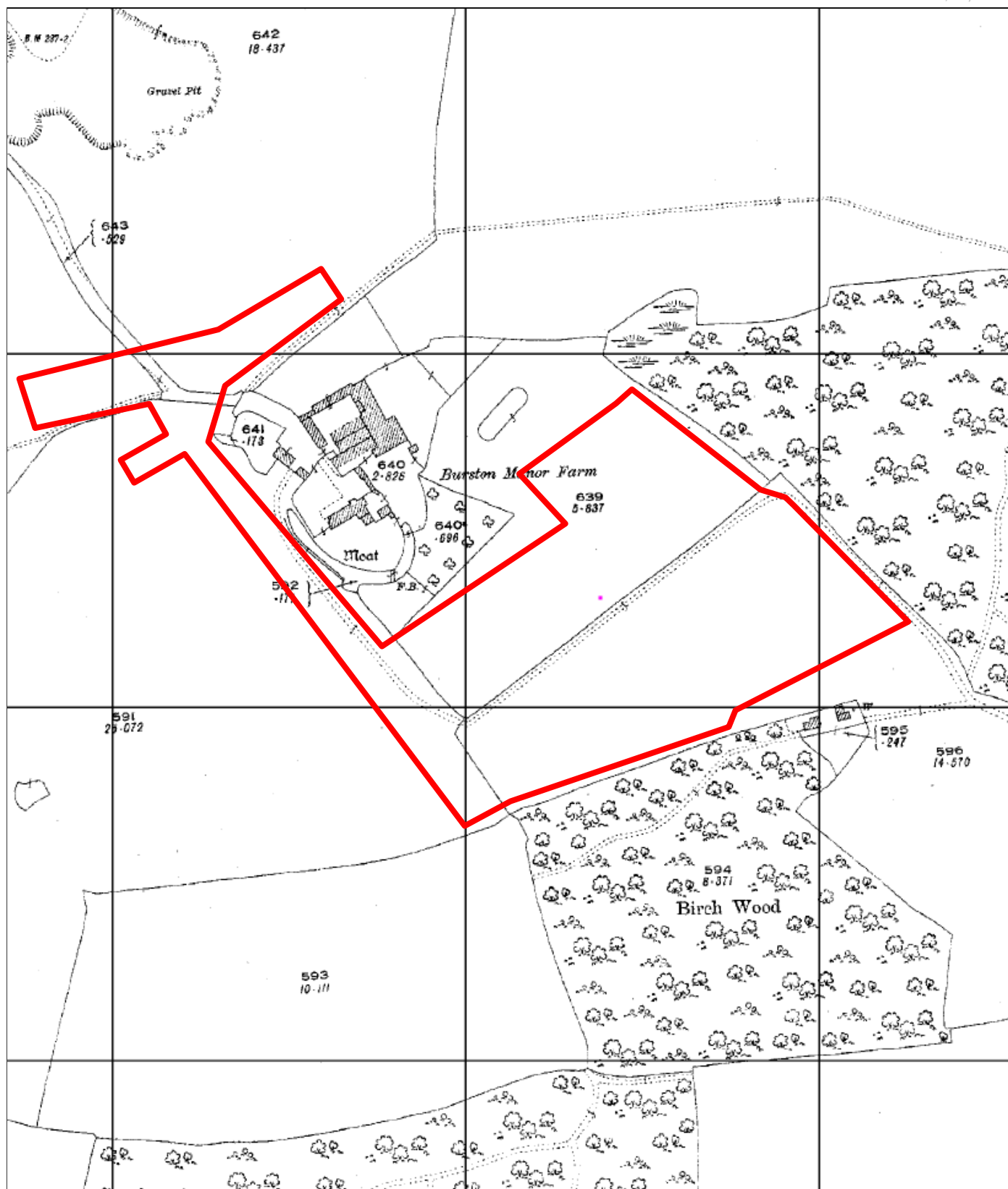
**SITE:**

Land to rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans



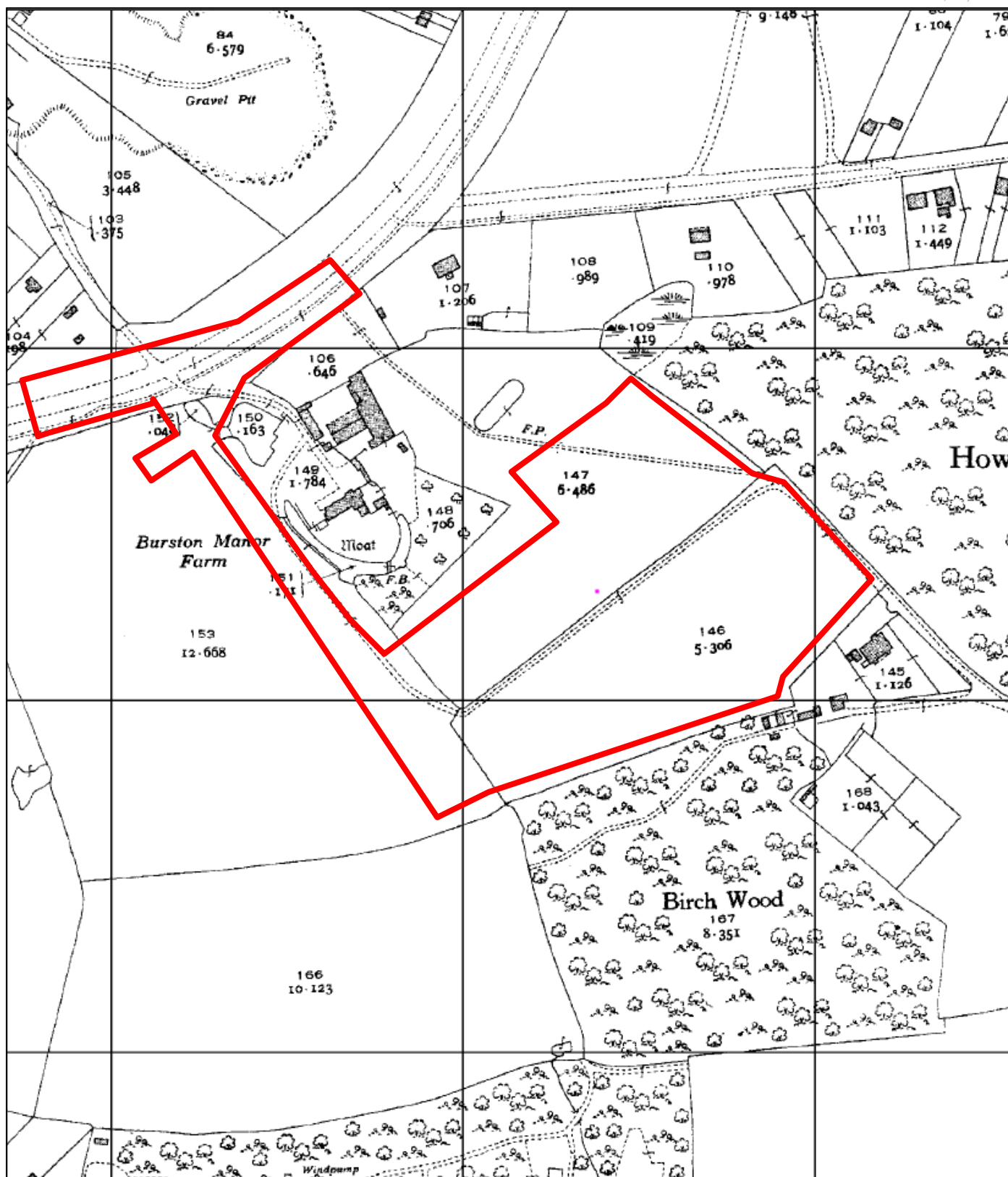
