



# **Whitchurch settlement expansion**

Statement of Heritage Significance and  
appraisal of risk of harm

## **Bath & North East Somerset Council**

**Final report**

Prepared by LUC

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Whitchurch settlement expansion

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Context

**1.1** Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Council are preparing a new Local Plan. This will establish the planning framework for the district up to 2042. It will contain a vision, strategy and policies to guide and manage how the district grows and changes over the next 20 years, and how planning applications for new development are decided. The Council are reviewing potential development areas across the District, to meet evidenced need for housing, employment, and other land uses. One of the areas of search comprises the Whitchurch area of B&NES.

**1.2** In 2013, LUC – with Conservation Studio and Bath and Regional Archaeological Services – prepared a heritage asset study for B&NES as supporting evidence for the then-emerging Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan. The 2013 study assessed the potential risk of six greenfield development proposals to historic assets and their setting. This included an assessment of an area within Whitchurch.

**1.3** In 2017, LUC – in association with Conservation Studio - prepared a Historic Environment Appraisal of Whitchurch which was submitted to B&NES. This report provided additional evidence to help inform the potential consideration of the Whitchurch area for housing development. It extended the previous 2013 study by covering a broader geographic area.

## Aims and objectives

**1.4** The purpose of this study is to provide additional evidence for the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan to help inform the potential allocation of land in the Whitchurch area for housing and employment development, with supporting infrastructure.

**1.5** The study objectives were to:

- Undertake a review of the key documents;
- Identify heritage assets with the potential to be affected by the proposed land allocation;
- Understand their significance, including any contribution made by setting via the production of a Statement of Significance to:
  - Understand the significance of Maes Knoll and Wansdyke Scheduled Monuments and their setting;
  - Understand if/how this setting contributes to their significance; and
  - Assess the likely effect on heritage significance arising from development within the study area, including those arising from setting change and cumulative/in-combination effects.
- Assess the likely effect on heritage significance arising from development in the study area – including those arising from setting change and cumulative/in-combination effects;
- Provide commentary on the wider relationships between heritage assets and the historic landscapes of the area, including potential for effects as a consequence of development.

## Legislation, policy and guidance

**1.6** The assessment has regard for legislative requirements in relation to the historic environment and has been informed by national and local planning policy. It also takes account of established sector guidance on the assessment of significance of heritage assets and how to assess the impact of proposals on that significance.

### Statutory Duties

**1.7** Legislation relating to archaeology and scheduled monuments is contained in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended. Under the terms of the Act the Secretary of State has a duty to compile and maintain a schedule of monuments of national importance. The purpose of the schedule is to help preserve these monuments, so far as possible, in the state in which they have come down to us today.

**1.8** Legislation regarding buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest is contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended. The 1990 Act places a number of duties on decision makers. Key amongst these are:

- Section 66. This states that when considering planning applications that affect listed buildings, “special regard” will be had by the decision-maker “to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”; and
- Sections 69 and 72, which states that conservation areas are designated for their “special architectural or historic interest” and, in considering applications that affect them, “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.



**1.9** In the operation of this law, the concept of ‘preservation’ referred to in Sections 66 and 72 has been interpreted as to do no harm.

## National Planning Policy

**1.10** National planning policy is laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (revised December 2023). The NPPF reflects the statutory requirement to have special regard for the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment by:

- Making the conservation of the historic environment and good design fundamental to achieving sustainable development (para.8c)
- Requiring great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets (para.205)
- Requiring any harm to have clear and convincing justification (para.206)
- Requiring a level of information proportionate to the importance of assets that helps the local authority make informed decisions about proposals that affect them (para.200).

**1.11** Chapter 16 of the NPPF – entitled Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment – relates specifically to the management of the historic environment in the planning system. It provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the conservation and management of heritage assets, both designated and non-designated. Overall, the objectives of Section 16 of the NPPF can be summarised as seeking to:

- deliver sustainable development
- understand the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits brought by the conservation of the historic environment
- conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and

- recognise the contribution that the historic environment makes to our knowledge and understanding of the past.

**1.12** Achieving sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the environment and, in the case of heritage assets, requiring local planning authorities to look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance (para.206). It is also a fundamental part of Plan-making, as set out in Chapter 3 of the NPPF. Chapter 3 states that:

"The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate..." and "should demonstrate how the plan has addressed relevant economic, social and environmental objectives [...]. Significant adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued." (Paragraphs 31 and 32)

**1.13** The purpose of this assessment is to address both the plan-making and historic environment chapters of the NPPF by providing a robust evidence base to inform the development of the local plan.

## Sector Guidance

**1.14** The methodology has been developed with reference to current guidance. This includes:

- Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), the institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (2021) 'Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK' **[See reference 1]**

- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (2014) 'Standards and guidance for desk-based assessment'.
- Historic England (2015) 'Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans: Historic England Advice Note 3' (HEAN3) [See reference 2]
- Historic England (2017) 'The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3' (GPA3) [See reference 3]
- Historic England (2021) 'Commercial Renewable Energy Development and the Historic Environment: Historic England Advice Note 15' (HEAN15) [See reference 4]
- Historic England (2008) 'Conservation principles, policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' [See reference 5]

## Definitions

1.15 The following definitions are provided in Annex 2 of the NPPF:

- **Heritage Assets:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- **Archaeological Interest:** a heritage asset which holds or potentially could hold evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.
- **Designated Heritage Assets:** world heritage sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields and conservation areas.

- **Significance:** The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
- **Setting:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance, or may be neutral.

## Reporting, Assumptions and Limitations

**1.16** The findings and recommendations have been drawn together into this report. The following assumptions and limitations have been made during the process of this assessment.

1. This study only considers the effect that the development of the sites would have on the significance of individual heritage assets. It does not include assessments of impact on public and visual amenity, landscape character, or constitute a townscape and visual impact assessment; these are related but distinct disciplines, evidenced by the separate guidance document and methodology for such assessments, as set out by the Landscape Institute and IEMA (in partnership with Historic England) (2013) in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition). It has, therefore, been assumed that issues relating to landscape character and the impact of the development thereon will be assessed separately by the council as necessary. This approach adheres with GPA3, which states (p.7):
2. "Analysis of setting is different from landscape assessment. While landscapes include everything within them, the entirety of very extensive settings may not contribute equally to the significance of a heritage asset, if at all. Careful analysis is therefore required to assess whether one heritage asset at a considerable distance from another, though intervisible with it – a church spire, for instance – is a major component of the setting, rather than

just an incidental element within the wider landscape. Assessment and management of both setting and views are related to consideration of the wider landscape, which is outside the scope of this advice note... Similarly, setting is different from general amenity. Views out from heritage assets that neither contribute to significance nor allow appreciation of significance are a matter of amenity rather than of setting ." **[See reference 6]**

3. The study has utilised a range of sources on the area's historic environment. Much of this is necessarily secondary information compiled from a variety of sources (e.g. Historic Environment Record (HER) data and Conservation Area documentation). It has been assumed that this information is reasonably accurate unless otherwise stated.
4. This report is intended to provide an enhanced historic environment baseline for the local plan. It provides professional judgements on likely effects to heritage assets in line the cited guidance. The appraisal work has been undertaken by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
5. As detailed proposals for the sites are not available, the study cannot draw conclusive statements regarding the significance of the potential impacts or definitive levels of harm. Detailed assessments would need to be undertaken as part of any subsequent planning applications and, if necessary, accompanying Environmental Impact Assessments (if the decision is taken to proceed with the allocation of these sites for development).
6. The assessment of potential effects was based upon a series of assumptions to provide a maximum case' scenario, in line with the required precautionary approach. The assumptions applied to the assessment are set out in **Chapter 2: Methodology.**
7. As noted above, no detailed information on mitigation has been included, due to a lack of specificity with regard to the nature, scale and location of development.

