

STRATA HERITAGE

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Heritage and Archaeology Statement

Land South Drayton Road

Hodnet, Shropshire

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Site address	<i>Land South Drayton Road, TF9 3NF</i>
NGR	<i>SJ 615 288</i>
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This document has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Desk-Based Assessment (CIfA 2017).

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1. Summary

SUMMARY

Site: *Land South Drayton Road, Hodnet, Shropshire, TF9 3NF. SJ 615 288*

Proposed development: *The development is for 20 houses built across 1.2 hectares.*

Heritage assets identified: *84 within 1 km, 712 within 5km*

Archaeological potential: *Medium tending to high*

Recommendation: *WSI & Fieldwork required*

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose and Aims

Strata Heritage prepared a Heritage and Archaeology Statement (HAS) of land south of Drayton Road, TF9 3NF, hereafter referred to as 'the Site'. The assessment was carried out to inform a planning application for the proposed housing development.

The aims of this assessment are to:

- establish the nature, extent, and significance of known and potential heritage assets within the Site and its wider setting
- evaluate the potential impact of the proposed development upon those assets
- provide recommendations for further assessment or mitigation measures where appropriate
- assist the Local Planning Authority in determining the planning application in accordance with the NPPF

2.2 Site Description

The Site is located south of Drayton Road, Hodnet, Shropshire TF9 3NF (NGR: SJ 615 288). It covers an area of approximately 1.2 hectares and is currently agricultural land.

The Site is situated at approximately 85m OD. It is bounded to the north by Drayton Road, to the east by agricultural land, to the south by Abbot's Way, and to the west by housing off Abbot's Way.

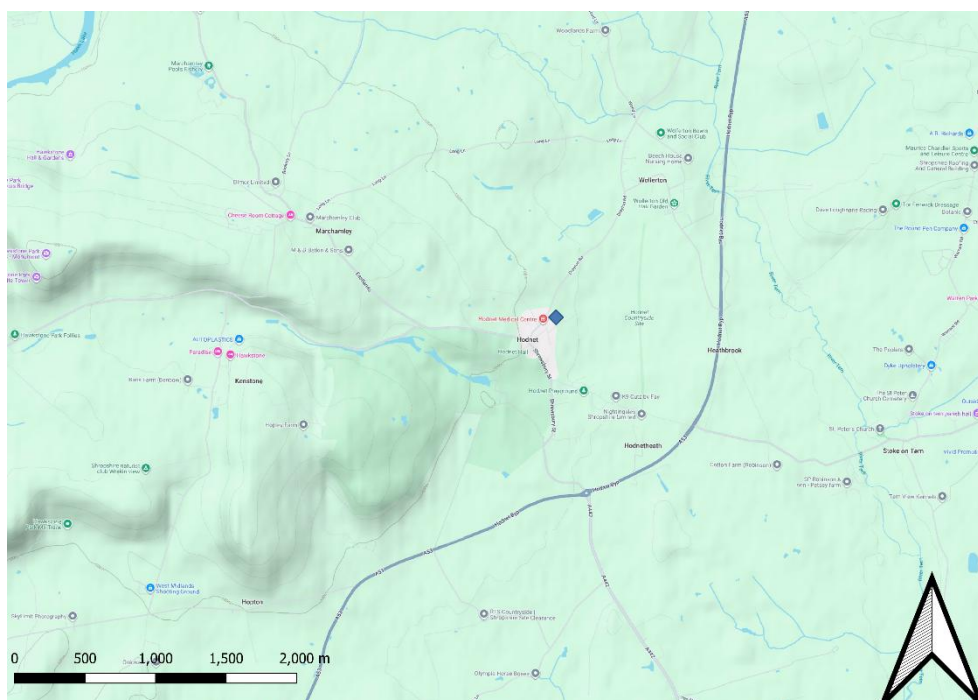


Figure 1 - Site Location



Figure 2 - Site Boundary

2.3 Proposed Development

The development is for 20 houses built across 1.2 hectares, providing 58 beds across 2 – 4 bedroom houses and bungalows.

2.4 Study Area

The primary study area for this assessment extends to a radius of 1km from the Site boundary. A wider zone of 5km was used for the assessment of landscape character and the setting of designated assets.

2.5 Methodology

This assessment was undertaken in accordance with the ClfA Standard and Guidance for Desk-Based Assessment (2017) and Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning notes. The following sources were consulted:

- Historic Environment Record: Shropshire HER
- National Heritage List for England (NHLE) - Historic England
- Ordnance Survey mapping, historical and modern (via National Library of Scotland)
- Tithe maps and estate maps
- Aerial photographs - Google Earth
- LiDAR data - Environment Agency 1m DTM composite
- British Geological Survey (BGS) solid and drift geology
- Published archaeological and historical literature

3. Planning and Legislative Context

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) is the primary statement of Government planning policy for England and constitutes a material consideration in all planning decisions. Chapter 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) is of central relevance to this assessment.

3.1.1 Significance and the Requirement for Assessment

Paragraph 207 requires that applicants describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail must be proportionate to the asset's importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on that significance.

Paragraph 208 requires local planning authorities (LPAs) to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including assets affected through development within their setting) and to take that assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals.

Paragraph 209 states that LPAs should require an applicant to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment, and where necessary, a field evaluation, where a site is known or thought to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest. This assessment has been prepared in part to ensure that the below-ground archaeological potential of the application site is considered with the rigour that this paragraph demands.

3.1.2 Impact Assessment and Harm

Paragraph 195 establishes that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated heritage asset. The more important the asset, the greater the weight that should be given to its conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the asset, or through development within its setting.

Paragraph 210 requires LPAs to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the positive contribution that conservation can make to sustainable communities, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 212–215 establish a graduated harm framework for designated heritage assets. Where proposals would lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, Paragraph 214 requires LPAs to refuse consent unless substantial public benefits can be demonstrated that outweigh that harm. Paragraph 215 requires that less than substantial harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. These thresholds must be applied to the several designated assets whose settings are engaged by the application.

3.1.3. Conservation Areas

Paragraph 220 confirms that the loss of an element that makes a positive contribution to the significance of a Conservation Area should be treated as either substantial harm under Paragraph 214, or less than substantial harm under Paragraph 215, taking into account the relative significance of the element and its contribution to the Conservation Area as a whole.

Paragraph 219 states that proposals preserving those elements of the setting of a heritage asset that make a positive contribution to its significance or which better reveal its

significance should be treated favourably. Conversely, proposals that compromise those elements do not attract this positive weight.

3.1.4 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

Paragraph 216 requires that the effect of proposals on the significance of non-designated heritage assets be taken into account in determining the application. A balanced judgement is required, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments should be considered subject to the same policies as designated assets.

3.2 Local Planning Policy

The Site falls within the administrative area of Shropshire Council.

3.2.1. The Operative Development Plan

The operative development plan for the site comprises the Shropshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted March 2011) and the Site Allocations and Management of Development Adopted Plan (SAMDev, adopted December 2015).

The Shropshire Local Plan Review 2016–2038 was withdrawn at Full Council on 17 July 2025, having been found unsound by the Examining Inspectors. The policies of the Core Strategy and SAMDev therefore remain fully operative and carry undiminished weight. The application site is not allocated for residential development within the SAMDev Plan and carries no housing land allocation.

3.2.2. Core Strategy Policies

Policy CS5 (Countryside and Greenbelt) establishes that development in the open countryside will be strictly controlled, with only limited categories of development considered acceptable where essential need can be demonstrated. The application site comprises agricultural grazing land at the settlement edge and, in the absence of any SAMDev allocation, must be assessed against this policy.

Policy CS6 (Sustainable Design and Development Principles) requires proposals to demonstrate high-quality design that is responsive to the character and context of the local area, and that protects and enhances the historic environment.

Policy CS17 (Environmental Networks) requires that the landscape and the built and historic environment are protected and enhanced. Heritage assets, including designated and non-designated assets and their settings, are to be identified, protected, conserved and enhanced.

3.2.3. SAMDev Policies

Policy MD2 (Sustainable Design) reinforces CS6, requiring proposals to protect the natural and historic environment and to respect and reinforce local character and distinctiveness.

Policy MD13 (Historic Environment) provides specific policy protection for heritage assets, requiring that they are protected, conserved, sympathetically enhanced and restored through four processes: avoiding harm or loss of significance to designated or non-designated heritage assets including their settings; requiring a Heritage Assessment for proposals likely to affect significance; permitting proposals adversely affecting non-designated heritage assets only where public benefits clearly outweigh the harm; and encouraging development that delivers positive benefits to heritage assets.

3.2.4. Hodnet Conservation Area Appraisal

The Hodnet Conservation Area was designated in August 1976. A Conservation Area Summary Appraisal produced by the former North Shropshire District Council identifies eight distinctive character areas within the designation. The application site falls within the zone of influence of Character Area 3 (Drayton Road), described as characterised by scattered historic timber-framed buildings set back from the roadside with front gardens and mature trees, with the approach from the north providing a progressive transition into the historic core of the village, culminating in views of the Church tower. The Appraisal constitutes a material consideration in the assessment of impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and on the setting of the designated heritage assets within it.

3.2.5. Previous Application and Refusal

An earlier outline application for residential development on the same land (Ref: 14/03403/OUT, for 14 dwellings) was refused by Shropshire Council's planning committee. The committee found that the development would result in unacceptable harm to the open countryside and an adverse impact on the adjacent Conservation Area, specifically on the approach to the village from the north, and that these harms outweighed the economic and social benefits of the housing proposed. That decision, and the reasoning underpinning it, constitutes a material consideration in the determination of the current application. The present proposal is for a larger scheme of 20 dwellings on the same site.

3.3 Relevant Legislation

The following legislation is relevant to this assessment:

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66(1) places a statutory duty on decision-makers, when considering whether to grant planning permission for development affecting a listed building or its setting, to 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. The courts have confirmed that this duty requires decision-makers to give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings; it is a stronger obligation than a simple material consideration.

Section 72(1) requires that, in the exercise of planning functions with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended)

Provides statutory protection for Scheduled Monuments. Any works affecting a scheduled monument require Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State. The motte and bailey castle on Castle Hill, Hodnet (List Entry No. 1019653), together with the associated remains of a park pale, a fishpond and a formal garden, is a Scheduled Monument in the vicinity of the application site.

Environment Act 2021

Establishes a statutory framework for the protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements applicable to this application.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Relevant in respect of public rights of way in the vicinity of the site and the duty to maintain access.

Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The hedgerows forming the boundaries of the application site may qualify as 'important' hedgerows under the Regulations if they meet the archaeological, historic, wildlife or landscape criteria specified. Important hedgerows may not be removed without the prior approval of the LPA, and their potential significance requires assessment before any determination.

3.4 Professional Standards

This Heritage and Archaeology Statement has been prepared by Strata Heritage having regard to the following professional standards and guidance:

- ClfA Standard and Guidance for Desk-Based Assessment (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2017)
- Historic England, Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015)
- Historic England, Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd edition, 2017)
- Historic England, Heritage Impact Assessment in the Historic Environment (HEAN 12, October 2019)

4. Geological and Topographical Background

4.1 Solid Geology

The Hodnet area of north Shropshire lies within the southern extent of the Cheshire Basin, a major Triassic sedimentary basin bounded to the southeast by the Hodnet Fault, which forms part of the Wem Fault Zone. The solid geology of the parish is principally Permo-Triassic in character, reflecting a period of arid continental deposition between approximately 260 and 200 million years ago.

The application site and the village of Hodnet are underlain at depth by the Bridgnorth Sandstone Formation (Permian, c.260 Ma), a highly porous, coarse-grained red aeolian sandstone deposited under desert dune conditions. This formation constitutes an important regional aquifer and underlies much of the village core and its eastern and northeastern environs, including the application site. Overlying this, and present across parts of the wider parish, including the grounds of Hodnet Hall, are Triassic sandstones of the Sherwood Sandstone Group: the Tarporley Siltstone Formation (a red and green micaceous sandstone) and the Helsby Sandstone Formation (a reddish-brown coarse sandstone with pebbles), the latter being the bedrock on which St Luke's Church stands. Reddish-brown Triassic mudstones of the Mercia Mudstone Group underlie the more northerly parts of the parish around Marchamley Wood, Wollerton and Lostford.

The Hodnet Fault itself, running broadly northeast–southwest, is a structurally significant feature that acts as a conduit for cross-formational groundwater flow between the Triassic sandstone aquifer and overlying superficial deposits and has been identified by the Environment Agency as a locus of preferential groundwater movement in the vicinity of the River Tern.

The Permo-Triassic sandstone bedrock has significant implications for archaeological preservation potential. Calcareous groundwater percolating through the sandstone into overlying deposits creates moderately alkaline soil conditions in which bone, shell and other calcium-rich organic materials are preserved to a greater degree than would be the case in upland acidic soils. Contrary to the assertion in the applicant's Heritage Impact Assessment that the evidential value of the site is low on account of it being a "rural field on the edge of the settlement," the geological substrate offers preservation conditions that are broadly favourable to the survival of archaeological remains.