Not to Scale: Illustrative Only

Figure 3:
1898 Ordnance
Survey Map

**SITE:****Land to rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans**

Not to Scale: Illustrative Only

Figure 4:
1924 Ordnance
Survey Map



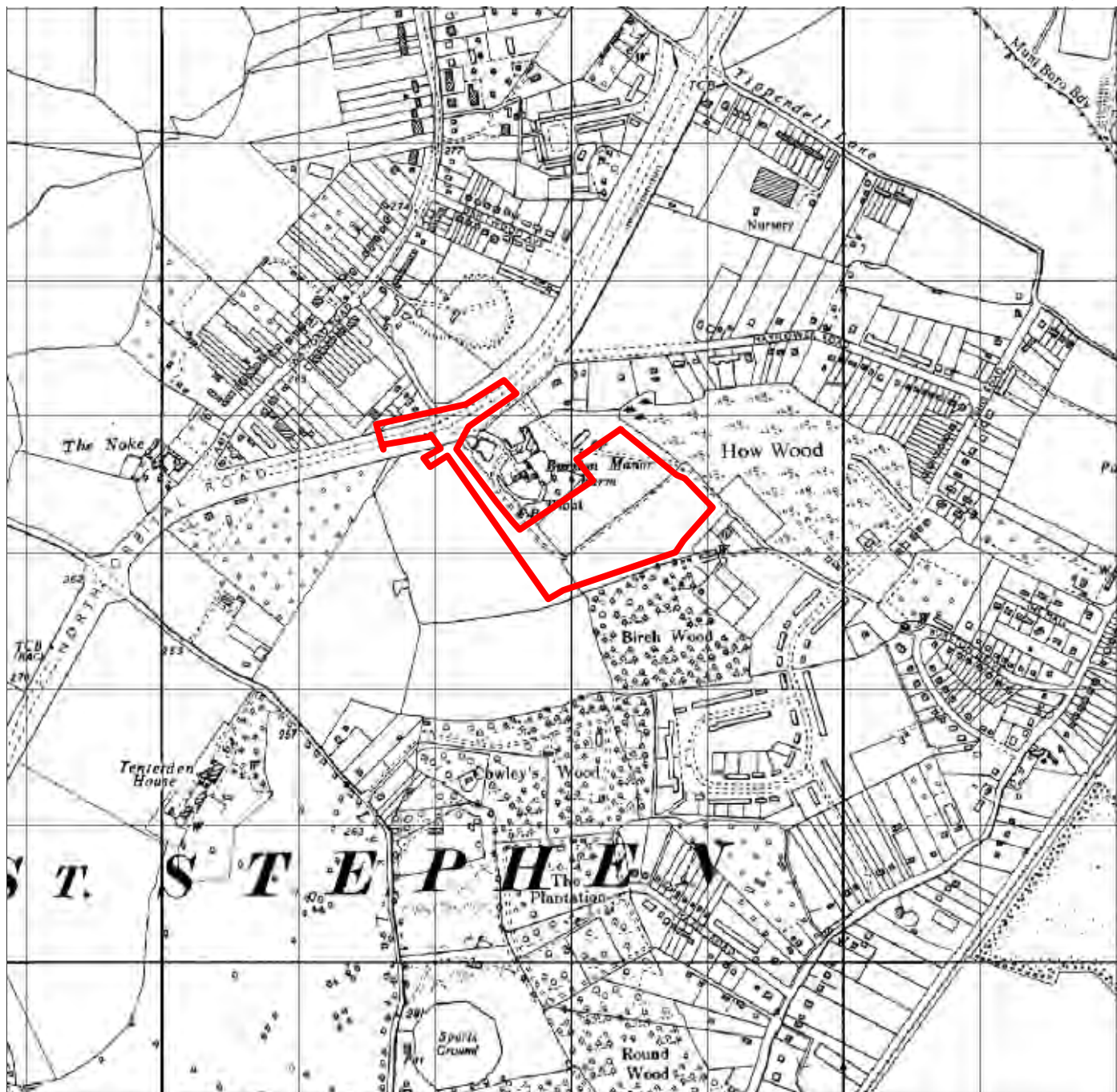
SITE:

Land to rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans



Not to Scale: Illustrative Only

Figure 5:
1938 Ordnance
Survey Map



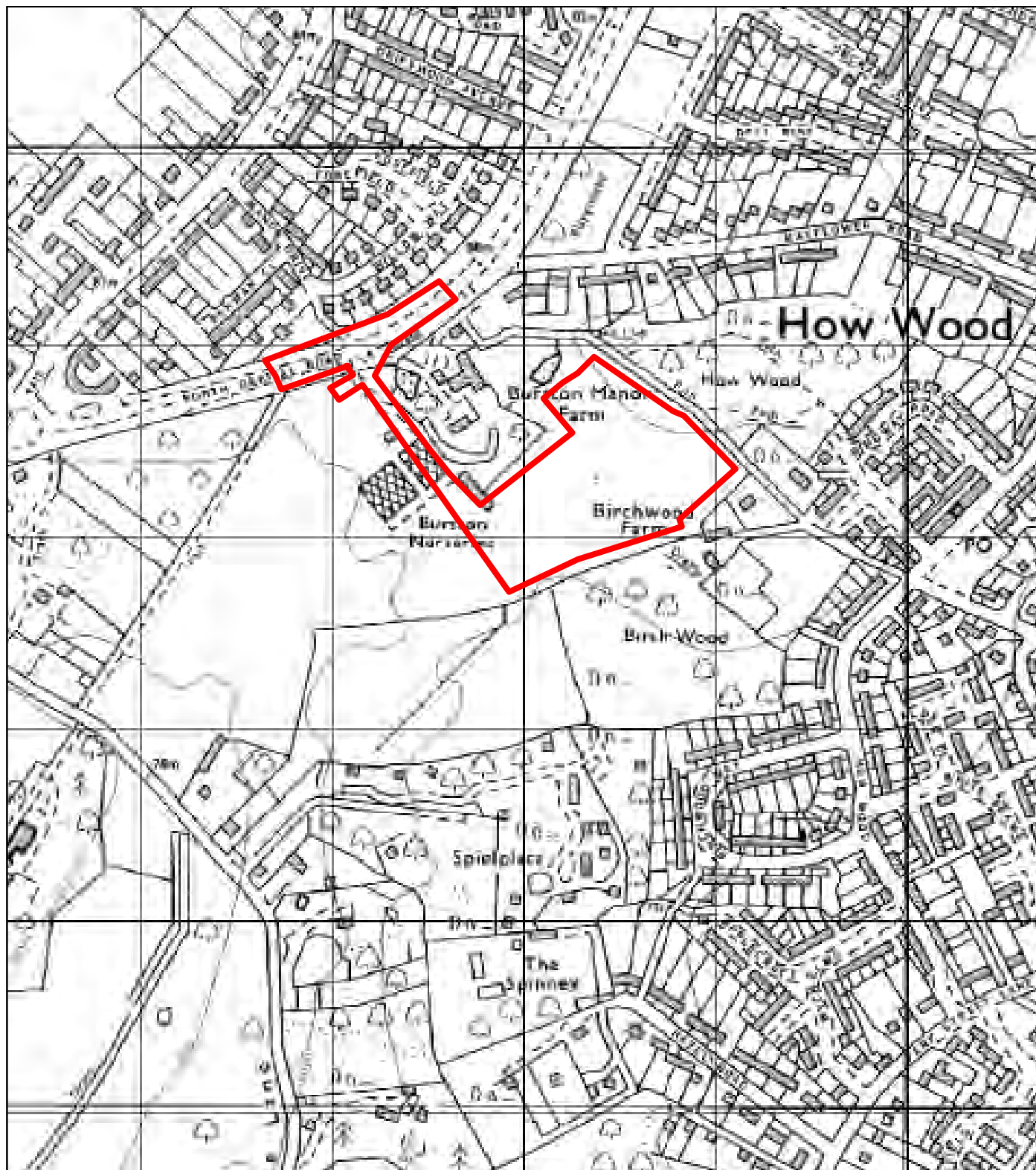
SITE:

Land to rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans



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Figure 6:
1960 Ordnance
Survey Map