# Chapter 2

## Methodology

### Introduction

This section outlines the methodology that was used in the study on a task-by-task basis. Key data sources are also identified. The tasks were as follows:

- Task 1: Review key documents;
- Task 2: Data collection;
- Task 3: Identification of affected assets and determination of significance;
- Task 4: Appraisal of the risk of harm;
- Task 5: Summary of risk for individual assets;
- Task 6: Cumulative risk of harm appraisal; and
- Task 7: Site visit and appraisal mitigation.

### Task 1: Review key documents

**2.1** In order to provide an updated and relevant assessment, and to bring it in line with current legislation and policy, a review of the previous documentation was undertaken. This included a review of the:

- Heritage Asset Study prepared by LUC in 2013
- Heritage Statement prepared by CgMs in 2017
- Historic Environment Appraisal prepared by LUC in 2017
- Developer Legal Advice 2018

**2.2** The results of this review identified the need for a Statement of Significance focussing on the land between Whitchurch village and Maes Knoll Scheduled Monument and Wansdyke Scheduled Monument which would comprise a more detailed review of the setting and significance of both Scheduled Monuments, drawing in information from the 2013 and 2017 LUC reports and bringing the assessment up to date with current legislation and guidance.

**2.3** It also highlighted the need for a wider assessment of other nearby heritage assets as well as the Maes Knoll and the Wansdyke, in order to understand how development within the site could affect the significance of these heritage assets.

## **Task 2: Data collection**

**2.4** Supporting data and information was collected and collated for the study area. Sources consulted comprise:

- GIS data for the proposed land allocation;
- Historic England (HE) designated heritage asset data;
- Conservation Areas – GIS data and supporting documents (e.g. Conservation Area Appraisals);
- Modern Ordnance Survey (OS) mastermapping maps (provided by the client); and
- Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR)-derived Digital Terrain Model (DTM) and Digital Surface Model (DSM).

## Task 3: Identification of affected assets and determination of significance

**2.5** The heritage assets susceptible to potential development of the Site have previously been identified during the study undertaken by LUC in 2017.

**2.6** In order to be able to ascertain the levels of possible harm caused to each asset as a result of the proposed development the significance of each asset was appraised. This was prepared in a Statement of Significance, supplemented by the 2017 study. The assessment of the significance of each asset aids in determining the level of potential harm.

### Ascribing significance

**2.7** The value of heritage assets to present and future generations is measured by their heritage significance: the sum of their heritage values. Heritage assets can be important for many reasons and in different ways to different people. In this assessment, significance is articulated in accordance with Historic England's guidance document Conservation Principles (2008) [See reference 7] which identifies four principal heritage values which can be used to help explore and understand the multiple ways that a heritage asset can be considered important. The four key values are:

1. **Evidential** - What does the study of the physical remains of a place reveal? What evidence does it hold of its past? What can it contribute to a greater understanding of our collective history?
2. **Historical** - What is the story of the place? How can it connect past people and events to the present? What evidence survives that makes this place distinct from others?



3. **Aesthetic** - How does the place stimulate the senses and mind? Is it inherently attractive, eye-catching, innovative or inspiring?
4. **Communal** - What does the place mean to people now? How important is it to a community's collective identity? Is it a cherished resource?

## Evidential

**2.8** This measure of significance derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. It relates to the physical fabric of the place and its capacity as the main source of information on the place and its past. Here, age and rarity are important indicators of the degree of significance but are not always paramount. The less historic fabric there is (e.g. where it has been removed or replaced) the less it can be used to evaluate significance and so the less it can contribute to our overall understanding of significance; however, sometimes incomplete physical remains are all that's left to judge significance – such as archaeological deposits – and when they are the only source of information their importance is paramount.

## Historical

**2.9** This measure of significance derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. This is typically either illustrative or associative. It relates to what the place can tell us about the past. It falls into two forms: illustrative value is how the place visually reveals the past, helping to understand and interpret it; associative value is where a place is linked to important people or events, or to movements or cultural expression (e.g. in art or politics). Here, rarity, authenticity and completeness are important, but a place can still have historical significance even when altered – indeed, the evolution of a place over time and the story this demonstrates can be central to a place's significance.

## Aesthetic

**2.10** This measure of significance derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. This includes architectural and artistic interest. It relates to our experience of and reaction to a place. It is primarily visual but can also relate to the other senses. It can be influenced by deliberate design, such as the proportions or detailing of a building or the layout and planting of a landscape, or it can relate to a specific style, movement, patron or designer. Here, quality, craft, innovation and influence are important, but aesthetic merit can also be fortuitous, such as the organic growth of a medieval village or an unintentional view of or relationship between seemingly unconnected features.

## Communal

**2.11** This measure of significance derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It relates to our emotional attachment to place and how we relate to it. Where significance is linked emotionally to identity it is often symbolic or commemorative. The social significance of a place comes from its links to a community's identity or social practices, such as a church, pub or institutional building. In some places this can relate more to the place's use than its physical fabric; in others it is the actual fabric which is venerated (e.g. Stonehenge). Spiritual value is about the spirit of place, which can be religious but can be anywhere that embodies the beliefs of the individual.

**2.12** The National Planning Policy Framework's definition of significance is slightly different: "The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic"; **[See reference 8]** however, there is clearly an overlap between them. The criteria in Conservation Principles have been used to structure the discussion of the assets' significance, but with consideration given to the NPPF criteria.

## Quantifying contribution of values to significance

**2.13** A level is ascribed to each component heritage value to indicate its contribution to the asset's overall significance. Note that these levels are provided to help understand the individual asset's intrinsic values, not to indicate its relative importance.

- **High** - critical to significance
- **Medium** – makes a considerable contribution to significance
- **Low** – makes some contribution to significance
- **No/ none** – makes no contribution to significance

## Contribution of setting

**2.14** In line with NPPF, the contribution that setting makes to an asset's significance has been considered. Setting is defined by the NPPF as the surroundings in which an asset is experienced. The contribution made by setting to an asset's heritage significance is set out discursively with reference to Historic England's (2017) setting guidance. This, and an understanding of the nature and likely interaction of future change with the contribution of setting to the asset's significance, will be used to determine susceptibility to change.

## Importance

**2.15** Heritage values help in understanding cultural significance of an asset, but do not determine the level of that significance (i.e. 'importance'). For that, professional judgment has been employed alongside use of the designation criteria for assets of national significance and regional research agendas. Assets may derive their significance from one or more of the heritage values outlined above, but a lack of interest in one or more of these areas does not indicate a lower level of importance, just that their interest lies elsewhere.

**2.16** Importance derives from a consideration of:

- how strongly are the identified heritage values demonstrated or represented by the place, compared with other places?
- how do its values relate to statutory designation criteria, and any existing statutory designations of the place? **[See reference 9]**

## Levels of importance and their definitions

**2.17** Outstanding

- Usually, designated heritage assets of international significance: world heritage sites.
- May be highly graded-listed buildings, scheduled monuments, highly-graded registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, protected wrecks and conservation areas of demonstrably international significance or exceptional national significance. Assets such as this are often part of multiple, overlapping designations and strong collective significance with other heritage assets.

**2.18** High

- Usually, designated heritage assets of national significance: scheduled monuments, Listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, and protected wrecks.
- Conservation areas, as a statutory designation, although individual examples may be more or less significant.