4.2 Drift Geology and Soils

The application site, in common with most of the Hodnet parish, is overlain by Devensian glacial till deposited during the last glacial maximum, approximately 18,000 years ago. North Shropshire lay under an estimated 1,000 metres of ice at this time, fed by Irish Sea ice and Welsh ice advancing from the north and west, respectively. As the ice retreated, it deposited till (an unsorted mixture of sand, gravel and clay incorporating far-travelled erratics, including granite from north Cumbria identified within the grounds of Hodnet Hall) across the landscape. This glacial till now covers the majority of the parish and is directly responsible for its characteristically gently rolling topography.

The till in this area has a calcareous component derived in part from glacial marl, a mixture of clay, calcium carbonate and other minerals deposited as the ice sheets retreated. This material was historically exploited as a soil improver, and numerous marl pits remain across the parish as landscape features. The calcareous nature of the till deposit is archaeologically significant: it moderates soil acidity and provides conditions conducive to the survival of animal bone; carbonised plant remains and other organic archaeological materials. This

point is directly relevant to the assessment of below-ground archaeological potential at the application site and is not addressed in the applicant's Heritage Impact Assessment.

Soils across the application site and immediate surroundings are variable over short distances, reflecting the heterogeneous composition of the underlying till. The site occupies a gentle east-facing slope and has been maintained as permanent pasture, a land use that, in comparison with arable cultivation, is more likely to have preserved any surviving earthwork or buried archaeological deposits intact.

In the lower-lying areas toward the River Tern to the east, river alluvium has been deposited over the till, creating flatter ground with a higher proportion of silts and clays, and a greater potential for waterlogged anaerobic conditions that can preserve organic archaeological materials, including wood, leather and plant remains.

4.3 Topography and Hydrology

The application site occupies a single field of approximately 1.14 hectares on the northeastern edge of Hodnet village. The site exhibits a consistent gentle gradient, falling from approximately 87.0m AOD at the western boundary to approximately 82.0m AOD at the southeastern corner – a fall of approximately 5 metres across the width of the site. This east-facing aspect and elevated position in relation to the Tern valley to the east are topographically characteristic of locations favoured for past settlement and agricultural use in the region.

The application site lies within the catchment of the River Tern, which flows through the eastern extent of the wider study area, descending from approximately 62.0m AOD in the north to 59.0m AOD in the south. The Tern valley is flanked by areas of riverside meadow fed by several small streams and field ditches that form tributaries to the main channel. Within the registered park and garden of Hodnet Hall to the southwest, a chain of ornamental lakes occupies steep-sided valleys associated with tributary drainage of the Tern system; these pools are underlain by alluvial deposits with significant potential for waterlogged preservation of organic materials. No watercourses or field ponds are recorded within the application site boundary itself.

The highest ground in the wider landscape is found to the west along the Kenstone Hill sandstone ridge, reaching approximately 175–180m AOD. The application site thus occupies an intermediate position on the broad east-facing slope between this elevated sandstone upland and the Tern floodplain, a location broadly consistent with the zone of agricultural exploitation associated with the medieval settlement and its associated deer park.

4.3.1. LiDAR Analysis

LiDAR data for the application site and its wider setting were obtained from the DEFRA / Environment Agency Open Data repository (1m DTM composite, 2023 survey). The data has been visualised using multi-scale topographic position (MSTP) analysis, a technique that simultaneously highlights micro-topographic variation at multiple spatial scales and is particularly effective in identifying subtle earthwork features, former field systems and linear boundaries that are not readily apparent in conventional hill shade visualisations.

The MSTP analysis (*Figure 3*) reveals a series of features of potential archaeological significance across and immediately adjacent to the application site. These include rectilinear field boundaries and patterning consistent with the survival of former cultivation earthworks, together with linear features whose alignment and morphology are consistent with the historic field and park boundaries identified in the cartographic and documentary record (see Section 7). The applicant's Heritage Impact Assessment does not refer to LiDAR analysis in its assessment of the site's evidential value and does not engage with the below-

ground archaeological potential evidenced by these features. This omission is addressed in the assessment of significance in Section 8.

The relationship between the topography of the application site and the location of the medieval deer park pale (recorded in the Historic Environment Record as an approximately 80m-long linear bank running northwest-southeast to the southeast of the motte and bailey castle) is of particular relevance.

Multi-Scale Topographic Position analysis of the application site, derived from 2023 DEFRA 1m LiDAR data. The extent of this image is shown by the red rectangle in the accompanying satellite image

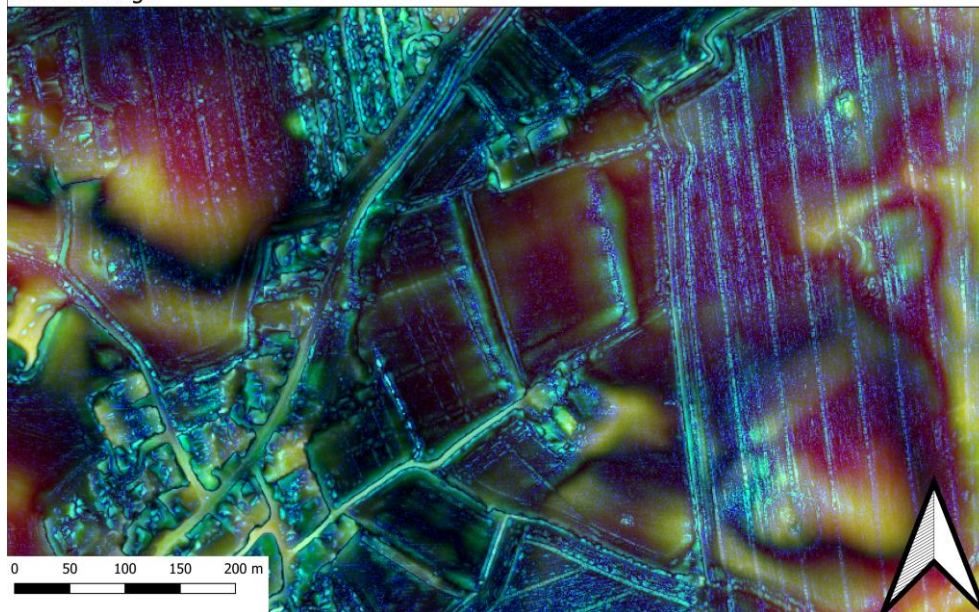


Figure 3 - MSTP of the site & immediate surrounding area.

Google Maps Satellite Hybrid view of the surrounding area. The red rectangle indicates the extent of the accompanying LiDAR analysis.



Figure 4 - Map showing extent of Figure 3

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

The following section comprises the archaeological and historical evidence for the application site and its environs, drawing on the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER), cartographic sources, the Scheduled Monument record, and published literature. Evidence is presented chronologically. The application site is referred to throughout as 'the Site'. Where no evidence has been identified in the immediate vicinity of the Site, the regional and local context is described to establish the character of likely archaeological potential.

5.1 Prehistoric (pre-43 AD)

Palaeolithic and Mesolithic (pre-4000 BC)

North Shropshire lay under an estimated 1,000 metres of ice at the peak of the Devensian glaciation approximately 18,000 years ago, and no in-situ Palaeolithic evidence from the immediate vicinity is known. As the ice retreated, the landscape was progressively colonised by woodland, and Mesolithic hunter-gatherer groups occupied the region from at least 10,000 BP. While no Mesolithic material has been recorded in the Hodnet HER to date, the absence of evidence reflects the relatively limited programme of fieldwork in this part of north Shropshire rather than a confirmed absence of activity. Residual Mesolithic flintwork is commonly recovered as unstratified material on later sites across the region.

Neolithic and Bronze Age (c.4000–700 BC)

The prehistoric period is directly evidenced within the Hodnet parish by a significant discovery made during the construction of the A53 Hodnet bypass in 2002. Archaeological investigation revealed a Bronze Age burial site comprising at least 17 individual cremation pits, each containing charcoal and fragments of burnt human bone. This represents a formal cremation cemetery of Middle–Late Bronze Age character, of the type commonly associated with established agricultural communities occupying favoured ground. Its location on the outskirts of the modern settlement on the same east-facing, till-covered sandstone slope that characterises the application site is directly relevant to the assessment of below-ground potential at the Site.

More broadly, north Shropshire has a well-documented Bronze Age funerary landscape, with cremation cemeteries recorded at several locations across the county, including the nationally significant Bromfield cemetery. Round barrows and ring ditch cropmarks have been identified across the north Shropshire plain through aerial photography. A round barrow of Late Neolithic or Bronze Age character has been recorded at Morton Say parish. There is also a local tradition, recorded in the Hodnet local history, that the mound on which St Luke's Church stands may overlie a prehistoric fortified site, and the Scheduled Monument record notes that the castle motte may have been founded on 'an earlier moated mound' of pre-Norman origin. Neither has been subject to systematic investigation.

The proximity of the 2002 bypass finds to the Site, the bypass corridor passing to the north and east of the village, and the shared geomorphological context of gently sloping calcareous till over Permo-Triassic sandstone, mean the Site must be considered as falling within a zone of demonstrated prehistoric archaeological potential. The applicant's Heritage Impact Assessment does not reference the 2002 discovery.

Iron Age (c.700 BC–43 AD)

The Iron Age tribe of Shropshire and the broader west Midlands was the Cornovii, whose territory extended across modern Cheshire, Shropshire, north Staffordshire and parts of the Welsh borderlands. Their civitas capital in the Roman period was Viroconium Cornoviorum (Wroxeter), approximately 20 kilometres south of Hodnet. Prior to Romanisation, the

Cornovii occupied a landscape of enclosed farmsteads, field systems and, on defensible high ground, hillforts. No hillfort has been recorded at Hodnet itself, but the sandstone ridge on which the church and castle complex stands an elevated promontory with good all-round visibility is topographically consistent with a location of Iron Age significance.

The placename of Hodnet provides an important clue to the deep antiquity of settlement here. Recorded as 'Odenet' in the Domesday Book, the name is of Brittonic/Old Welsh derivation, from hawdd (pleasant or peaceful) and nant (a glen or valley), suggesting a Welsh-speaking population was still naming landscape features in this area in or before the early medieval period and by implication that the settlement's origins predate Anglian colonisation. Place-names of this type are generally associated with settlements of significant antiquity.

5.2 Roman (43–c.410 AD)

The Roman period is characterised across north Shropshire by agricultural exploitation of the fertile Triassic lowlands, served by a network of roads radiating from Viroconium. Wroxeter was the fourth largest city in Roman Britain and the *civitas* capital for the Cornovii, and its hinterland supported a dense pattern of rural farmsteads, small roadside settlements and field systems extending across the Tern catchment.

No Roman features have been specifically recorded in the Hodnet HER at the time of this assessment, but the absence of recorded features does not indicate an absence of activity. The density of Roman rural settlement in the comparable landscapes of the north Shropshire plain is well established through aerial photographic survey, and the position of Hodnet (on a slightly elevated, well-drained sandstone ridge above a productive river valley) is precisely the kind of location associated with Roman-period farmstead activity in this region. Cropmark evidence from aerial photography across north Shropshire routinely reveals enclosures and field systems on the sandstone terraces that are invisible at ground level.

The Roman road network in this area connected Viroconium northwards towards Mediolanum (Whitchurch) and Deva (Chester), with routes passing through the north Shropshire plain. The application site falls broadly within the zone of these communication corridors, and roadside or near-road agricultural settlement of Roman date is a realistic possibility that has not been tested by any fieldwork on or adjacent to the Site.

5.3 Early Medieval (c.410–1066 AD)

The early medieval period is one of the most archaeologically significant for Hodnet's history, and the documentary and place-name evidence points to a settlement of unusual administrative and political importance.

The place-name evidence noted above suggests continuity of a named settlement from at least the sub-Roman or early medieval period. By the time of the Norman Conquest, Hodnet was established as the *caput*, the head of the hundred of Odenet: the primary administrative and judicial meeting place for a substantial area of north Shropshire. The hundred system in England is generally thought to have been established or formalised in the 10th century under the late Anglo-Saxon kings, but the high-status settlements that served as hundred capitals typically had earlier origins as estate or villa centres. Hodnet's designation as a royal manor of Edward the Confessor confirms this status by the mid-11th century.

The Anglo-Saxon settlement is thought to have been focused on the road junction at the crest of the ridge, the same location as the present village centre. A chapel serving the settlement is believed to have preceded the Norman church, with St Luke's Church occupying, on current archaeological thinking, the site of this earlier place of worship. The church mound itself may overlie earlier activity.

This early medieval estate, as a royal hundred caput, would have encompassed a wide range of land uses, including agricultural strips, common pasture, meadow and woodland, distributed across the landscape surrounding the historic core. The application site, lying on the northeastern edge of the historic settlement and on ground directly adjacent to the later medieval planned expansion zone, falls within the likely extent of this early medieval estate landscape.

5.4 Medieval (1066–c.1540 AD)

The medieval period represents the most intensively documented phase of activity in the Hodnet landscape, and several elements of this archaeology are of direct relevance to the application site.