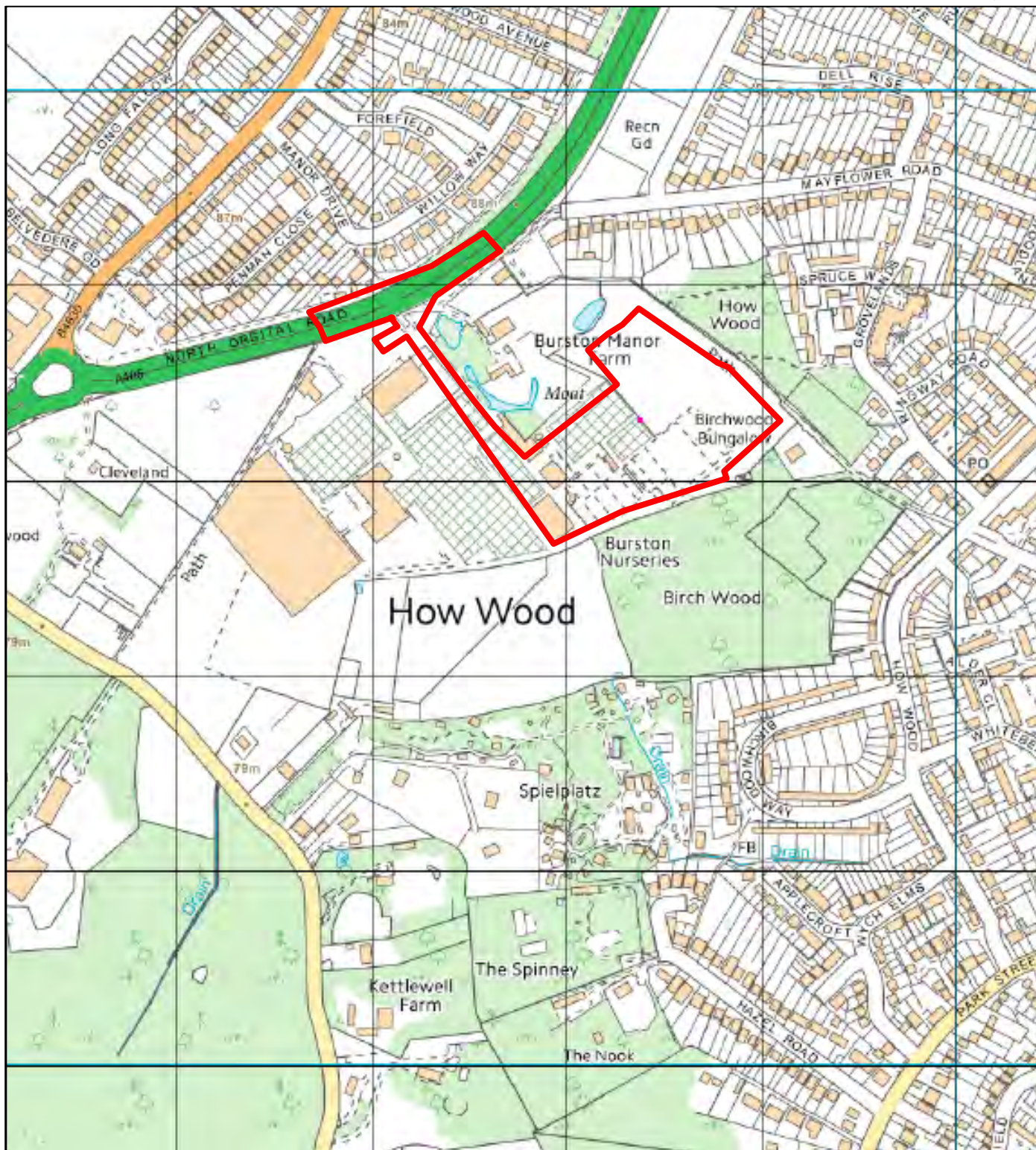
SITE:

Land to rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans



Not to Scale: Illustrative Only

Figure 7:
1972-78 Ordnance
Survey Map



SITE:

Land to rear of Burston Garden Centre, St Albans



Not to Scale: Illustrative Only

**Figure 8:
2018 Ordnance
Survey Map**

PLATES



Plate 1: View south from edge of Site along northern boundary.



Plate 2: View looking north-west from south-eastern corner of Site towards Burston Manor.



Plate 3: View south-east from edge of Site ion northern edge.



Plate 4: View from southern boundary looking over Site towards Burston Manor above glasshouses.



Plate 5: View from southern edge of Site looking to the north-east.



Plate 6: View along southern boundary of Site to west incorporating several buildings (centre right) to be removed as part of the proposals.



Plate 7: View east from western edge of Site.



Plate 8: Looking north along proposed access drive corridor through present storage area.



Plate 9: looking towards Burston Manor from area of access drive with buildings in view to be removed.



Plate 10: Buildings on Site to be removed as part of proposals.



Plate 11: View looking west from edge of car parking area adjacent to entrance to Burston Manor (left).



Plate 12: Burston Manor viewed from proposed access drive to west of manor house gardens.



Plate 13: View of Burston Manor from southern edge of Site.



Plate 14: Burston Manor viewed from east (outside of Site) with separately listed Outbuilding (centre left).

APPENDICES

HERITAGE ASSETS PLAN



Legend

— Site Boundary



Not to Scale: Illustrative Only

Appendix 1:
Heritage Assets Plan