**2.19** Medium

- Locally listed buildings or locally listed parks and gardens, sites of archaeological interest as noted on the HER, previously unidentified non-designated assets of demonstrably national and regional significance.
- Conservation areas of demonstrably lower significance.

**2.20** Low

- Usually non-designated heritage assets of local significance.

**2.21** Uncertain

- May be key features in a conservation area, buildings / areas / parks and gardens identified on the HER or historic maps, previously unidentified non-designated assets of demonstrably national or local significance.

## Task 4: Appraisal of risk of harm

**2.22** The risk of harm to the significance of heritage assets, should the site be developed, was then appraised. This focused on effects to the significance of the asset in line with NPPF and considers:

- The significance and importance of the asset
- The likely level of harm of the potential development type, split into that arising from residential, other infrastructure (this category comprises uses such as a primary school or community centre) and green space.

**2.23** For assets within the Site boundary, the level of harm relates to physical harm to the asset itself and harm to the significance of an asset related to setting change.

**2.24** For assets outside of the Site boundary, the level of risk relates to potential harm to the significance of an asset via a change in its setting. Assessment of effects related to setting change follows the stages set out in HE guidance (GPA3).

**2.25** A variation of a red/amber/green (RAG) rating system was used to give an initial assessment of the predicted level of harm that would be caused to the asset(s), should the Site be developed. This included extra categories in addition to the red, amber and green in order to be able to reflect a more nuanced approach to predicting harm across the Site.

2.26 The level of harm is defined in **Table 2.1**. Professional judgement has been used to inform the final decision regarding the degree of harm.

**Table 2.1: Definition of levels of risk of harm**

Rating	Level of risk of harm to asset
<b>Very high</b>	An area of high importance and sensitivity, where development would have the greatest impact. The development of the site is likely to be of such a scale that the significance of the heritage asset would experience significant harm, up to and potentially including ‘substantial harm’ for the purposes of the NPPF, with no potential for meaningful mitigation..
<b>High</b>	An area of high importance and sensitivity, where development would have a significant impact. Development of the site is likely to result in a significant harmful impact on the significance of the heritage asset, but this could be reduced (but not removed) via appropriate mitigation.
<b>High-medium</b>	Area of medium-high importance and sensitivity where development would have a harmful impact if no mitigation occurred. Development of the site could result in a harmful impact on the significance of the heritage asset but this impact is likely to fall within the definition of ‘less than substantial harm’, and/or could be reduced via appropriate mitigation (such as via landscape design solutions).
<b>Medium</b>	Area of medium importance and sensitivity. The development of the site may result in a harmful impact to the significance of a heritage asset

Rating	Level of risk of harm to asset
	but it is likely that these impacts could be avoided via appropriate mitigation (such as via landscape design solutions).
Medium-low	Area of medium to low sensitivity. Potential impact will be of such a minimal scale that the significance of the heritage asset will not be harmed.
Low	Area of low sensitivity. development of the site is likely to result in minimal impact on the significance of the asset. It is likely that no mitigation would be required.

## Task 5: Summary of risk appraisal for individual assets

2.27 The first stage of the risk appraisal involved a rating for the likely risk of harm of the potential development split into residential, other infrastructure (such as a primary school or community centre) and green space.

2.28 In order to be able to ascertain an overall RAG rating for each field parcel these individual RAG ratings were then assessed to create an overall rating of the likely level of harm as a result of the proposed development for each field parcel.

2.29 In order to capture the fact that field parcels are likely to contain multiple types of development, a ‘maximum case scenario’ was used to determine the overall RAG rating for each field parcel. This overall RAG rating uses the same categories as outlined in **Table 2.1**.

2.30 In situations where a ‘high’ RAG rating was given for an individual development type the approach determined that this would be weighted heavily

in scoring the overall RAG rating for each field parcel in order to be able to predict the appropriate levels of harm on each asset.

## Task 6: Cumulative risk appraisal

**2.31** In addition to assessing the risk of potential effects to individual heritage assets, an assessment was also undertaken of the potential cumulative effect of proposed development on the local historic environment. This considers:

- Potential effect on group value of assets.
- Combined impact of individual effects from one proposed development on a particular asset.
- Effects from several developments which when considered together could give rise to significant cumulative effects.

**2.32** The potential cumulative effects are reported using the same scale as **Table 2.1**. This judgement is based on professional opinion.

## Task 7: Site visits and appraisal moderation

**2.33** Initial impressions on likely potential risks on known archaeological remains, archaeological potential and effects related to the setting change were tested in the field. This included assessing how the development site can be viewed from key assets. It also included photography to illustrate any key points.

**2.34** The initial appraisal of individual and cumulative effects was moderated, as required, following the site visits.



## Chapter 3

# Statements of Significance

## Maes Knoll (NHLE ref. 1005424)

### Description

**3.1** Maes Knoll is a substantial, univallate fort enclosing the eastern end and highest point of a plateau of high ground running approximately west to east for around 3 kilometres from East Dundry, located 2 kilometres to the southwest of Whitchurch village. The fort is trapezoidal/sub-triangular and is partly defined by steeply-sloping cirque/cwm features to the north and southwest, giving the landform its distinctive shape – creating two steep-sided bowls of land – and forming the basis of the defences on these sides of the asset. The ground slopes steeply in the eastern circuit, providing much of the defensive potential of this aspect. A bank and ditch, although likely much-reduced by agricultural activities and erosion, is visible in this circuit.

**3.2** At the northwest corner of the fort, where the plateau continues to the west, an impressive bank and ditch is clearly visible. Rising around 8 metres above the fort interior, 'The Tump' – as the large section of bank is known locally – and standing nearly 20 metres above the ditch bottom, the rampart serves to sever access from the west, creating an enclosed and defensible promontory. Tratman (1963) contends that the profile of the Tump's bank and ditch could suggest a later date, but there is little evidence to support this assertion. (Interestingly though, there is no trace of a formal entrance on this side, which would likely have been the easiest approach to the site. A slight return in the southern rampart is visible on LiDAR, however this may be a fortuitous artefact of modern agricultural access being taken by this route.)

**3.3** Maes Knoll is a visually prominent local landmark, with its distinctive flat-topped profile visible across large areas of Bristol and north-east Somerset. In turn, views from the site are very extensive, reaching as far as both Severn crossings and a swathe of historic Somerset.

**3.4** There is no absolute dating evidence from the site, although based on other hilltop enclosures in the region, a later prehistoric / Iron Age date would seem reasonable. This is corroborated by roughly-dated pottery recovered from trial excavations in 1958, although the fragments were too small to enable definitive identification (Rahtz & Barton 1963). [\[See reference 10\]](#)

**3.5** The allocation site is located approximately 800 metres to the northeast of the asset, covering a large swathe of flatter land surrounding Whitchurch village.

### Setting description

**3.6** The setting of Maes Knoll is defined by its hilltop location. Its elevated location affords panoramic views of the immediate fields on the hillslopes and the green buffer surrounding suburban Bristol. The eastern edge of the hillfort is defined by a steep escarpment whereas the northwestern edge (the edge of the hillfort defined by a substantial bank and ditch, the 'Tump') further continues as a high ridge towards the west.

**3.7** On approaching the asset from the north along Maes Knoll Lane, the viewer is immediately struck by its sheer size and bulk as it rises out of the undulating surrounding landscape. The eastern side of the hillfort is very steep, whereas the northern edge is slightly more gradual with some small hillside terracing.