Following the Norman Conquest, the manor and hundred of Odenet were granted by William I to Roger de Montgomery. Within two decades, Baldwin de Hodenet had constructed a motte and bailey castle (c.1082) in the area to the southeast of the church, possibly on a pre-existing moated mound of earlier date. The timber castle was rebuilt in sandstone around 1196, and documentary sources record its first mention in 1223 before its destruction by fire in 1264. The castle earthworks, together with the associated remains of a park pale, a fishpond and a formal garden, are designated as a Scheduled Monument (List Entry No. 1019653).

Of particular relevance to the application site is the medieval deer park and its associated boundary features. The park was established in the area adjacent to the castle, and its extent in the medieval period is not precisely defined in the historical sources. However, the Scheduled Monument record describes a substantial linear bank approximately 80 metres long and running northwest–southeast as the surviving remains of the eastern boundary or park pale of the deer park. This feature lies to the southeast of the castle. The majority of deer parks were created between approximately 1200 and 1350 AD, and their pale boundaries (typically substantial earthwork banks) were designed to prevent deer escaping and were maintained features of the managed estate landscape.

The relationship between the park pale as currently recorded in the HER and the application site is central to this assessment. The recorded 80-metre section is unlikely to represent the full extent of the original pale boundary. The LiDAR analysis described in Section 4.3 identifies linear features whose alignment and morphology are consistent with the continuation or associated earthwork complex of this pale in the direction of the application site. This matter requires proper investigation and cannot be dismissed based on desk-based evidence alone, as the applicant's HIA implies.

In the mid-13th century, Odo de Hodnet was granted by Henry III the right to hold a weekly fair and an annual market at Hodnet. It is widely accepted among landscape historians that this stimulus prompted a planned extension of the village to the north and east of the castle complex, away from the deer park. Burgage plots associated with this planned expansion remain partially legible in the present-day layout of Shrewsbury Street and the area south of the church access. This planned medieval town extension places the application site at the northern limit of the zone of 13th-century urban growth, precisely the area where the boundary between the settled zone and the agricultural/park landscape would have been at its most dynamic, and therefore most archaeologically complex.

Ridge and furrow cultivation strips have been recorded approximately 80 metres south of the castle within the park grounds, confirming the survival of medieval agricultural earthworks in this landscape. The application site, as a permanent pasture on an east-facing till slope directly adjacent to this zone, represents a strong candidate for the survival of comparable or related features. No earthwork survey of the application site has been undertaken.

5.5 Post-Medieval (c.1540–1900)

The post-medieval evolution of the Hodnet landscape is documented through a sequence of cartographic sources examined in detail in Section 7. In summary, the application site and the wider Drayton Road frontage underwent gradual residential development from the 17th and 18th centuries onward, as the settlement expanded northwards from the historic core. The surviving timber-framed buildings on Drayton Road, including the Grade II listed properties at Nos. 8, 15, 18, 19–21 and 22, represent this phase of expansion and are largely of 17th-century origin, replacing earlier medieval structures.

The deer park remained a defining element of the landscape west of the application site throughout this period, eventually being incorporated into the designed landscape of Hodnet Hall. The original timber-framed Hodnet Hall, recorded on Christopher Saxton's Map of Shropshire in 1579, was demolished in 1870 and replaced by the present neo-Elizabethan hall designed by Anthony Salvin. The park's formal garden layout, incorporating the castle earthworks, dates from the late 19th to early 20th century.

The application site appears on the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (1880s) as an open field with the Dutch barn structure already present, the barn and associated stable representing agricultural use of the site from at least the late 19th century. The conservation area boundary, designated in 1976, was drawn to include the Dutch barn within the eastern conservation area limit, confirming its recognised contribution to local character.

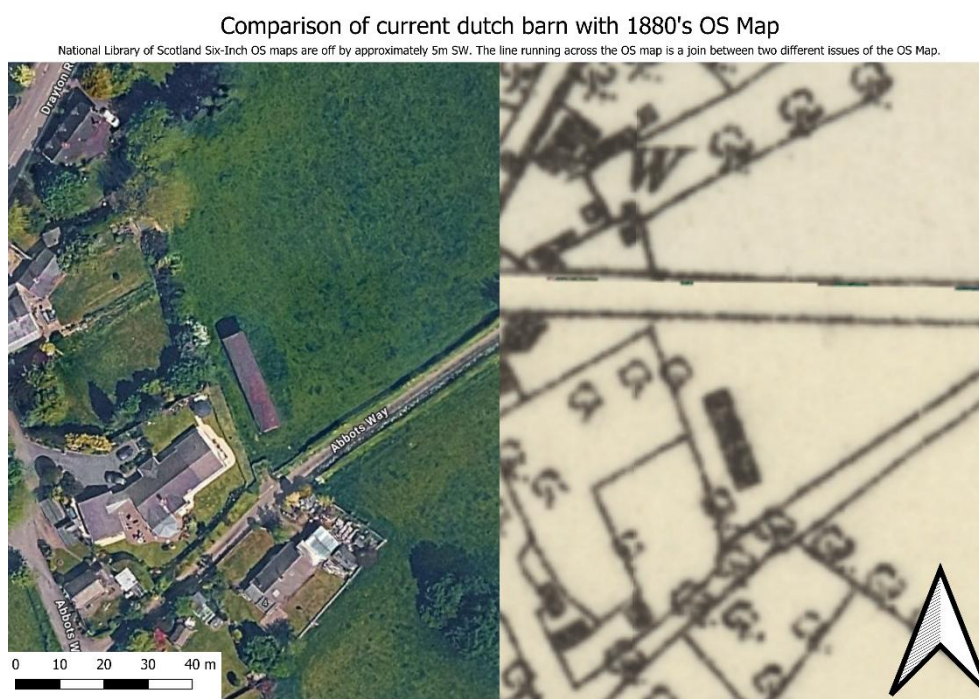


Figure 5 - OS Six-Inch Map & Satellite Comparison of the Dutch Barn in the south-western corner of the site.

5.6 Modern (1900 – present)

In the 20th century, the village expanded substantially through residential development along its principal roads. The application site has remained in agricultural use throughout this period. The most significant modern event for the assessment of archaeological potential is the 2002 discovery of the Bronze Age cremation cemetery during A53 bypass construction, which confirmed the presence of preserved buried prehistoric remains within the Hodnet parish at a location and on a soil type comparable to the application site. No archaeological evaluation has been carried out on the application site itself.

6. Historic Environment Record

A search of the Shropshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) was conducted on 31 May 2026 via the Historic Environment Gateway, covering all recorded monuments, find spots, events and statutory designations within a 5-kilometre radius of the application site. The results were reviewed to identify assets of direct relevance to the Site and those whose setting may be engaged by the proposed development. The full dataset is retained on file.

The application site itself has not been subject to any previous archaeological investigation recorded in the HER. There are no previous evaluation trenches, watching briefs, geophysical surveys or fieldwalking events associated with the Site or its immediate boundaries.

6.1 Designated Heritage Assets

6.1.1. Scheduled Monuments

The following Scheduled Monuments were identified within the 5-kilometre search area. Those of greatest relevance to the assessment of the application site are described in detail.

Motte and Bailey Castle on Castle Hill, Hodnet, and the Associated Remains of a Park Pale, a Fishpond and a Formal Garden (List Entry No. 1019653; NGR SJ 61336 28453). This is the principal designated heritage asset in the immediate vicinity of the Site and the most significant for the purposes of this assessment. The monument includes the earthwork and buried remains of a motte, and bailey castle (the motte standing up to 7 metres high from the base of its rock-cut ditch) together with a tower keep, two baileys, a fishpond, a post-medieval formal garden, and the remains of the eastern park pale of the medieval deer park. The park pale survives as a substantial linear bank approximately 80 metres long, running northwest–southeast to the southeast of the castle, up to 3 metres high at its northern end. The Scheduled Monument description explicitly records that "the original extent of the park in the medieval period is not known," confirming that the recorded pale boundary does not represent the definitive limit of the deer park's archaeological footprint. The application site lies to the northeast of the Scheduled Monument, within the zone of potential continuation of the park pale and associated earthworks.

Dovecote 300m South of Hodnet Hall (List Entry No. 1019652; NGR SJ 60929 28180). A Scheduled and Grade II* Listed dovecote of 1656, situated within the grounds of Hodnet Hall approximately 450 metres west-southwest of the application site. Its scheduling reflects the significance of the Hodnet Hall landscape complex as a whole, within which the application site falls as an area of potential setting influence.

Moated Site and Field System 380m South of Moat Farm, Wollerton Wood (List Entry No. 1017012; NGR SJ 60908 31072). A medieval moated site with associated ridge and furrow cultivation remains and field boundary ditches, approximately 2.3 kilometres north of the application site. This monument demonstrates the density of medieval earthwork survival in the Hodnet landscape more broadly.

Bury Walls: A Large Multivallate Hillfort (List Entry No. 1020284; NGR SJ 57628 27515). A major Iron Age hillfort of approximately 8 hectares, situated on the Hawkstone sandstone ridge approximately 3.5 kilometres west-southwest of the application site. Archaeological investigation has identified the remains of a probable Romano-Celtic temple within the interior, confirming Roman period activity in the wider landscape. The fort represents the principal surviving monument of the Cornovii territorial landscape within the study area.

Red Castle: An Enclosure Castle in Hawkstone Park (List Entry No. 1020850; NGR SJ 57164 29425). A 13th-century enclosure castle occupying sandstone ridges in Hawkstone Park, approximately 4.0 kilometres west of the application site.

Animal Pound 140m Northwest of Riverside, Wollerton (List Entry No. 1020849; NGR SJ 62319 29718). A post-medieval animal pound of probable 18th-century date, situated in the hamlet of Wollerton, approximately 1.5 kilometres north of the application site.

Ringwork and Bailey Castle 390m West of Buntingsdale Hall (List Entry No. 1019659; NGR SJ 65092 32536). A medieval ringwork and bailey, approximately 4.8 kilometres northeast of the application site in the Tern valley.

Edge Runner Mill, Bury Walls (List Entry No. 1003024; NGR SJ 57880 26830). The buried remains of a cider mill on the slopes of Bury Walls, approximately 3.8 kilometres southwest of the application site.

6.1.2. Registered Parks and Gardens

Hodnet Hall (List Entry No. 1001125; NGR SJ 60668 28280; Grade II). This 140-hectare registered landscape lies immediately west of the application site, with its eastern boundary formed by the A49 (Drayton Road) corridor. The registered area encompasses 20th-century gardens developed around a chain of pools, 19th-century formal gardens, and the medieval deer park on the hill to the west of the hall. The Registered Park and Garden description notes that the area of land to the east of the Hall and to the north of Church Street – the zone that directly encompasses the application site – was historically occupied by "a series of long, narrow closes representing enclosed open-field strips," before being partially incorporated into the extended park landscape in 1870. The description also records that the scheduled motte and bailey castle lies "c 300m east of the Hall" within the registered area, and that ridge and furrow associated with former strip cultivation surrounds the dovecote 250m southwest of the former hall site. The application site, lying on the northeastern margin of this landscape, falls within the wider setting of the Registered Park and Garden.

Hawkstone (List Entry No. 1000199; NGR SJ 59362 29138; Grade I). The Grade I registered landscape of Hawkstone Park, centred on the sandstone hills to the northwest of Hodnet, lies approximately 3 kilometres from the application site.

6.1.3. Listed Buildings

The following listed buildings on and immediately adjacent to Drayton Road are of particular relevance to the assessment of the application site's setting contribution to the Conservation Area. The applicant's Heritage Impact Assessment describes these buildings as forming the principal heritage interest of Conservation Area Character Area 3 (Drayton Road).

No. 18 Drayton Road, Hodnet Cottage (List Entry No. 1366849; Grade II; NGR SJ 61429 28772) – a mid to late 17th-century timber-framed, thatched cottage on the southeast side of Drayton Road, directly opposite the application site.

No. 22 Drayton Road (List Entry No. 1366811; Grade II; NGR SJ 61340 28661) – an early 17th-century single-storey timber-framed cottage with three bays, also on the southeast side of Drayton Road.

No. 2 Drayton Road (List Entry No. 1366848; Grade II; NGR SJ 61329 28671) – an early 19th-century three-storey house on the northwest side of Drayton Road.

Church of St Luke (List Entry No. 1366827; Grade I; NGR SJ 61241 28600) – the parish church, of 12th-century origin extensively remodelled in the 14th century, thought to occupy the site of the earlier Anglo-Saxon chapel associated with the royal manor of Odenet.

The Old Rectory (List Entry No. 1366812; Grade II; NGR SJ 60936 28976) – the 1812 rectory designed by Edward Haycock for Bishop Heber.

Tithe Barn at Home Farm (List Entry No. 1307896; Grade II*; NGR SJ 61068 28183) – a dated 1619 timber-framed tithe barn within the Hodnet Hall grounds.

Nos. 24 and 25 Shrewsbury Road (List Entry No. 1366847; Grade II; NGR SJ 61478 28402) – a late 17th-century timber-framed building with early 19th-century alterations.