Figure 3.1: Approach to Maes Knoll hillfort from eastern side



**3.8** Once atop the hillfort, there are clear panoramic views with the sense of elevation strongly experienced. When looking towards the east, in the direction of the potential allocation, the rural landscape can be widely appreciated with semi-regular field boundaries with some small farms, such as at Whitewood Farm which is located between Maes Knoll and the site. In this view, there are few modern interventions, aside from several modern farm buildings.

**3.9** When looking northwards from atop of the hillfort, the suburban expansion of Bristol and its environs (including the western expansion of Whitchurch village) is more keenly felt. Although uneven hedgerows do limit clear views towards the north, the relationship between the more rural, undeveloped land on the eastern side of the hillfort and the built-up areas to the north can be clearly viewed from this location where the urban sprawl is evident.

Figure 3.2: Views towards the east from Maes Knoll hillfort



**Figure 3.3: Views towards the southeast from Maes Knoll hillfort**





**Figure 3.4: Views towards the northeast from Maes Knoll hillfort**



**Figure 3.5: Views towards the north from Maes Knoll hillfort**





**3.10** In terms of being able to appreciate the relationship between the Wansdyke and Maes Knoll hillfort, it is not possible to view the Wansdyke Section E (NHLE ref: 1007009) from the top of the hillfort due to the angle of the steep bank of the eastern flank. The further eastward sections are also hard to determine due to their distance from the hillfort and small-scale.

**3.11** The way the asset is experienced is one of a prominent landmark, affording clear views of the surrounding landscape. Despite the suburban expansion being clearly visible to the north, the location of the asset is rural and peaceful with no urban noise. When one is standing on the flat top of the hillfort, it is easy to appreciate the purpose, form and function of the asset and its relationship with the surrounding landscape and this is further substantiated by its rural setting.

## Significance

### Evidential value

**3.12** The heritage significance of the asset is primarily evidential as it comprises archaeological and palaeoenvironmental evidence for construction, longevity, social, political, and economic significance, technical achievement, and overall landscape context.

**3.13** Maes Knoll is one in a series of univallate later prehistoric hillforts in Somerset enclosing large, highly visible hilltops. While not uncommon, such assets are inherently of high archaeological importance, representing a major investment of time and resource for the construction of the hillfort in antiquity, in addition to being the most tangible aspect of the later prehistoric in the landscape. An extensive corpus of excavated evidence confirms the potential of each site to contribute significantly to our knowledge and understanding of construction sequences, use of interior space and relationships to activity relating to other periods. While the interior of the fort appears to have been in

agricultural use for a considerable period – meaning that any settlement remains will have been truncated – the potential for archaeological evidence to survive in situ is high.

**3.14** In addition to the asset's evidential value in relation to the Iron Age, the fact that the Wansdyke (NHLE ref: 1007009) terminates at/on Maes Knoll adds greatly to the potential for archaeological evidence relating to the relationship between later prehistoric and early medieval earthworks. The evidential value of the asset is therefore very high.

### Historical value

**3.15** The asset also derives significance from its illustrative historical value. This is primarily in the form of the relationship between Maes Knoll and the Wansdyke; the interplay between the two reflecting a deliberate choice for the on the part of the builders to terminate their works at a clearly-visible ancient fortification. This relationship provides historical value in the information it provides regarding attitudes towards the re-use of earlier monuments, and the control over them and legitimisation of them in the early medieval landscape.

### Aesthetic value

**3.16** As an important feature in an extensive landscape, Maes Knoll also derives its heritage significance from its high aesthetic value. As an important landmark, it also potentially plays a role in the significance of other heritage assets, most notably the Neolithic complex of Stanton Drew around 2.5 kilometres to the south which is clearly intervisible – in addition to being part of the folk tales connected with standing stones in the area. It is also reflected in local placenames, lending its name to the farm within which it is located, the lane connecting the landholding with the wider area and a local primary school.

**3.17** Overall, the importance of the Maes Knoll hillfort is high.

## Contribution of setting to significance

**3.18** The relationship of the fort to the wider landscape is a critical aspect of its significance. Its hilltop location is partly about the selection of a defensible location, but at least as important – if not more so – is its commanding views of, and visibility from, the surrounding area. Hillforts such as Maes Knoll are often intended to visually, if not militarily, dominate their landscape.

**3.19** The relationship between Maes Knoll and the Wansdyke has clear strategic importance. Both assets are large symbols of power within the landscape; this power being both in terms of military and economic purposes. Both Maes Knoll and the Wansdyke were built to control the movement of people through the landscape, and both also required considerable manpower to construct the monuments, given their sheer size and scale. The similarities between these assets are not simply coincidences but reflect the strategic re-use of this landscape for a similar function (both military and symbolic) which has endured throughout the centuries.

**3.20** The largely undeveloped agricultural setting (defined as the agricultural environment surrounding the asset) allows for an appreciation of the topography which formed a key part in the siting of the hillfort. The visual relationship between the hillfort and the surrounding landscape greatly contributes towards the aesthetic and evidential values of the asset as it allows for the siting, form and function of the hillfort to be understood and appreciated.

## Susceptibility and potential harm

**3.21** The susceptibility of Maes Knoll to the proposals is high. As the proposals do not include works that would cause physical harm to the asset, potential harm is limited to a change in the setting of the asset.

**3.22** Development, particularly in the southwest and southern portions of the site, would represent a substantial encroachment of development into the

asset's otherwise relatively rural and agricultural setting. While, for visitors to the asset, visibility from the asset itself is screened by vegetation (at least in the summer months), views of the fort in its context from the Dundry Ridge to the north-west of the asset – critical for appreciating its place and function within the wider landscape – are already compromised by development to the south of Whitchurch.

**3.23** Development of the southwest portion of the site would introduce an additional swathe of potentially incongruous modern residential development into views to the west; changing what is still principally a rural setting to one dominated by residential development.

**3.24** Development in that area would also affect sequential views of Maes Knoll in its context, as well as strategic views from the asset itself (albeit seasonally available due to vegetation levels); this will change the way that the asset is experienced and understood in the landscape.

## Wansdyke (NHLE refs. 1007009, 1003066, 1007010)

### Description

**3.25** The upstanding sections of the Wansdyke are represented by a low bank running west to east along a ridge of higher ground, with the attendant ditch generally obscured by the effects of erosion.

**3.26** While there is evidence of prehistoric origins for some sections of the East Wansdyke (the section running between Savernake Forest and Morgan's Hill in Wiltshire) (Small 1999), the monument was extended and altered in the early medieval period, and is widely interpreted as a military frontier and boundary work between polities (likely the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Wessex to the south and Hwicce /Mercia to the north). Nevertheless, it is still unclear as to whether

the Wansdyke was a principally a sub-Roman or early Anglo-Saxon monument. Its Old English name 'Wodnes-dic' and mythical association with the Anglo-Saxon god Woden, could suggest that (unlike Offa's Dyke) the origin of the monument was unknown to the local people at that time, and therefore place its construction in the earlier pre-Saxon period.

**3.27** Stretching from Bathampton Down to Maes Knoll, the West Wansdyke, however, is rather less substantial on the ground than its eastern counterpart. Excavations in the vicinity of Compton Dando ( 36/1992/192 Medieval archaeology journal of the Society for Medieval Archaeology. Available at: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archsearch/record?titleId=1911690> ) [See reference 11] returned a 7th century AD date for the monument, suggesting that the western section of the monument does indeed have an early medieval origin – albeit making use of later prehistoric enclosures at Maes Knoll and Stantonbury Camp (to the east of Compton Dando).