The full schedule of listed buildings within the 5-kilometre search area is retained on file. The 5-kilometre area contains two Grade I listed buildings, seven Grade II* listed buildings, and in excess of sixty Grade II listed buildings, reflecting the exceptional density of heritage assets in north Shropshire's historic landscape.

6.2 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

The Shropshire HER search returned in excess of 700 entries within the 5-kilometre search radius. The following are of particular relevance to the application site, its below-ground potential, and the significance of its setting.

Ridge and furrow south of Hodnet Motte and Bailey Castle (HER PRN 33462; MSA36254). Earthwork remains of ridge and furrow cultivation visible on LiDAR imagery, recorded approximately 80 metres south of the Scheduled Monument. This feature lies within the grounds of Hodnet Hall Park and confirms the survival of medieval agricultural earthworks in the immediate vicinity of the castle complex. The HER entry corroborates the Scheduled Monument description, which notes that this area of ridge and furrow is not included in the scheduling "as there is no direct relationship between it and the castle." Its proximity to the application site is directly relevant to the assessment of below-ground potential.

Possible Site of Saxon Chapel, Hodnet (HER PRN 08083; MSA17603). The possible site of the Anglo-Saxon chapel associated with the royal manor and administrative centre of Odenet, identified in the HER as a discrete monument. This confirms the status of the Hodnet church site as one of exceptional early medieval significance, and reinforces the archaeological depth of the settlement complex within which the application site sits.

Three Sections of Pit Alignment c.480m Southeast of Harcourt Farm, Stanton upon Hine Heath (HER PRN 34320; MSA37174). Three sections of cropmark pit alignment visible on Google Earth imagery captured during drought conditions on 27 June 2018. Pit alignments of this type are a characteristic feature of the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age landscape of north Shropshire, recorded as cropmarks across the Permo-Triassic sandstone terrains where the geology permits their formation. Their identification from aerial imagery in this area confirms that the landscape around Hodnet contains undiscovered buried prehistoric features of this type, and demonstrates the value of remote sensing in revealing otherwise invisible archaeology.

Pit Alignment East of Slang Farm, The Avenue, Stanton upon Hine Heath (HER PRN 34425; MSA37292). A further cropmark pit alignment visible under drought conditions in 2018, approximately 4 kilometres north of the application site. The same conditions under which these features were identified (drought-induced differential drying over buried ditches) would also be likely to reveal comparable features on and around the application site if examined under equivalent conditions.

Earthwork Remains of Lynchets, East of Lostford Manor Farm Moated Site (HER PRN 34726; MSA37601). Earthwork remains of lynchets of possible medieval date, visible on LiDAR imagery. Lynchets are cultivation terraces formed by repeated ploughing on sloping

ground and are characteristic of medieval agricultural systems. Their identification from LiDAR approximately 2.5 kilometres north of the application site demonstrates both the survival of medieval earthwork evidence in this landscape and the capability of LiDAR to reveal such features.

Fragmentary Remains of Ridge and Furrow, West of Hawkstone Hall (HER PRN 33398; MSA36213). Ridge and furrow visible on LiDAR imagery at Hawkstone, demonstrating the survival of medieval cultivation earthworks across the wider landscape of the study area.

Find Spot of Flint Flake at Stoke upon Tern (HER PRN 03622; MSA14394). A retouched flint flake, found during fieldwalking at an unrecorded location within Stoke upon Tern parish, is classified as Lower Palaeolithic to Late Iron Age in the HER associated finds record. The presence of prehistoric lithic material within the 5-kilometre study area, albeit from a non-specific location, is consistent with the broader pattern of prehistoric activity in the north Shropshire plain.

Earthwork Remains of Possible Water Meadow System, West of Stoke Park Farm (HER PRN 32777; MSA35618). Earthwork remains of parallel drainage channels adjacent to a possible former watercourse, visible on LiDAR imagery, suggest a water meadow management system. The feature demonstrates the complexity of the agricultural and hydrological landscape preserved in the Tern valley and its tributaries.

6.3 Summary of HER evidence

The HER data confirms that the application site lies within a landscape of exceptional archaeological and historical richness, encompassing evidence from the Bronze Age through to the post-medieval period. The most significant observation from the HER search is that no archaeological fieldwork of any kind (evaluation, watching brief, geophysical survey or fieldwalking) has been carried out on the application site or within its immediate boundaries. The site therefore represents an unassessed archaeological resource within a landscape context that strongly favours the survival and significance of below-ground remains.

The Registered Park and Garden description explicitly identifies the zone of the application site as historically characterised by medieval open-field strips, placing it within the zone of potential medieval agricultural archaeology directly associated with the documented planned expansion of the medieval settlement. The Scheduled Monument description confirms that the extent of the medieval deer park is not fully known, leaving open the possibility that the park pale and associated features extend into or towards the application site in ways not yet recorded. Neither of these points is acknowledged in the applicant's Heritage Impact Assessment.

7. Cartographic and Documentary Sources

The following cartographic sources were consulted in order of date. Analysis focuses on the application site and the immediately surrounding area, with particular attention to the evolution of the northern approach to Hodnet, the extent of the deer park, and any features of potential archaeological significance visible within the Site boundary.

Christopher Saxton, Map of Shropshire (1577)

Saxton's county survey is the earliest cartographic source for the Hodnet landscape. At the scale of the original, individual field boundaries and the Site itself are not discernible, but the map clearly depicts Hodnet as a named settlement of some significance and shows the deer park as an established feature to the west of the settlement. The Park is shown occupying the hill to the west and southwest of the hall complex, broadly consistent with the medieval extent described in the Scheduled Monument record. The map confirms that by the late 16th century the deer park boundary was sufficiently well defined to be represented at county-survey scale. The A49 corridor north of the village – the line of Drayton Road along which the application site fronts – appears as the principal route from Shrewsbury to the north.

John Speed, Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine (1611–12)

Speed's map of Shropshire, derived in part from Saxton, shows Hodnet at a comparable scale and resolution. No additional detail is recoverable for the application site at this scale.

John Rocque, Map of Shropshire (1752)

Rocque's survey, published at a significantly larger scale than its predecessors, provides the first cartographic evidence useful for understanding the immediate landscape setting of the application site. The map depicts the Hodnet Hall complex in its pre-1870 form, the timber-framed Hodnet Old Hall and its associated park, and shows the principal approach roads through the village. The northern settlement edge along the Drayton Road corridor is shown with individual properties beginning to appear on the frontage. The Registered Park and Garden record confirms this map as a key source for the pre-improvement landscape of Hodnet Hall Park, and the Shropshire Records and Research Centre holds an associated undated 18th-century plan of Hodnet Park (ref. 6001/2792, p. 72) which provides complementary detail for the park interior.

The application site lies northeast of the historic core, in an area that Rocque shows as open agricultural land beyond the settled frontage. The northern boundary of the settled area at this date appears to lie south of the application site, with the landscape to the north and northeast characterised by enclosed fields – consistent with the 'long, narrow closes' noted in the Registered Park and Garden description as representing enclosed open-field strips in this part of the parish. No park pale or formal boundary is shown extending to the northeast in this area at this date, though the scale and accuracy of Rocque preclude certainty.

Tithe Map for Hodnet Parish (c.1840; Shropshire Archives)

The tithe map and its accompanying apportionment schedule constitute the most important pre-Ordnance Survey cartographic source for the application site at the field scale. The map should be consulted at the Shropshire Archives to confirm the following, which is inferred from published descriptions of the wider estate landscape.

At the date of the survey, the application site is understood to comprise one or more enclosed pastoral fields fronting Drayton Road to the west. The apportionment schedule will provide the field name or names, the names of owner and occupier, the acreage, and the

land use classification (arable, pasture, meadow or otherwise) for each parcel. Field names recorded in the tithe apportionment are of particular archaeological significance, as they may reflect earlier land use, former ownership, or landscape features no longer visible.

The 1840 tithe map is also significant for documenting the kitchen garden associated with Hodnet Hall at that date, which the Registered Park and Garden record places "on the east side of the approach to the old Hall from the north, c.80m west of Castle Hill" – a location broadly consistent with the western margin of the application site's visual envelope. This places the application site within the zone of direct interface between the historic estate landscape and the agricultural hinterland at the mid-19th-century date.

The Registered Park and Garden description also records that at 1840 "the area between the two" road lines – that is, between the former line of the Shrewsbury to Whitchurch road (Church Street) and its present line (the A49) – was occupied by long, narrow closes representing enclosed open-field strips. When the road was diverted north in 1870 to accommodate the new hall's grounds, this strip-field zone was absorbed into the extended park landscape to the south and west. The application site, lying to the east of the A49 and to the north of the village, was not absorbed in this way and retained its agricultural character beyond the park boundary.

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition, 6 inches to 1 mile (surveyed 1879, published 1889)

The first OS 6-inch sheet covering Hodnet (Sheet SJ62NE or equivalent) provides the earliest accurate large-scale cartographic record of the application site. At this scale, individual field boundaries, the layout of Drayton Road frontage properties, and the relationship between the Site and the recently completed Hodnet Hall (1870) and its remodelled park are clearly legible.

The application site is shown as an enclosed field with its boundaries largely consistent with those visible today. The Dutch barn and associated stable structures are shown, confirming that agricultural use of the Site was well established by the survey date and that no residential or other development had taken place within the field by the late 19th century. The northern approach to the village along Drayton Road is shown with the listed buildings at Nos. 18 and 22 already in place on the southeast side of the road, their positions and setbacks from the carriageway clearly recorded. The A49 corridor at this date presents the same character of widely spaced historic buildings with intervening open land that the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies as the defining quality of Character Area 3.

The 1st Edition also confirms the position of the Conservation Area's northern boundary in relation to the field system and shows the course of any drainage ditches and field boundaries within and adjacent to the application site. Any earthwork features of potential archaeological significance (ridge and furrow, boundary banks, or irregular ground) that appear on this survey would be directly relevant to the assessment of below-ground potential.

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition, 25 inches to 1 mile (surveyed 1880, published 1881)

The 25-inch survey provides the highest resolution cartographic coverage available for the application site at any pre-modern date. At this scale, individual buildings, field gate positions, drainage features and topographic detail are all recorded. The application site is shown as a single enclosed field with the Dutch barn structure present. The boundary hedgerows are depicted, and their character at this date (whether substantial, recently planted, or showing signs of age) may be inferred from their representation relative to adjacent boundaries. The relationship between the application site and the immediately

adjacent listed buildings at Nos. 18 and 22 Drayton Road is clearly established at this scale, and the open land frontage of the Site in relation to the road is precisely recordable.

Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition, 25 inches to 1 mile (surveyed 1900, published 1901)

Comparison of the 2nd Edition survey with the 1st Edition provides evidence of any changes within the Site or on the Drayton Road frontage in the intervening 20 years. The application site is expected to show no significant change in boundary configuration or land use between the two surveys. Any differences – in the position or character of boundary hedges, drainage features, or agricultural structures – should be noted and considered in the context of the below-ground archaeological assessment.

Summary of Cartographic Evidence

The cartographic sequence establishes the following key points for the significance assessment in Section 8:

The application site has been in continuous agricultural use as enclosed pastoral land from at least 1840 and most likely for considerably longer, given the reference to open-field strip closes in this area prior to the enclosure evident on the tithe map. This land use history is consistent with the survival of below-ground archaeological deposits undisturbed by deep ploughing.

The deer park, as depicted on Saxton (1577) and in subsequent sources, is shown occupying the hill to the west of Hodnet Hall, with its eastern boundary broadly coinciding with the area of the Scheduled Monument's recorded park pale. The maps do not resolve the question of whether park pale earthworks extend further northeast towards the application site, a question that must be addressed through field evaluation rather than cartographic analysis alone.

The northern approach to Hodnet along Drayton Road has preserved its historic character of intermittent historic buildings within a predominantly open frontage since at least the date of the 1st Edition survey, a character directly threatened by the introduction of a residential development of 20 dwellings within the open field forming the application site.

The southern boundary of the site, a single lane track called 'Abbots Way', is anomalous within the Hodnet road-name sequence. Unlike every other named route in the village, which takes its name from a destination, landmark or functional feature, 'Abbots Way' does not correspond to any known local topographic or administrative feature. The name most plausibly commemorates a medieval monastic association, either a route used by a religious house in connection with its Hodnet Fee landholdings, or a boundary path associated with abbey-owned land. Documentary evidence confirms that Combermere Abbey held interests in the Hodnet Fee through its Longford connection in the 12th century (VCH Shropshire). Lilleshall Abbey, approximately 12 kilometres to the southeast, also held extensive Shropshire landholdings and cannot be excluded. The significance of this toponym for the assessment of below-ground potential is considered further at Section 8.

7.1 Aerial Photograph Analysis

Satellite Imagery from 2015 shows the faint outline of a rectilinear enclosure to the east of the site; however, the lines are very faint and cannot be assessed with a high degree of accuracy.

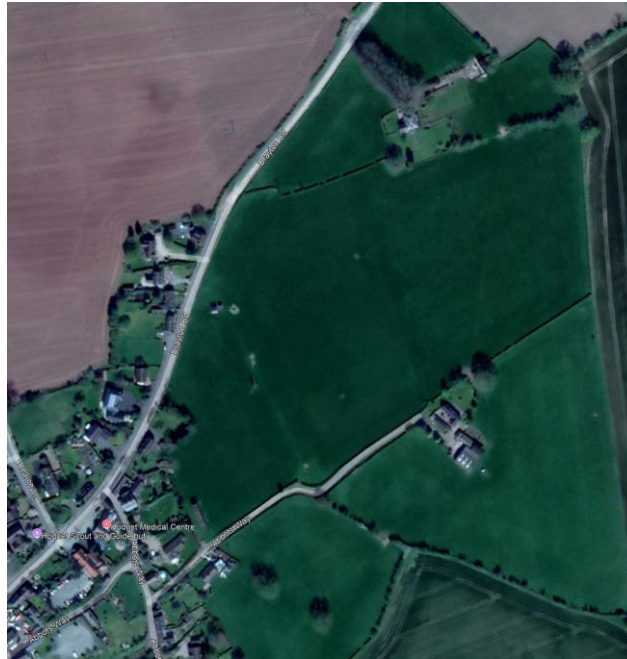


Figure 6 - 2015 Satellite Imagery.

7.2 LiDAR Analysis

LiDAR data for the Site and wider area was obtained from the Environment Agency's Open Data repository (1m DTM and DSM composite). The data was processed using Raster Visualisation Toolbox plugin for QGIS and visualised using hillshade / sky view factor / slope / multi-directional hillshade / Multi-Scale Topographic Position. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate the results.

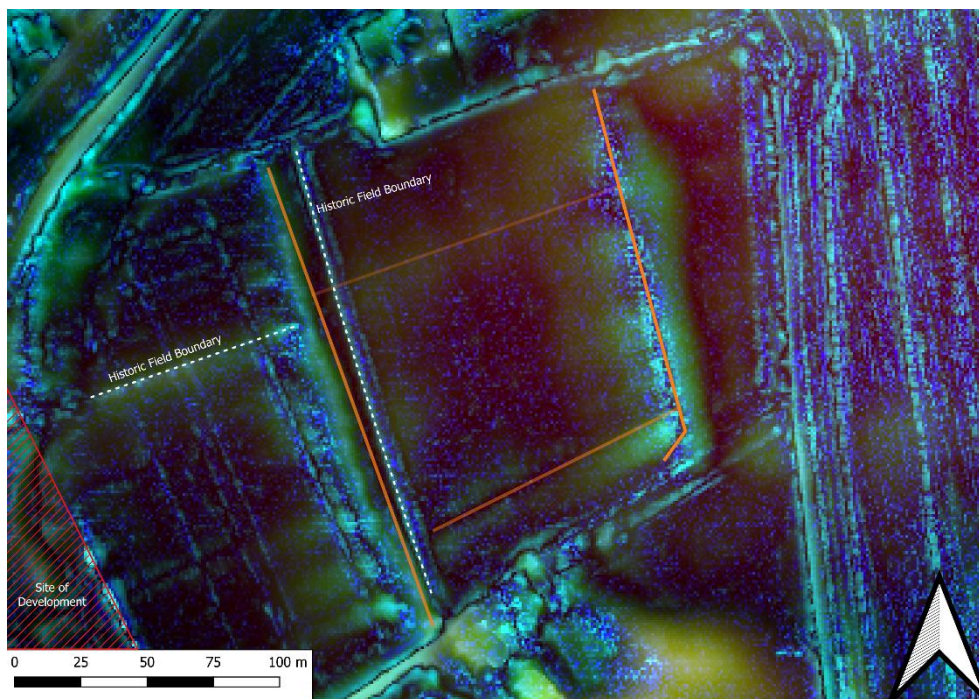


Figure 7 - MSTP to the east of the site.

Approximately 100 metres east of the application site, the MSTP analysis reveals a sub-rectangular enclosure defined by a surrounding bank and ditch. The enclosure is intersected by two raised linear features orientated broadly perpendicular to the outer earthworks. Initial interpretation might suggest these represent former field boundaries; however, comparison with the 1880 Ordnance Survey Six-Inch mapping demonstrates that the mapped historic field boundaries of this date correspond to the white dashed lines shown on Figure 7, and not to the more substantial earthwork features identified within the enclosure interior. These internal linear features are therefore not explained by the post-medieval field system and are not accounted for by any available historic mapping.

While it remains possible that the features represent earlier, unmapped field divisions, this interpretation is assigned a low level of confidence on account of their markedly larger scale relative to other historic field boundaries identified within the wider LiDAR dataset. The sub-rectangular bank-and-ditch morphology of the enclosure itself is a form consistent with a range of archaeological site types (including Iron Age or Romano-British farmstead enclosures, medieval moated sites, and enclosures associated with monastic land management) none of which can be distinguished on remote sensing evidence alone.

If the proposed alignment of Abbots Way reflects a genuine medieval monastic route associated with a religious house holding interests in the Hodnet Fee (as discussed at Section 7), the sub-rectangular enclosure may form part of a broader monastic landscape, representing an outbuilding complex, grange structure or managed enclosure associated with that route. This association is noted but assigned speculative status in the absence of corroborating documentary or field evidence. What can be stated with confidence is that the feature is not explained by the available historic cartographic record and requires investigation before its significance can be properly determined.



Figure 8 - MSTP of the site's eastern boundary.

Along the eastern boundary of the application site, the MSTP analysis identifies a narrow rectilinear depression interpreted as a possible rectilinear structure or managed earthwork.

The western extent of this feature is obscured by later disturbance and associated data noise, preventing full delineation. The visible footprint measures approximately 100 metres east–west by 50 metres north–south, encompassing an area of approximately 0.53 hectares. No corresponding feature is depicted on any available historic mapping.

The absence of any cartographic record for a feature of this footprint has two principal explanations: either the feature represents a temporary structure of perishable materials that had been removed prior to the earliest available cartographic survey, or it represents a feature that predates the earliest available mapping entirely. In either case, the feature is not accounted for by the post-medieval agricultural history of the site and represents an earthwork anomaly whose character and date require ground-truthing before its significance can be assigned. The feature's position along the eastern boundary of the application site places it within the direct zone of potential ground disturbance from the proposed development.

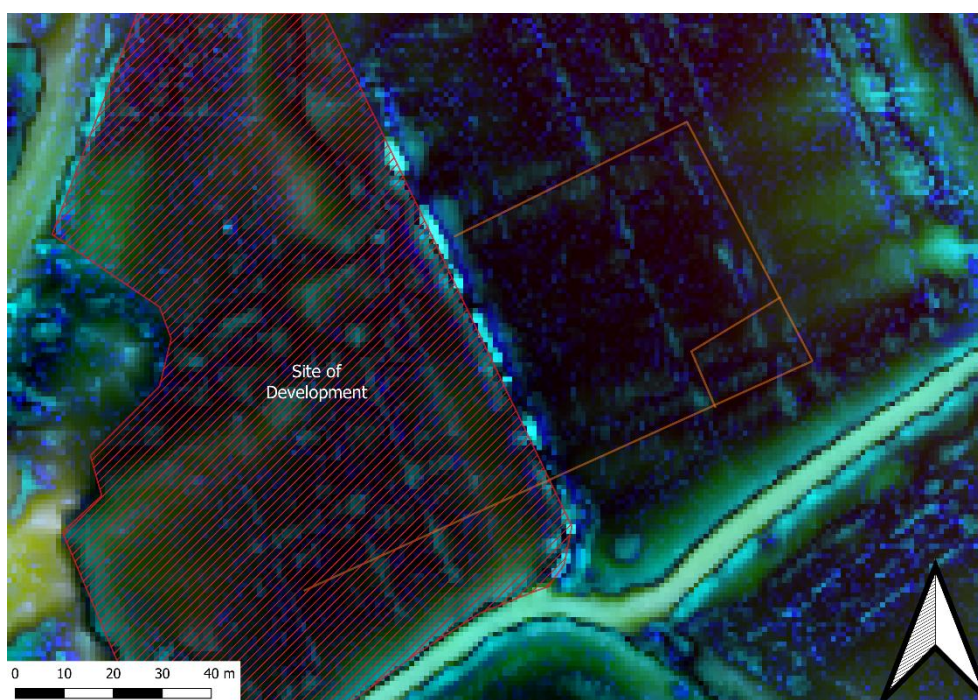


Figure 9 - MSTP of the eastern site boundary with feature highlighted.

8. Significance Assessment

8.1 Methodology

This significance assessment has been prepared in accordance with Historic England's Heritage Impact Assessment in the Historic Environment (HEAN 12, October 2019) and Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015). Significance is assessed across four values - evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal - and assigned a level of Outstanding, High, Medium, Low or Negligible. Where significance is uncertain due to the absence of fieldwork, this is explicitly identified, and its implications for the assessment are drawn out.

The applicant submitted a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) dated October 2025 and updated in April 2026 in support of application 26/01717/OUT. That document is a material consideration and is engaged directly throughout this section where its conclusions are considered to misrepresent, understate or omit relevant evidence. The applicant's HIA does not constitute a desk-based assessment within the meaning of NPPF Paragraph 209 or the ClfA Standard for Desk-Based Assessment (2017). It does not reference LiDAR analysis, does not engage with the below-ground archaeological potential of the application site, does not mention the 2002 Bronze Age bypass discovery, and does not address the toponym 'Abbots Way' or features identified in this assessment. These omissions are material to the assessment of significance and are addressed explicitly below.

8.2 Significance of the Site – Below-Ground Archaeological Potential

The application site has not been subject to any archaeological fieldwork (evaluation, geophysical survey, watching brief or fieldwalking) at any recorded date. In the absence of fieldwork, significance must be assessed on the basis of the contextual evidence assembled in Sections 4 to 7 of this assessment.

The applicant's HIA concludes that the evidential value of the application site is Low, on the basis that it is described as "a rural field on the edge of the settlement" with no known archaeological finds from within its boundary. This conclusion is not supportable given the evidence available.

Evidential Value

Assessment: Medium tending to High

The LiDAR evidence described above materially strengthens the evidential value assessment of the application site and its immediate environs. Combined with the contextual evidence presented in Sections 4 to 7, the following factors individually and cumulatively support a significantly higher evidential value than the applicant's HIA assigns:

The two features identified in the MSTP analysis (the sub-rectangular enclosure east of the site and the rectilinear depression along its eastern boundary) are not explained by any available historic cartographic source. Both require investigation. The rectilinear depression, in particular, lies within the zone of direct impact from the proposed development.

The Bronze Age cremation cemetery discovered during construction of the A53 Hodnet bypass in 2002, comprising at least 17 individual cremation pits containing charcoal and burnt human bone, demonstrates confirmed preserved prehistoric buried remains within the parish on ground of comparable geological and topographic character to the application site. The applicant's HIA does not reference this discovery.

The application site is underlain by calcareous glacial till over Permo-Triassic sandstone. The calcareous character of the till creates moderately alkaline soil conditions conducive to the preservation of bone, shell and organic materials. The applicant's HIA makes no geological assessment and does not engage with preservation potential.

The site has been maintained as a permanent pasture throughout the entire period of the cartographic record. This land use is associated with significantly better preservation of buried archaeological deposits than arable cultivation, as repeated deep mechanical ploughing does not take place.

The Scheduled Monument description for the motte and bailey castle on Castle Hill explicitly states that "the original extent of the park in the medieval period is not known." The application site lies to the northeast of the Scheduled Monument in the direction of the potential park pale continuation. The sub-rectangular enclosure identified on Figure 7, lying approximately 100 metres east of the site, may be associated with this uncertain zone. The applicant's HIA does not address this uncertainty.

The toponym 'Abbots Way', applied to the road forming the eastern boundary of the application site, is anomalous within the Hodnet road-name sequence and most plausibly commemorates a medieval monastic route or land boundary. Documentary evidence confirms that the Abbey of Combermere held interests in the Hodnet Fee. If the route alignment of Abbots Way is of monastic origin, the sub-rectangular enclosure on Figure 7 and the rectilinear depression on Figure 8 may represent associated features of this monastic landscape dimension, a possibility that, while requiring investigation to confirm, cannot be responsibly dismissed on desk-based evidence.

On the basis of these factors (the confirmed Bronze Age activity within the parish, the favourable preservation conditions, the absence of any disconfirming fieldwork, the two LiDAR anomalies within and adjacent to the application site boundary, the uncertain park pale extent, and the significant toponym), the evidential value of the application site is assessed as Medium, tending to High. The applicant's 'Low' rating is based on an incomplete evidence base, most critically the total absence of any LiDAR analysis, and cannot be sustained.

Historical Value

Assessment: Medium

The application site lies within the zone of the medieval planned town extension associated with Odo de Hodnet's market grant of the 1250s and within the zone of the medieval open-field system that preceded enclosure. The 'Abbots Way' toponym adds a further possible historical dimension through its association with medieval monastic land management. The possible connection between the LiDAR-identified features and a monastic landscape (while speculative at this stage) adds weight to this assessment. Historical value is assessed as Medium.