**3.28** From west to east, the sections of the Wansdyke potentially affected by the proposed allocation run approximately northwest to southeast from Maes Knoll, descending the western flank of the hill and traversing the edge of a shoulder of land standing above the steep-sided valley of a tributary of the River Chew. The monument then drops down to the valley floor, where a better-preserved section [1007010] – swathed in field trees – crosses lower ground. The route is then uncertain between Publow Hill and Pepper Shells, where upstanding sections of the monument run across a low promontory above the Chew floodplain.

## Setting description

**3.29** For the most part, the asset stands in open agricultural land, allowing ready appreciation of its surviving fabric and route. The section abutting the hillfort is wooded, with tree belts following the line of the bank – which serves to increase the visibility of the route, if not always the monument itself. The section of the Wansdyke that abuts the eastern edge of the hillfort shares the same rural, agricultural setting as the hillfort.

## Chapter 3 Statements of Significance

**3.30** The three sections intervisible to the south of the site currently have largely undeveloped vistas, with few buildings and no extensive residential development visible. This is important in appreciating the persistently rural and liminal character of the monument.

Figure 3.6: Wansdyke Section E 1





Figure 3.7: Wansdyke Section E 2





## Significance

### Evidential value

**3.31** The evidential value of the Wansdyke gives a high contribution towards the significance of the asset. The bank and ditches that form the monument provide important archaeological evidence of early medieval frontier systems. For the section of the Wansdyke that abuts Maes Knoll hillfort, the evidential value is particularly high given the scale and importance of the Wansdyke as a linear feature that stretches between Wiltshire and Somerset. As it travels through this landscape, the Wansdyke reuses and builds upon several earlier Iron Age hillforts, such as those at Stantonbury and Maes Knoll. Therefore, the relationship between the Wansdyke Section E (NHLE ref: 1007009) and the Maes Knoll hillfort provides evidence for the Anglo-Saxon re-use and reinterpretation/appropriation of later prehistoric monuments in establishing physical and conceptual territorial claims. This furthers our understanding of the Anglo-Saxon approaches and attitudes towards earlier earthwork features within the landscape.

**3.32** As the precise function of these monuments is still unclear, and contested by scholars, intact archaeological evidence is vital in supporting reinterpretation, refining dating schemes and drawing distinctions between origins, construction techniques and usage in antiquity.

**3.33** The Scheduled sections, as the best-preserved elements of the asset in the district, have particularly high evidential value as they offer the greatest potential to add to our knowledge and understanding of the asset. The section where part of the Wansdyke (NHLE1007009) abuts Maes Knoll is also of particularly high evidential value for the potential for archaeological evidence relating to the relationship between later prehistoric and early medieval earthworks.

## Historical value

**3.34** The Wansdyke also has historical value which gives a high contribution towards the significance of the asset.

**3.35** As currently interpreted, the Wansdyke is an important representation of the attempt by Anglo-Saxon polities to establish legitimate, and legible, territorial claims over (relatively) recently-conquered territory. While the current understanding of Anglo-Saxon and British relations from the 6th century onwards prioritises a model of integration rather than one of solely violence and subjugation, the need for polities to demonstrate their control speaks to the underlying tension inherent in maintaining control over both the native population and curbing the power and influence of neighbouring kingdoms.

**3.36** In contrast to the linear fortifications constructed as part of Roman colonial frontier strategy (in Britain, Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall), early medieval linear earthworks do not appear to have included formal fortifications – beyond the relatively simple bank and ditch. While the Roman limes were not intended as an impenetrable barrier, their function as instruments of observation, social control, and taxation are well-established – in addition to a 'rapid response' military function. Their early medieval equivalents remain rather more enigmatic and significantly less well researched. Nevertheless, their function can be assumed to be principally as symbols of power in the landscape, rather than defensible boundaries, given their often non-strategic locations in the landscape, lack of formal observation/garrison points and simple form.

**3.37** Neither the East or West Wansdyke is contiguous with parish or Anglo-Saxon estate boundaries (with one notable exception of the boundary between South Stoke and Lyncombe, recorded in their respective Bath Abbey Charters (S694 and S777)), despite the Roman roads in the vicinity being consistently used as estate boundaries. This is highly unlikely to be explained by the estates post-dating dyke construction, as one estate charter (S272, dated AD825) refers to the Wansdyke as 'the old dyke', suggesting it had existed for some time before the grants of land (Taylor 1904; Mellor 1945; Shaw Mellor 1945;

Green 1971 141-42; Bonney 1972; Muir 1981 150-51; Reynolds 1999 82; Draper 2006 71; Reynolds and Langlands 2006, 26; Grigg 2015, 205). Mirrored in evidence across southern Britain, this suggests that the role of the dykes as formal territorial boundaries was often potentially less important.

**3.38** Current interpretations hold that (e.g. Grigg 2015; Wileman 2013) that the act of raising the dyke was the most symbolically (and practically) important moment in the life of the monument; expressing the power of kingship to literally alter the landscape. The assertion and definition of the extent of a polity was likely a key part of their creation, with the very act of communities being mobilised to dig the dyke acting to bond the kingdom together in shared effort – and also reinforcing the right and ability of the ruler to extract labour from their subjects. The Romans, although long absent from Britain, were certainly remembered through the persistence of military infrastructure, including the linear frontiers of the Antonine Wall and Hadrian's Wall, and especially the road network. The Roman influence on the early church should also not be underestimated. The construction of linear frontiers could therefore be seen as a further attempt to link the emerging kingdoms with the past, and giving their reign a quasi-imperial image (Grigg 2015, 206).

**3.39** Therefore, the asset has historical value as a physical expression of development, politics and power relationships between Anglo-Saxon kingdoms recorded in early historical sources. The Wansdyke – as part of a network of putative early historic frontier systems spanning England, Wales and southern Scotland – is part of the process and narrative of conflict, colonisation and integration that frames the emergence of the kingdom of England.

### Communal value

**3.40** The Wansdyke also has communal value which gives a medium contribution towards the significance of the asset.

**3.41** The asset symbolises an important stage in the evolution and emergence of England as a distinct and recognisable polity – arising as a consequence of

conquest and migration from the continent and the mixing of cultures and populations. The extent to which local people are aware of the Wansdyke and its history is unclear, and would need to be established through direct engagement. However, it is a legible feature in the local cultural landscape, giving its name to a local school and small industrial complex ('Wansdyke Workshops'), in addition to having lent its name to local government – Wansdyke District Council – from 1974.

**3.42** The importance of the asset is high. Linear frontiers are a rare asset type, necessitating significant control over resources, territory and manpower – as well as requiring extensive planning, knowledge of local topography and (presumably) sufficient security to construct a major work in potentially contested territory.

### Contribution of setting to significance

**3.43** As a monument designed to function as both a tangible symbol of power and a (at least notional) physical frontier, whether directly defended or otherwise, the Wansdyke's position in the landscape and its relationship with its setting is a critical part of its significance.

**3.44** While its much-reduced condition means that it is likely less visible in the landscape than when constructed, it occupies a position in the landscape that does not enjoy (at least in this section of the monument) very extensive views across the surrounding landscape, except where it ascends Stantonbury Hill and Maes Knoll to claim later prehistoric hilltop enclosures – although glimpses of the asset are possible from across much of the study area. This is partly a product of the intricate local topography, but also of a deliberate choice on the part of the builders not to stick to the highest ground available, or to follow a particular contour. This could be taken to suggest that a defensive function was of less priority than its symbolic role. This arrangement is mirrored in the Cambridgeshire dykes (Grigg 2015, 204).

**3.45** Representing the accepted western terminus of the West Wansdyke, the section on the eastern flanks of Maes Knoll assumes greater significance, meeting as it does the circuit of a later prehistoric hillfort, and representing an important decision on the part of the builders to terminate their works at a clearly-visible ancient fortification. Unlike the majority of the West Wansdyke, Maes Knoll is intervisible with a vast swathe of landscape. A deliberate choice to use this monument as the western terminus seems both likely (given the extensive searches for traces of the dyke to the west) and a deliberate attempt to align the builders with the past 'owners' of the land – and to legitimate their presence and claim to the land and its people.

**3.46** The asset was therefore intended to be understood as part of – but distinct from – the surrounding landscape, marking out the physical extent of the king's power and embodying his ability to control people and resources. Boundaries are special places; inherently at the margins of the safe, domesticated landscape where normal rules do not always apply. (This is echoed in later medieval/post-medieval practice, where execution sites were often located on boundaries. Gibbet Lane, around 600m north of the Wansdyke on the edge of the study area, and terminating at the Norton Malreward, Queen Charlton and Whitchurch parish boundary, is a useful example.)

**3.47** The Wansdyke was therefore intended to be read as standing apart from its contemporary landscape, visible, legible and distinct from settlement and other land uses.

## Susceptibility and potential harm

**3.48** Intervisibility between the Scheduled sections of the Wansdyke and the site is comparatively limited due to the nature of the asset as a low bank although the areas that are defined by woodland (such as the Wansdyke Section E) are more visible. Where there is intervisibility, this is anticipated to be between the southern sections of the site.

**3.49** Development in this area in particular (the area with greatest visibility, from multiple sections of the asset) could give rise to significant change in the setting of the asset, introducing a wholly new land use – in the form of housing – that would be at odds with the rural, comparatively isolated feel of the current setting. Due to the shape of the site, if developed a particularly large area of development ‘edge’ would be visible from the asset. This could potentially exacerbate the stark contrast between the rural vista and ‘hard’ settlement edges.

**3.50** Development within the site would therefore appear prominently in views from the three Scheduled sections of the Wansdyke, with development in this area giving rise to setting change over these areas of the asset, including the section where it abuts Maes Knoll where there is the potential for increased harm caused due to the higher significance of this section.

## Listed Buildings within the Site

**3.51** There are two listed buildings within the Site:

- Lyons Court Farmhouse (GdII\*, NHLE ref. 1136453)
- Milestone along Queen Charlton Lane (GdII, NHLE ref: 1365674)

**3.52** These assets have evidential, historical and (in the case of Lyons Court Farmhouse) aesthetic value.

**3.53** The significance of these assets, and the impact of the proposed development is assessed in **Chapter 4**.

## Listed Buildings within Whitchurch village

**3.54** Although this assessment does not cover statements of significance for the listed buildings within Whitchurch village, it was considered pertinent to include a short discussion on the likely impacts of the proposed works on the significance of the assets.

**3.55** The following assets have previously been assessed in detail (LUC, 2017):

- Milestone on Queen Charlton Lane (GdII, NHLE ref: 1365674).
- Manor Farmhouse, Staunton Lane, Whitchurch (GdII, NHLE ref: 1129499).
- Grey House and its Gatepiers, Staunton Lane, Whitchurch (GdII, NHLE ref:1136454).
- Staunton Manor House, Steep Lane, Whitchurch (GdII, NHLE ref: 1365675)
- Whitewood Farm, off Norton Lane, southeast of Whitchurch (GdII, NHLE ref: 1365670).
- New Barn Farm and barn, off Maesknoll Lane, southeast of Whitchurch (GdII, NHLE ref: 1320778 and NHLE ref: 1365668).

**3.56** The following assets have not previously been assessed and need further assessment:

- The Church of St Nicholas (GdII\*, NHLE ref:1136442)
- Unidentified monument in churchyard 8 metres to east of Church of St Nicholas (GdII, NHLE ref: 1129498)
- Yew Tree Cottage (GdII, NHLE ref: 1129502)

**3.57** These assets are of high importance (derived from their evidential, historic, aesthetic and communal values). The significance of these assets, and the impact of the proposed development is assessed in **Chapter 4**.

## **Queen Charlton Conservation Area**

**3.58** This assessment also does not include a detailed assessment of Queen Charlton Conservation Area, but again, it was felt that it was pertinent to include a short discussion on the likely impacts of the proposed works on the significance of the conservation area.

**3.59** Queen Charlton Conservation Area is considered to be an asset of medium importance, befitting its historical and architectural interest as its statutory designation. Its significance is derived from its character and appearance, i.e. its aesthetic and historical values.

**3.60** Further discussion of this can be found in the Historic Environment Appraisal undertaken by LUC in 2017 and in **Chapter 4**.



## Chapter 4

# Risk Appraisal

**4.1** This chapter outlines the results of Tasks 1-5, combined to form an assessment of the level of harm of the development proposals for each designated heritage asset which has been brought forward for assessment as a result of Task 2 (identification of assets and asset significance).

**4.2** The RAG ratings for each asset are illustrated on **Figures 4.1-4.7**. These figures have been created to display the RAG ratings and help to guide and steer future development proposals, as a worst-case scenario. These figures need to be read in conjunction with the discussion of risk to individual assets below, as these provide a more nuanced approach to the impact of different types of development upon the heritage assets.

## Maes Knoll hillfort (Figure 4.1)

**4.3** The asset will not be physically affected by the proposed development and so any harm to the significance of the asset is via setting change.

**4.4** Residential development in parcels in the southwestern part of the Site would cause a high level of harm to the significance of the asset due to:

- a substantial encroachment of development into an otherwise relatively rural setting which would harm the aesthetic value of the asset, which contributes towards its significance.
- by affecting the experience of the asset (i.e. its setting), including sequential views of it in its context as well as changing strategic views from the asset itself (albeit these are seasonally available due to vegetation levels) which would change the way the asset is experienced within the landscape.

**4.5** This is likely to result in less than substantial harm to a designated asset, but this would be towards the upper end of the scale.

**4.6** Residential development of the northern part of the Site (parcels 1 and 2) would be less harmful to the significance due to the existing urban development in this area and the distance from Maes Knoll.