Aesthetic Value

Assessment: Medium

The application site forms part of the rural northern approach to Hodnet along Drayton Road. It occupies the open field setting between the last historic buildings on the Drayton Road frontage and the open countryside to the north. Its undeveloped character contributes directly to the progressive transition from open countryside to historic settlement core that the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies as the defining quality of Character Area 3

(Drayton Road). This aesthetic contribution - the maintenance of the rural approach and the visual separation of the listed building group from the open countryside - is assessed as Medium.

Communal Value

Assessment: Low

The site has no specific communal associations beyond its general contribution to the character of the village's northern approach. Its communal value is assessed as Low.

8.3 Significance of Designated Heritage Assets

8.3.1. Motte and Bailey Castle on Castle Hill, Hodnet, with Associated Park Pale, Fishpond and Formal Garden (SAM List Entry No. 1019653)

Evidential value: Outstanding. The Scheduled Monument encompasses a rare and well-preserved multi-period complex (the castle earthworks, masonry tower keep, park pale, fishpond and formal garden), representing the military, administrative and agrarian archaeology of the manorial centre of one of north Shropshire's most significant medieval settlements. The motte stands up to 7 metres high. The park pale survives up to 3 metres high. The monument has not been comprehensively excavated and contains substantial surviving buried deposits.

Historical value: Outstanding. The monument represents the physical remains of the seat of the lords of Hodnet from the late 11th century, within a settlement identified in Domesday as a royal manor and hundred capital. The relationship between the castle complex, the Church of St Luke and the planned medieval town is legible in the present-day village morphology.

Aesthetic value: High. The motte and earthwork complex is visible within the Hodnet Hall grounds and contributes to the designed landscape of the Registered Park and Garden.

Communal value: High. The castle represents the most tangible physical expression of Hodnet's medieval significance and is a focus of local historical identity.

Overall significance: Outstanding.

The applicant's HIA acknowledges the Scheduled Monument but does not engage with the implications of the uncertainty in the park pale's recorded extent. The conclusion that the application site's potential relationship to unrecorded park pale features is insignificant is not supported by the evidence and is directly contradicted by the Scheduled Monument's own description.

8.3.2. Hodnet Hall Registered Park and Garden (List Entry No. 1001125; Grade II)

Evidential value: High. The registered landscape incorporates evidence of medieval deer park management, 17th to 19th-century formal garden design, and 20th-century landscape design, representing a layered sequence of designed landscape development of regional significance.

Historical value: High. The park incorporates the remains of the medieval deer park established before 1275. The Registered Park and Garden description identifies the zone of the application site as formerly occupied by medieval open-field strip closes, underlining the historical significance of the interface between the park and the wider agricultural landscape.

Aesthetic value: High. The chain of ornamental pools, the terraced gardens, the mature tree cover and the broader park setting constitute a designed landscape of considerable aesthetic value and public amenity.

Communal value: High. Hodnet Hall gardens are open to the public and constitute a significant cultural and tourism asset for the village and the wider region.

Overall significance: High.

The application site lies within the wider setting of the Registered Park and Garden. The Registered Park and Garden's eastern boundary runs along the A49 corridor, with the application site on the opposite (east) side of the road. The Registered Park and Garden description explicitly identifies the area of the application site as part of the historic interface between the park and the open-field agricultural landscape. Development on the application site would alter the character of this interface zone and would be visible from within the registered area.

8.3.3. Church of St Luke, Church Street (List Entry No. 1366827; Grade I)

Evidential value: Outstanding. The church is of 12th-century origin, thought to occupy the site of the earlier Anglo-Saxon chapel associated with the royal manor of Odenet. It incorporates fabric spanning the 12th to 20th centuries and contains monuments and fittings of exceptional quality, including the unique octagonal tower and monuments attributed to Chantrey. It is the physical focus of Hodnet's ecclesiastical and administrative significance from the pre-Norman period.

Historical value: Outstanding. The church's probable continuity on the site of the Anglo-Saxon chapel of the hundred caput makes it one of the most historically significant sites in north Shropshire.

Aesthetic value: High. The church tower is the primary visual landmark of the village and defines the character of the settled area as seen from the approaches.

Overall significance: Outstanding.

The Church of St Luke is a Grade I Listed Building, engaging the statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 s.66(1) to give special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting. The northern approach to the village along Drayton Road (the approach from which the application site is experienced) is the sequence through which the church tower progressively becomes visible above the roofline and tree canopy of the historic settlement. This approach sequence is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal as a defining characteristic of Character Area 3. Development within the application site would alter the experience of this sequence.

8.3.4. Listed Buildings on Drayton Road

The following listed buildings front directly onto Drayton Road, adjacent to the application site, and constitute the principal heritage interest of Conservation Area Character Area 3:

No. 18 Drayton Road (Hodnet Cottage, List Entry No. 1366849; Grade II): a mid to late 17th-century timber-framed thatched cottage. Significance: Medium-High.

No. 22 Drayton Road (List Entry No. 1366811; Grade II): an early 17th-century timber-framed cottage. Significance: Medium-High.

No. 2 Drayton Road (List Entry No. 1366848; Grade II): an early 19th-century three-storey house. Significance: Medium.

Nos. 24 and 25 Shrewsbury Road (List Entry No. 1366847; Grade II): a late 17th-century timber-framed building. Significance: Medium-High.

These buildings are listed under the statutory duty of s.66(1) of the 1990 Act. Their significance derives not only from their individual architectural and historic interest but from their collective contribution to the Drayton Road character area, specifically the relationship between the historic built frontage and the open agricultural land of the application site beyond. This open land setting is integral to the significance of these buildings as experienced from Drayton Road.

8.3.5 Hodnet Conservation Area

The Hodnet Conservation Area was designated in August 1976. The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies eight-character areas, of which Character Area 3 (Drayton Road) is directly engaged by the application site. The Appraisal characterises this area as defined by the gradual rural approach to the historic core from the north, with scattered historic timber-framed buildings set back behind front gardens and mature trees, and the progressive revelation of the Church tower as the viewer moves south along Drayton Road.

The significance of the Conservation Area is assessed as High. The application site forms the open agricultural land that defines the northern boundary of the settled area within this character zone. Its undeveloped character is not incidental to the Conservation Area's significance; it is structurally constitutive of it. The applicant's previous application on this site (ref. 14/03403/OUT) was refused in 2014, specifically on the grounds of adverse impact on the Conservation Area and its approach from the north. That determination remains a material consideration.

The statutory duty under s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This is a higher obligation than a simple material consideration.

8.4 Summary Significance Table

Heritage asset	Designation	Significance
<i>Motte and Bailey Castle, Castle Hill</i>	<i>SAM</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>Church of St. Luke</i>	<i>Grade 1 Listed</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>Tithe Barn at Home Farm</i>	<i>Grade 2* Listed</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Hodnet Hall Park & Garden</i>	<i>Grade 2 RPG</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Hodnet Conservation Area</i>	<i>CA</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>No.18 Drayton Road (Hodnet Cottage)</i>	<i>Grade 2 Listed</i>	<i>Medium-High</i>
<i>No.22 Drayton Road</i>	<i>Grade 2 Listed</i>	<i>Medium-High</i>

Heritage asset	Designation	Significance
<i>Nos. 24 & 25 Shrewsbury Road</i>	<i>Grade 2 Listed</i>	<i>Medium-High</i>
<i>No.2 Drayton Road</i>	<i>Grade 2 Listed</i>	<i>Medium</i>
<i>Sub-rectangular enclosure E of Site (Fig. 7)</i>	<i>Non-Designated</i>	<i>Unknown – requires investigation</i>
<i>Rectilinear depression, E boundary (Fig. 8)</i>	<i>Non-Designated</i>	<i>Unknown – requires investigation</i>
<i>Ridge & Furrow S of Castle (HER PRN 33462)</i>	<i>Non-Designated</i>	<i>Medium</i>
<i>Application site- below-ground potential</i>	<i>Non-Designated</i>	<i>Medium (tending to High)</i>
<i>Application site – setting contribution</i>	<i>Non-Designated</i>	<i>Medium</i>
<i>'Abbots Way' toponym</i>	<i>Non-Designated</i>	<i>Medium</i>

8.5 Assessment of the Applicant's Heritage Impact Assessment

The applicant's HIA was prepared by a heritage consultant and is the primary document through which the applicant seeks to demonstrate the acceptability of the proposals in heritage terms. However, as a basis for the significance assessments required by NPPF Paragraph 207 and the ClfA Standard for Desk-Based Assessment, it contains a number of material omissions and errors.

It does not constitute a desk-based assessment to the standard required by NPPF Paragraph 209. It contains no LiDAR analysis. It does not reference the 2002 Bronze Age bypass discovery within the parish. It does not engage with the uncertainty in the extent of the Scheduled Monument's park pale. It does not address the toponym 'Abbots Way'. It does not assess the geological and soil conditions that bear on preservation potential. It does not engage with the Hedgerow Regulations implications for the site's field boundaries. It does not acknowledge the previous refusal of 2014 as a heritage material consideration in its significance assessment.

The conclusion that the evidential value of the application site is 'Low' cannot be reconciled with the evidence assembled in this assessment. An applicant seeking to demonstrate that below-ground significance is low must first undertake the fieldwork necessary to support that conclusion. In the absence of any fieldwork (geophysical survey, trial trenching or even a systematic walkover survey), the 'Low' rating represents an assumption rather than an evidence-based assessment.

The applicant's HIA concludes that the overall impact of the development on heritage assets ranges from 'negligible' to 'neutral.' For the reasons set out in this assessment and developed further in Section 9, that conclusion is not supportable on the available evidence.

9. Impact Assessment

9.1 Methodology

The following section assesses the likely impact of the proposed development on the heritage assets and their significance, identified and assessed in Section 8. The application is submitted in outline form with all matters reserved except access. The absence of fixed design parameters (including building heights, floor levels, foundation depths, drainage strategy and detailed layout) means that the precise nature and extent of ground disturbance cannot be determined from the application documents. Where this creates uncertainty in the impact assessment, this is stated explicitly, and its implications are drawn out.

Impacts are assessed in terms of nature (direct, indirect or setting), magnitude (Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible) and residual effect (Major Adverse, Moderate Adverse, Minor Adverse, Neutral or Beneficial). The NPPF harm framework (substantial harm under Paragraph 214, and less than substantial harm under Paragraph 215) is applied to each designated heritage asset at Section 9.4. Public benefits are considered in Section 9.5.

The applicant's HIA concludes that the overall impact of the development on heritage assets ranges from 'negligible' to 'neutral.' For the reasons set out below, that conclusion is not supportable.

9.2 Direct Physical Impacts on Below-Ground Archaeological Deposits

9.2.1. General below-ground potential of the application site

The proposed development is for up to 20 dwellings in outline. Residential development of this type invariably involves substantial ground disturbance across the entire site footprint through a combination of bulk foundation excavation, service trenches, drainage runs, soakaway construction, access road formation and landscaping works. In outline form, the maximum depth of ground disturbance cannot be confirmed, but standard residential development in north Shropshire typically involves foundation excavation to 600mm–1,200mm below existing ground level for strip footings, and to greater depths for any elements with a basement or where founding conditions require deeper engagement with the substrate.

As established at Sections 4 and 8.2, the application site has: demonstrably favourable preservation conditions arising from its calcareous glacial till geology; an unbroken permanent pasture land use that has minimised truncation of buried deposits throughout the cartographic period; a landscape context characterised by confirmed Bronze Age burial activity within the parish on comparable ground; a setting adjacent to a Scheduled Monument of outstanding significance whose park pale extent is explicitly unresolved; and two LiDAR-identified features of unknown date and character whose relationship to the proposed development footprint cannot be determined from an outline application.

On the basis of these factors, and in the absence of any archaeological evaluation of the site, the impact of the proposed development on below-ground archaeological deposits must be assessed as potentially Major Adverse. This assessment cannot be refined without prior geophysical survey and trial trench evaluation to establish the presence, character, date and significance of any buried deposits.

The outline nature of the application is directly relevant here. Under NPPF Paragraph 209, where a site is known or thought to contain heritage assets with archaeological interest, the LPA should require an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. The evidence assembled in this assessment confirms that the application site is

reasonably thought to contain heritage assets of archaeological interest. The applicant's HIA does not constitute a desk-based assessment, and no field evaluation has been carried out. Permission in outline should not be granted in advance of that evaluation, where the potential impact is of the magnitude identified here.

Residual effect without mitigation: Potentially Major Adverse – cannot be confirmed without evaluation.

9.2.2. LiDAR-Identified Features — Figures 7 and 8

The sub-rectangular enclosure identified on Figure 7, lying approximately 100 metres east of the application site boundary, falls outside the application redline. Its direct physical destruction by the proposed development is therefore not at issue in the determination of this application. However, the enclosure's relationship to the application site is relevant in two respects.

First, if the enclosure represents a monument of archaeological significance (whether Iron Age, Romano-British, medieval or of monastic association), the zone between the enclosure and the application site boundary may constitute a wider archaeological landscape of which both features form part. Development on the application site would permanently foreclose the opportunity to investigate that relationship through area evaluation. This constitutes an indirect impact on the significance of the enclosure if it is ultimately found to be of archaeological importance.