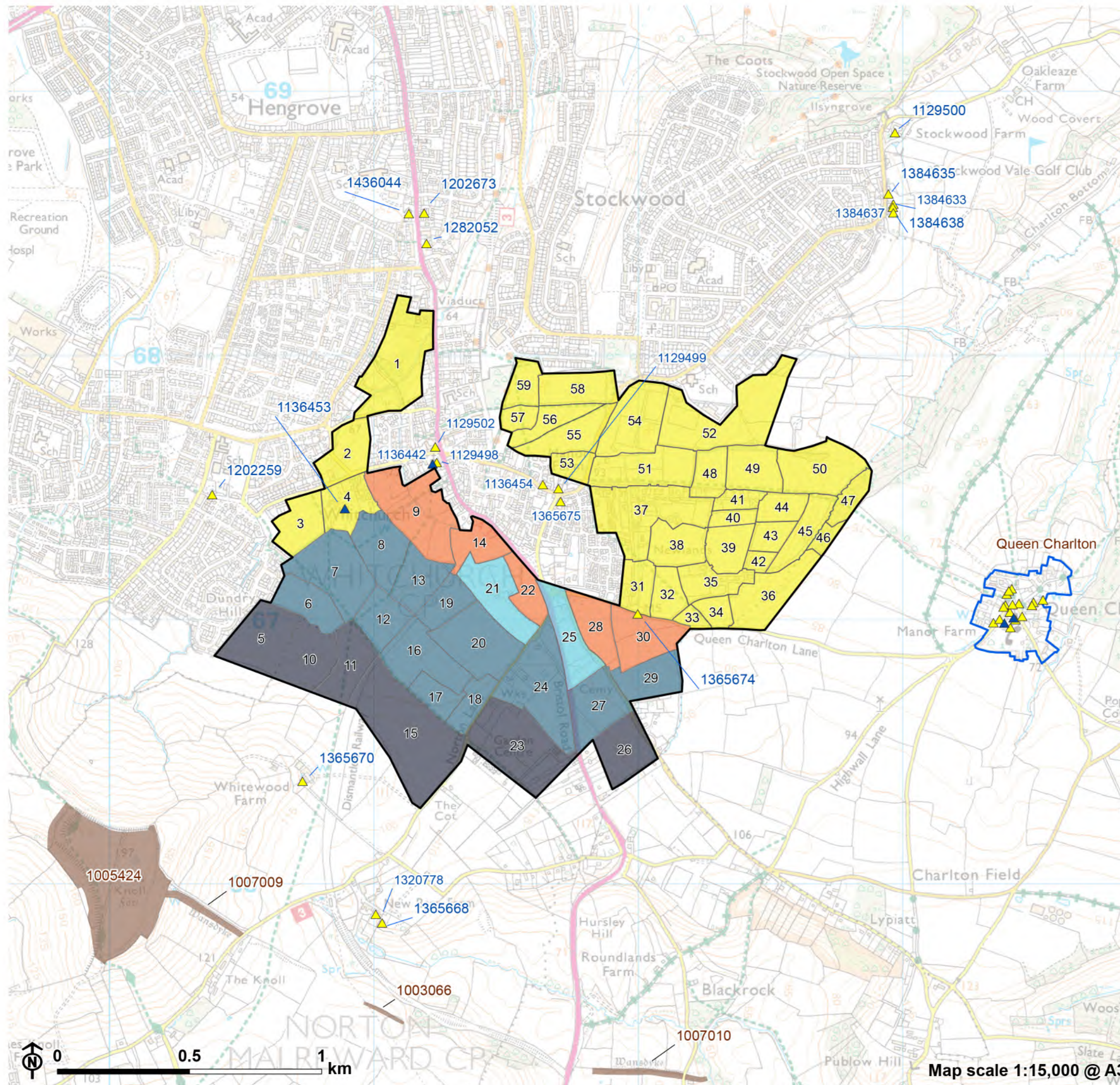
**4.7** Mitigation to reduce the level of harm to the asset would be difficult in the southern part of the Site due to a lack of strong visual barriers that could be enhanced to reduce the suburbanising effect of the residential development.

**4.8** Development which would enhance or maintain the open green space between Maes Knoll and Whitchurch village would result in the lowest level of harm to significance of the asset as it would best allow for its aesthetic values to be understood and appreciated.

**4.9** Residential or other infrastructure (such as a primary school or community centre) would be less harmful to the significance of Maes Knoll if located in the northern part of the Site, north of Queen Charlton Lane but would then also result in a cumulative level of harm to the significance of the assets within Queen Charlton.



**Figure 4.1: Risk of harm for Maes Knoll hillfort**



- Site boundary
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area

**Listed building**

- Grade II\*
- Grade II

**Risk ratings for Maes Knoll hillfort**

- Very high
- High
- High-medium
- Medium
- Medium-low
- Low



## Wansdyke (Figure 4.2)

**4.10** The asset will not be physically affected by the proposed development and so any harm to the significance of the asset is via setting change.

**4.11** Potential for a medium level of harm to the significance of the asset if residential development occurs in parcels closest to the asset (10,11 and 15), due to setting change. The current setting of the asset (as defined in **Chapter 3**) allows for the appreciation of the way the asset stands apart from its contemporary landscape, visible and distinct from other land uses.

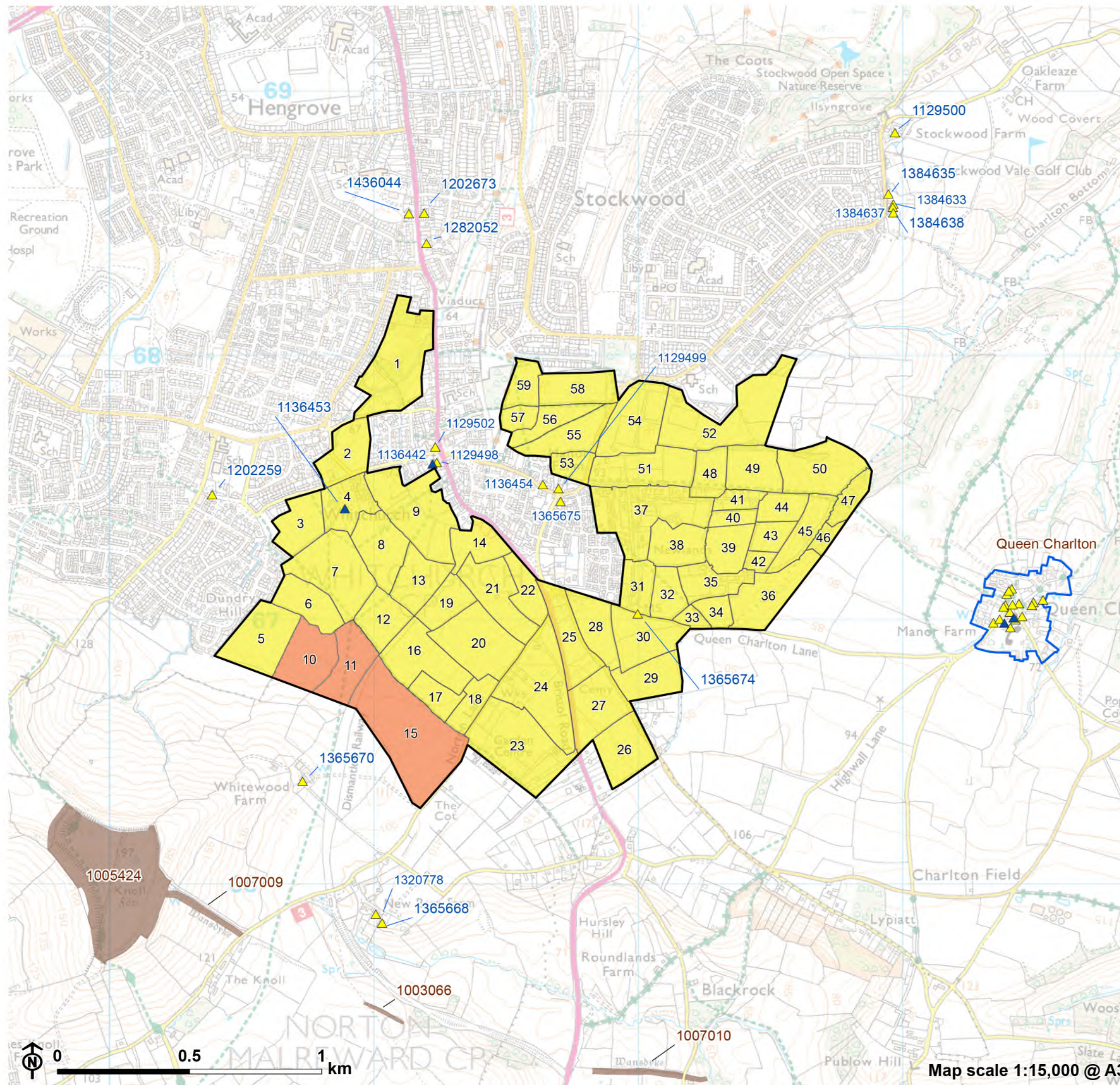
**4.12** A change in the setting of the asset would harm its significance by affecting the experience of the asset (and its relationship with Maes Knoll hillfort which is also of crucial importance) by adding a 'hard' edge which would be at odds with the rural and isolated feel of the current setting.