Second, the alignment of features associated with the enclosure (and in particular the possible relationship to the 'Abbots Way' route) raises the question of whether associated subsurface features extend westward into the application site itself, below the zone of visibility in the current LiDAR dataset. This cannot be determined without a geophysical investigation of the application site.

The rectilinear depression identified on Figure 8, along the eastern boundary of the application site, falls within or is immediately adjacent to the application redline. Its footprint of approximately 0.53 hectares encompasses a substantial area. If this feature is of archaeological significance, it falls directly within the zone of proposed development and would be subject to the ground disturbance impacts described in Section 9.2.1. Its character and date are unknown. Its significance, as noted in the summary table at Section 8.4, is currently unknown, requiring investigation.

Granting outline planning permission for a development that would physically destroy or irrevocably truncate a feature of unknown but potentially significant character, without prior evaluation, would not be consistent with the precautionary approach to the protection of non-designated heritage assets required by NPPF Paragraph 216, nor with the NPPF Paragraph 209 requirement for field evaluation where heritage assets with archaeological interest are thought to be present.

Residual effect on LiDAR features without prior evaluation: Cannot be assessed – evaluation required before determination.

9.3 Setting Impacts on Designated Heritage Assets

9.3.1. Hodnet Conservation Area

The application site occupies the open field on the northern edge of the Conservation Area. Its relationship to the Conservation Area is not peripheral; it is the defining open land that separates the northernmost historic buildings of the Drayton Road character area from the open countryside beyond. The Conservation Area Appraisal characterises Character Area 3

(Drayton Road) as defined by the gradual rural approach from the north, with historic buildings set intermittently within a predominantly open landscape, culminating in the progressive revelation of the Church of St Luke's tower above the roofline and tree canopy of the historic core.

The introduction of up to 20 dwellings within the application site would fundamentally alter this approach sequence. The open rural land that currently allows the Conservation Area to be read as an entity within its countryside setting (approached progressively rather than entered abruptly) would be replaced by a residential development of suburban form visible from the approach along Drayton Road for a considerable distance to the north. The character of Character Area 3 as described in the Appraisal would be directly and permanently altered.

This impact is not theoretical. It is precisely the harm that Shropshire Council's planning committee identified when refusing the previous application on this site in 2014 (ref. 14/03403/OUT): "unacceptable harm to the open countryside and adverse impact on the adjacent Conservation Area, specifically on the approach to the village." The current application proposes 20 dwellings (six more than the refused scheme) on the same land. There is no material change in the relationship between the application site and the Conservation Area that would lead to a different conclusion on setting harm.

The statutory duty under s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed development would preserve neither. It would diminish the character of the Drayton Road approach in a manner that, once built, could not be undone.

Nature of impact: Setting (direct visual).

Magnitude: Major.

Residual effect: Major Adverse.

NPPF classification: Less than substantial harm – tending to substantial harm given the structural role of the application site in the Conservation Area's character, and the totality of impact across the full built frontage of up to 20 dwellings.

9.3.2. Motte and Bailey Castle on Castle Hill (SAM List Entry No. 1019653)

The Scheduled Monument lies approximately 250–300 metres southwest of the application site. The proposed development would not physically affect the Scheduled Monument or its immediate setting within the park grounds. However, two setting impacts are identified.

First, the visual setting of the Scheduled Monument encompasses the wider historic landscape of Hodnet, within which the open agricultural land of the application site forms part of the medieval landscape context of the castle and its associated features. The introduction of residential development in this zone would alter the character of the landscape immediately north and northeast of the monument.

Second, and more significantly, the explicit uncertainty in the extent of the park pale (confirmed by the Scheduled Monument description) means that the relationship between the application site and the scheduled complex cannot be fully resolved without evaluation. If the park pale or associated features extend into the zone of the application site, development would represent a direct physical impact on a component of the Scheduled Monument's wider archaeological complex. The sub-rectangular enclosure on Figure 7, lying approximately 100 metres east of the site, may be relevant to this question.

Nature of impact: Setting (indirect visual) and potentially Direct (if park pale features extend to application site).

Magnitude: Minor to Moderate – cannot be confirmed without evaluation.

Residual effect: Minor to Moderate Adverse – potentially greater if evaluation confirms archaeological extent.

NPPF classification: Less than substantial harm – assessment subject to revision following evaluation.

9.3.3. Church of St Luke (Grade I Listed, List Entry No. 1366827)

The Church of St Luke stands approximately 400 metres south of the application site at the historic core of the village. The significance of the church tower as the primary visual landmark of the settlement has been established at Section 8.3.3. The northern approach to the village along Drayton Road is the principal sequence through which the tower is progressively experienced in its landscape setting, emerging above the roofline and tree canopy as the viewer moves south from open countryside into the historic core.

The proposed development would introduce a built frontage of up to 20 dwellings between the open countryside and the historic settled edge on the east side of Drayton Road. This built frontage would be experienced by the approaching viewer before the historic buildings of the Conservation Area and before the tower of the church becomes visible. The approach sequence (a key element of the setting of this Grade I listed building) would be permanently disrupted.

The statutory duty under s.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 applies. The courts have confirmed that this duty requires decision-makers to give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings: a higher obligation than a simple material consideration in the planning balance.

Nature of impact: Setting (indirect visual).

Magnitude: Moderate.

Residual effect: Moderate Adverse.

NPPF classification: Less than substantial harm.

9.3.4. Hodnet Hall Registered Park and Garden (Grade II, List Entry No. 1001125)

The eastern boundary of the Registered Park and Garden runs along the A49 (Drayton Road) corridor, with the application site on the opposite side of the road. The Registered Park and Garden description identifies the zone of the application site as historically characterised by medieval open-field strip closes that formed the agricultural interface with the park landscape. Development within the application site would alter the character of this interface as experienced from within the park and from the eastern approach to the park along Drayton Road.

The chain of ornamental pools and the designed vistas within Hodnet Hall gardens do not appear to include a primary visual axis towards the application site. The setting impact is therefore of moderate rather than major character. However, the historical and landscape significance of the interface zone (and its explicit identification in the Registered Park and Garden description) means the impact is not negligible, as the applicant's HIA implies.

Nature of impact: Setting (indirect visual).

Magnitude: Minor to Moderate.

Residual effect: Minor to Moderate Adverse.

NPPF classification: Less than substantial harm.

9.3.5. Listed Buildings on Drayton Road

The listed buildings at Nos. 18 and 22 Drayton Road face the application site directly across the carriageway. Their setting, as experienced from Drayton Road, is defined by the open agricultural land of the application site as the backdrop to the historic buildings on the southeast side of the road. This relationship (historic building against open countryside) is integral to the character of the Drayton Road frontage as a whole.

The introduction of a residential development of up to 20 dwellings as the immediate backdrop and outlook of these listed buildings would transform their setting from one of open agricultural land to one of suburban residential development. This is an irreversible change to the setting of buildings whose significance is partly constituted by their relationship to that open landscape.

The statutory duty under s.66(1) of the 1990 Act applies to each listed building individually.

Nature of impact: Setting (direct visual).

Magnitude: Moderate (Nos. 18 and 22 Drayton Road, directly opposite the site); Minor to Moderate (Nos. 24 and 25 Shrewsbury Road, No. 2 Drayton Road).

Residual effect: Moderate Adverse (Nos. 18 and 22); Minor to Moderate Adverse (others).

NPPF classification: Less than substantial harm to each listed building individually.

9.4 Application of the NPPF Harm Framework

The following designated heritage assets are subject to less than substantial harm as a result of the proposed development:

Heritage asset	Harm Level	NPPF Paragraph
<i>Hodnet Conservation Area</i>	<i>Less than substantial - tending to substantial</i>	<i>Para 215/ Para 220</i>
<i>Church of St. Luke (Grade 1)</i>	<i>Less than substantial</i>	<i>Para 215</i>
<i>Motte & Bailey Castle (SAM)</i>	<i>Less than substantial (minimum – pending evaluation)</i>	<i>Para 215</i>
<i>Hodnet Hall RPG (Grade 2)</i>	<i>Less than substantial</i>	<i>Para 215</i>
<i>No.18 Drayton Road (Grade 2)</i>	<i>Less than substantial</i>	<i>Para 215</i>
<i>No.22 Drayton Road (Grade 2)</i>	<i>Less than substantial</i>	<i>Para 215</i>

Heritage asset	Harm Level	NPPF Paragraph
<i>Nos. 24 & 25 Shrewsbury Road (Grade 2)</i>	<i>Less than substantial</i>	<i>Para 215</i>
<i>No. 2 Drayton Road (Grade 2)</i>	<i>Less than substantial</i>	<i>Para 215</i>

NPPF Paragraph 215 requires that less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. This weighing must be conducted for each asset individually. Where, as here, multiple designated heritage assets of varying grade and type are each subject to less than substantial harm from a single proposal, the cumulative effect of those instances of harm is a material consideration. The proposal results in less than substantial harm to two assets of Outstanding significance, one of High significance (the RPG), one of High significance (the Conservation Area – tending to substantial), and five assets of Medium to High significance. The aggregate effect of these harms is substantially greater than any individual instance considered in isolation.

The applicant's HIA does not conduct this aggregated assessment. It assesses each asset in isolation and assigns 'negligible' to 'neutral' impacts to each, without addressing the cumulative heritage harm of the proposal as a whole. This approach is not consistent with NPPF Paragraph 210 or the HEAN 12 methodology.

Additionally, the impact on below-ground archaeological deposits (assessed as potentially Major Adverse in the absence of evaluation) has not been included in the applicant's harm assessment at all. If evaluation were to confirm that the rectilinear depression identified in Figure 8, or other deposits on the application site, constitute heritage assets of Medium to High significance, the overall harm assessment would need to be revised upward accordingly.

9.5 Public Benefits and the Planning Balance

NPPF Paragraph 215 requires that less than substantial harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The applicant cites the following public benefits in the application documents: provision of market and affordable housing; economic benefit from construction; and contribution to local housing supply.

These benefits must be assessed in their planning context. The application site is not allocated for residential development in the SAMDev 2015 Plan, the operative development plan. The Shropshire Local Plan Review 2016–2038, which might have provided an allocation or strategic housing policy context for this site, was withdrawn in July 2025. The application, therefore, brings forward residential development on an unallocated site in the open countryside under an extant countryside protection policy (Core Strategy Policy CS5) that establishes a strong presumption against such development.

The housing provision of up to 20 dwellings (a modest number even if built out in full) does not constitute a substantial public benefit of the kind envisaged by NPPF Paragraph 214 or the scale of benefit contemplated in Paragraph 215. The Shropshire housing land supply position and the Council's five-year housing land supply calculation are matters for the Local Planning Authority to assess in the round; however, the absence of site allocation and the withdrawn Local Plan mean the applicant cannot rely on a strategic housing policy

justification for this development. The economic benefits of construction are temporary and are not site-specific.

Against these modest and contextually weakened public benefits must be weighed:

- Cumulative less than substantial harm to eight designated heritage assets of Outstanding to Medium-High significance;
- Potential Major Adverse harm to below-ground archaeological deposits of unassessed character on an unevaluated site;
- Unknown impact on two LiDAR-identified features of unconfirmed significance, one of which lies within the application redline;
- The irreversible loss of the open land setting that constitutes the defining character of Conservation Area Character Area 3;
- The departure from the finding of the 2014 refusal, with a larger scheme proposed on the same site without a material change in the heritage context that led to that refusal.

On the basis of this assessment, the public benefits of the proposed development do not outweigh the heritage harms identified. The balance required by NPPF Paragraph 215 falls against the grant of planning permission.

9.6 Prior Evaluation as a Pre-Condition

In the event that the Local Planning Authority is minded to consider granting permission notwithstanding the above assessment, this assessment strongly recommends that no determination be made until a programme of archaeological evaluation has been completed and its results submitted to the LPA. That programme should, as a minimum, comprise:

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a geophysical survey across the full application site, targeting in particular the zone of the rectilinear depression identified on Figure 8 and any extension of the sub-rectangular enclosure on Figure 7 into the site boundary.

A programme of trial trench evaluation across a minimum 10% sample of the application site, with trenches positioned to address the Named Areas of Archaeological Interest identified by the LiDAR analysis and to test the below-ground extent of the features identified at Figures 7 and 8.

The results of this evaluation should be submitted to and approved by the Shropshire HER and the LPA's archaeological advisor before any reserved matters application is submitted or determined. This recommendation is consistent with NPPF Paragraph 209 and with the requirement of SAMDev Policy MD13 that proposals likely to affect the significance of a heritage asset be accompanied by a proper Heritage Assessment.

The outline nature of the current application does not reduce this requirement. An outline permission without prior evaluation would commit the LPA to a development of up to 20 dwellings on a site where the below-ground archaeological resource is unassessed and where two LiDAR-identified features of unknown significance (one within the application redline) have not been investigated. Once outline permission is granted, the principle of residential development is established, and the ability of the LPA to require fundamental redesign or site-wide avoidance of significant archaeological features is materially diminished.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1 Conclusions

This Heritage and Archaeology Statement has assessed the significance of the heritage assets affected by outline planning application 26/01717/OUT for up to 20 dwellings on land off Drayton Road, Hodnet, and has evaluated the impact of the proposed development on those assets and their significance.

The principal conclusions of the assessment are as follows.

The applicant's Heritage Impact Assessment is inadequate as a basis for determination. It does not constitute a desk-based assessment within the meaning of NPPF Paragraph 209. It contains no LiDAR analysis, does not reference the 2002 Bronze Age cremation cemetery discovered within the parish, does not address the explicit uncertainty in the Scheduled Monument's park pale extent, does not consider the toponym 'Abbots Way' or its heritage implications, and makes no geological assessment of the site's preservation potential. The conclusion that the evidential value of the application site is 'Low' is not supported by the available evidence and should be given no weight by the Local Planning Authority.

The application site has demonstrably higher archaeological potential than the applicant's HIA claims. Multi-scale topographic position analysis of the 2023 DEFRA 1m LiDAR data has identified two features in and adjacent to the application site that are not accounted for by any available historic cartographic source: a sub-rectangular enclosure defined by a bank and ditch approximately 100 metres east of the site boundary (Figure 7), whose internal linear features are of markedly larger scale than the post-medieval field system; and a rectilinear depression along the eastern boundary of the application site (Figure 8) with a visible footprint of approximately 0.53 hectares and no cartographic equivalent. Both features are of unknown date and character. Both require investigation before their significance can be determined. The feature on Figure 8 lies within the application redline and would be subject to direct physical impact from the proposed development.

The overall evidential and archaeological significance of the application site is assessed as Medium, tending to High. This assessment reflects the confirmed Bronze Age activity within the parish, favourable calcareous preservation conditions, the site's unbroken permanent pasture history, the unresolved extent of the Scheduled Monument's park pale, the LiDAR-identified features, and the significance of the 'Abbots Way' toponym as evidence of possible medieval monastic land use. The below-ground impact of the proposed development, in the absence of any evaluation, must be assessed as potentially Major Adverse.

The proposed development results in less than substantial harm (tending to substantial harm) to eight designated heritage assets. These include two assets of Outstanding significance (the Scheduled Monument and the Grade I Church of St Luke), one of High significance as a Registered Park and Garden, one of High significance as a Conservation Area, and five listed buildings of Medium-High significance. The applicant's HIA assesses the impact on each asset as 'negligible' to 'neutral' and does not conduct a cumulative harm assessment. This approach is not consistent with NPPF Paragraph 210 or the HEAN 12 methodology. The aggregate of less than substantial harm across eight designated heritage assets of this significance profile is a substantial consideration in the planning balance.

The conservation area harm is particularly acute. The application site constitutes the open agricultural land that defines the northern boundary of the settled area within Conservation Area Character Area 3 (Drayton Road) and is structurally constitutive of that character, not incidental to it. This precise harm was identified in the committee's refusal of the previous application on this site in 2014 (ref. 14/03403/OUT). The current proposal is for a larger

scheme (20 dwellings compared to 14) on the same land, without material change in the heritage context that led to that refusal. The statutory duty under s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed development would do neither.

The public benefits of the proposed development do not outweigh the identified heritage harms. The site is not allocated for residential development in the operative development plan. The Shropshire Local Plan Review 2016–2038 was withdrawn in July 2025. The scheme delivers a modest 20 dwellings on an unallocated open countryside site under extant countryside protection policies. The construction and housing supply benefits cited by the applicant are neither site-specific nor of a scale that constitutes the substantial public benefit required to outweigh cumulative harm of the nature and extent identified in this assessment.

10.2 Recommendations

On the basis of this assessment, the following is recommended.

Primary recommendation: Refusal.

The proposed development should be refused planning permission on heritage grounds. The cumulative less than substantial harm (tending to substantial harm) to multiple designated heritage assets of Outstanding to Medium-High significance, combined with the potentially Major Adverse impact on unassessed below-ground archaeological deposits, including LiDAR-identified features of unknown significance, is not outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. This conclusion is consistent with the requirements of NPPF Paragraphs 210, 215 and 220, the statutory duties under ss.66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the operative policies of the Shropshire Core Strategy (CS5, CS6, CS17) and SAMDev (MD2, MD13).

The following heritage grounds are identified for inclusion in any refusal notice:

The proposed development would cause less than substantial harm (tending to substantial harm) to the significance of the Hodnet Conservation Area through the permanent loss of the open agricultural land that is constitutive of the character of Conservation Area Character Area 3 (Drayton Road) and the irreversible disruption of the rural northern approach to the historic core of the village, contrary to the desirability of preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area under s.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, NPPF Paragraphs 215 and 220, and SAMDev Policy MD13.

The proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade I listed Church of St Luke through the disruption of its setting along the northern approach to the village, contrary to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building under s.66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and NPPF Paragraph 215.

The proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Scheduled Monument (Castle Hill Motte and Bailey Castle, List Entry No. 1019653), the Grade II Registered Park and Garden of Hodnet Hall (List Entry No. 1001125), and the listed buildings at Nos. 18, 22 and 2 Drayton Road and Nos. 24 and 25 Shrewsbury Road, contrary to NPPF Paragraph 215 and SAMDev Policy MD13. The cumulative effect of this harm across multiple designated assets of varying significance is not outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

The applicant has failed to submit a desk-based assessment adequate to demonstrate the significance of heritage assets with archaeological interest on the application site, as required by NPPF Paragraph 209. Multi-scale topographic position analysis of 2023 LiDAR data has identified features of unknown date and significance on and adjacent to the application site that have not been evaluated. The Local Planning Authority cannot assess the impact of the proposed development on below-ground archaeological deposits without prior evaluation, and permission should not be granted in advance of that assessment.

In the event the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant permission:

No outline permission should be granted until a Written Scheme of Investigation for geophysical survey across the full application site has been submitted to and approved by the LPA and the Shropshire HET. The geophysical survey results should be assessed and, where the results indicate the presence of significant archaeological deposits, a programme of trial trench evaluation to a minimum 10% sample should be completed and its results approved by the LPA before any reserved matters application is submitted.

Suggested condition wording: "No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological evaluation, the scope of which has first been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Shropshire Historic Environment Record, has been completed and the results submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme shall include, as a minimum, a geophysical survey of the full application site and, where results indicate the presence of below-ground features, a programme of trial trench evaluation. Development shall be carried out in accordance with any mitigation measures approved pursuant to this condition."

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Appendix A — Asset Gazetteer

The following gazetteer lists heritage assets recorded within the 5-kilometre study area from the Shropshire HER search undertaken on 31 May 2026 and from the National Heritage List for England. The gazetteer is divided into Part 1 (Statutory Designations) and Part 2 (Non-Statutory HER Entries of Principal Relevance). The full HER dataset of 700+ entries is retained on file. Assets are ordered within each section by distance from the site boundary. Designated assets are flagged in the Designation column. Approximate distances are measured from the application site boundary.

Part 1 – Statutory Designation

Name	List Entry No.	Type	Grade	NGR	Approx. Distance
No. 18 Drayton Road (Hodnet Cottage)	1366849	Listed Building	II	SJ 61429 28772	Adjacent (W)
No. 2 Drayton Road	1366848	Listed Building	II	SJ 61329 28671	100m SW
No. 22 Drayton Road	1366811	Listed Building	II	SJ 61340 28661	120m SW
Nos. 24 and 25 Shrewsbury Road	1366847	Listed Building	II	SJ 61478 28402	220m S
Hodnet Conservation Area	—	Conservation Area	—	Centred SJ 612 285	Adjacent (SW)
Motte and Bailey Castle, Castle Hill, Hodnet	1019653	Scheduled Monument	—	SJ 61336 28453	260m SW
Church of St Luke	1366827	Listed Building	I	SJ 61241 28600	350m SW

Name	List Entry No.	Type	Grade	NGR	Approx. Distance
<i>Old Rectory, Hodnet</i>	1366812	<i>Listed Building</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>SJ 60936 28976</i>	<i>400m W</i>
<i>Dovecote 300m south of Hodnet Hall</i>	1019652	<i>Scheduled Monument / Listed Building</i>	<i>II*</i>	<i>SJ 60929 28180</i>	<i>450m WSW</i>
<i>Tithe Barn at Home Farm, Hodnet</i>	1307896	<i>Listed Building</i>	<i>II*</i>	<i>SJ 61068 28183</i>	<i>480m SW</i>
<i>Hodnet Hall</i>	1001125	<i>Registered Park and Garden</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>SJ 60668 28280</i>	<i>500m W (boundary adjacent)</i>
<i>Animal Pound, 140m NW of Riverside, Wollerton</i>	1020849	<i>Scheduled Monument</i>	—	<i>SJ 62319 29718</i>	<i>1.5km N</i>
<i>Moated Site and Field System, S of Moat Farm, Wollerton Wood</i>	1017012	<i>Scheduled Monument</i>	—	<i>SJ 60908 31072</i>	<i>2.3km N</i>
<i>Hawkstone</i>	1000199	<i>Registered Park and Garden</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>SJ 59362 29138</i>	<i>3.0km W</i>
<i>Bury Walls Hillfort</i>	1020284	<i>Scheduled Monument</i>	—	<i>SJ 57628 27515</i>	<i>3.5km WSW</i>
<i>Red Castle, Hawkstone Park</i>	1020850	<i>Scheduled Monument</i>	—	<i>SJ 57164 29425</i>	<i>4.1km W</i>
<i>Edge Runner Mill, Bury Walls</i>	1003024	<i>Scheduled Monument</i>	—	<i>SJ 57880 26830</i>	<i>3.8km SW</i>

Part 2 – Non-Statutory HER Entries of principal relevance

HER Ref	Name	Description	Type	Period	NGR	Approx. Distance
PRN 33462 (MSA36254)	Earthwork remains of ridge and furrow, S of Hodnet Motte and Bailey Castle	Earthwork remains of ridge and furrow, visible on LiDAR imagery, recorded south of the Scheduled Monument within the park grounds	Agricultural earthwork	Medieval	SJ 612 283	c.300m SW
PRN 08083 (MSA17603)	Possible site of Saxon Chapel, Hodnet	Possible site of the pre-Norman chapel associated with the royal manor of Odenet, likely predecessor to the current church of St Luke	Ecclesiastical	Early Medieval	SJ 612 286	c.350m SW
PRN 33462 (MSA36213)	Fragmentary remains of ridge and furrow, W of Hawkstone Hall	Fragmentary earthwork remains of ridge and furrow visible on LiDAR imagery	Agricultural earthwork	Medieval	SJ 594 285	c.3.0km W
PRN 34320 (MSA37174)	Three sections of pit alignment, c.480m SE of Harcourt Farm, Stanton	Three sections of cropmark pit alignment visible on Google Earth imagery (27 June 2018); characteristic of Bronze Age	Pit alignment (cropmark)	Bronze Age / Iron Age	SJ 610 265	c.3.2km SE

HER Ref	Name	Description	Type	Period	NGR	Approx. Distance
	<i>upon Hine Heath</i>	<i>or Early Iron Age land division</i>				
PRN 34425 (MSA37292)	<i>Pit alignment, E of Slang Farm, The Avenue, Stanton upon Hine Heath</i>	<i>Cropmark pit alignment visible under drought conditions in 2018</i>	<i>Pit alignment (cropmark)</i>	<i>Bronze Age / Iron Age</i>	<i>SJ 619 303</i>	<i>c.2.0km NE</i>
PRN 34726 (MSA37601)	<i>Earthwork remains of lynchets, E of Lostford Manor Farm Moated Site</i>	<i>Earthwork remains of possible medieval lynchets visible on LiDAR imagery</i>	<i>Agricultural earthwork</i>	<i>Medieval</i>	<i>SJ 619 306</i>	<i>c.2.5km N</i>
PRN 32777 (MSA35618)	<i>Earthwork remains of possible water meadow system, W of Stoke Park Farm</i>	<i>Earthwork remains of parallel drainage channels adjacent to a former watercourse, possibly representing a water meadow management system, visible on LiDAR imagery</i>	<i>Water management</i>	<i>Post-medieval</i>	<i>SJ 638 293</i>	<i>c.2.8km NE</i>
PRN 03622 (MSA14394)	<i>Find spot of flint flake, Stoke upon Tern</i>	<i>Retouched flint flake recovered during fieldwalking; classified Lower</i>	<i>Findspot</i>	<i>Prehistoric</i>	<i>SJ 638 278</i>	<i>c.3.0km E</i>

HER Ref	Name	Description	Type	Period	NGR	Approx. Distance
		<i>Palaeolithic to Late Iron Age</i>				
—	<i>Sub-rectangular enclosure, c.100m E of application site (Figure 7)</i>	<i>Sub-rectangular enclosure defined by surrounding bank and ditch, intersected by two raised linear features not corresponding to the 1880 OS field boundaries. Date and character unknown. Not recorded in HER.</i>	<i>Enclosure (earthwork)</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>SJ 617 289</i>	<i>c.100m E</i>

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