**4.13** This could be mitigated/reduced by using these parcels for green infrastructure only which would also reduce the level of harm to the significance of Maes Knoll hillfort.

**4.14** A low level of harm to the significance of the asset from development in other parcels due to distance from the asset and lack of intervisibility.



Figure 4.2: Risk of harm for Wansdyke



- Site boundary
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area
- Listed building**
  - Grade II\*
  - Grade II
- Risk ratings for Wansdyke**
  - Very high
  - High
  - High-medium
  - Medium
  - Medium-low
  - Low



## Assets within Queen Charlton (Figure 4.3)

**4.15** The asset will not be physically affected by the proposed development and so any harm to the significance of the asset is via setting change.

**4.16** The field parcels in the area east of the A37 are where potential development may cause harm to the significance of the assets within Queen Charlton. This harm would occur through setting change.

**4.17** The flat land to the west of Queen Charlton affords some intervisibility between the site and the assets and the conservation area within Queen Charlton, although in the area to the northwest of Queen Charlton, this visibility is limited by a tree bank and hedge line that runs on a northeast to southwest alignment across the fields to the west of Queen Charlton and would partially shield development within parcels 37-59. There may be some intervisibility between the conservation area and the parcels to the east of the A37 (parcels 25-30).

**4.18** There are clear lines of sight along the footpath that leads west out of Queen Charlton towards parcels 46 and 47, and along Queen Charlton Lane of parcels 33, 34 and 36 (Figure 4.4). Although there is a designed view towards parcels 26 and 46 through the two archways along Queen Charlton Lane associated with Manor Farmhouse/Manor House (NHLE1136044), this visibility is restricted to an area of tennis courts with further views limited by tall hedgerows.

**4.19** The setting of the conservation area is defined by its rural and agricultural surroundings, in a landscape that has remained unchanged for centuries and retains medieval and post-medieval landscape features such as radiating strip fields to the west of the village and the wider pattern of late medieval/post-medieval open fields surrounding it. The setting of the conservation area adds

to its significance in terms of its aesthetic and historical values by the way it allows for its significance to be understood and appreciated.

**4.20** The significance of the asset could be harmed as a result of setting change as this setting (as defined above) adds to the aesthetic value of the conservation area. The introduction of modern development in parcels 36 and 46 and 47 would alter the setting of the asset and cause harm to its significance by affecting its aesthetic value, changing the way the asset is experienced from the west by the introduction of a 'hard' edge of development in an otherwise rural landscape.

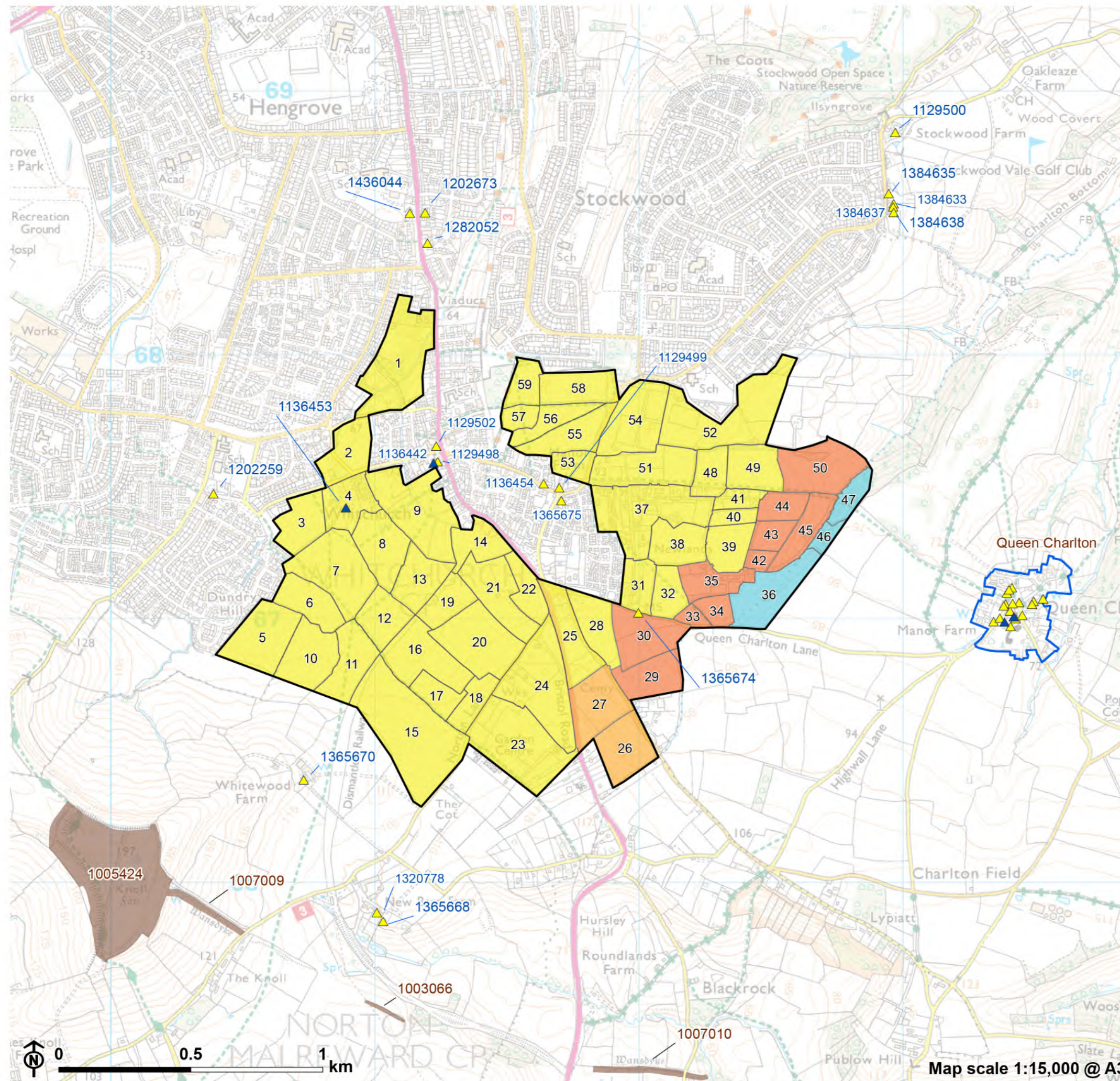
**4.21** Residential development in the area to the east of parcels 36, 46 and 47 could equate to a medium level of harm to the significance of the conservation area due to a change in setting but the level of harm is reduced by the limited visibility due to intervening vegetation.

**4.22** A single storey building for a primary school or community centre may result in a lower level of harm to the significance of the conservation area but the preference for this area in order to avoid harm would be for green infrastructure, particularly in the parcels closest to Queen Charlton (33,34,46,47).

**4.23** There will be no harm to the assets within Queen Charlton as a result of development on the eastern side of the A37.



**Figure 4.3: Risk of harm for assets at Queen Charlton**



- Site boundary
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area
- Listed building**
  - Grade II\*
  - Grade II
- Risk ratings for assets at Queen Charlton**
  - Very high
  - High
  - High-medium
  - Medium
  - Medium-low
  - Low



## Assets within Whitchurch village (Figure 4.4)

**4.24** These assets will not be physically affected by the proposed development and so any harm to the significance of the asset is via setting change.

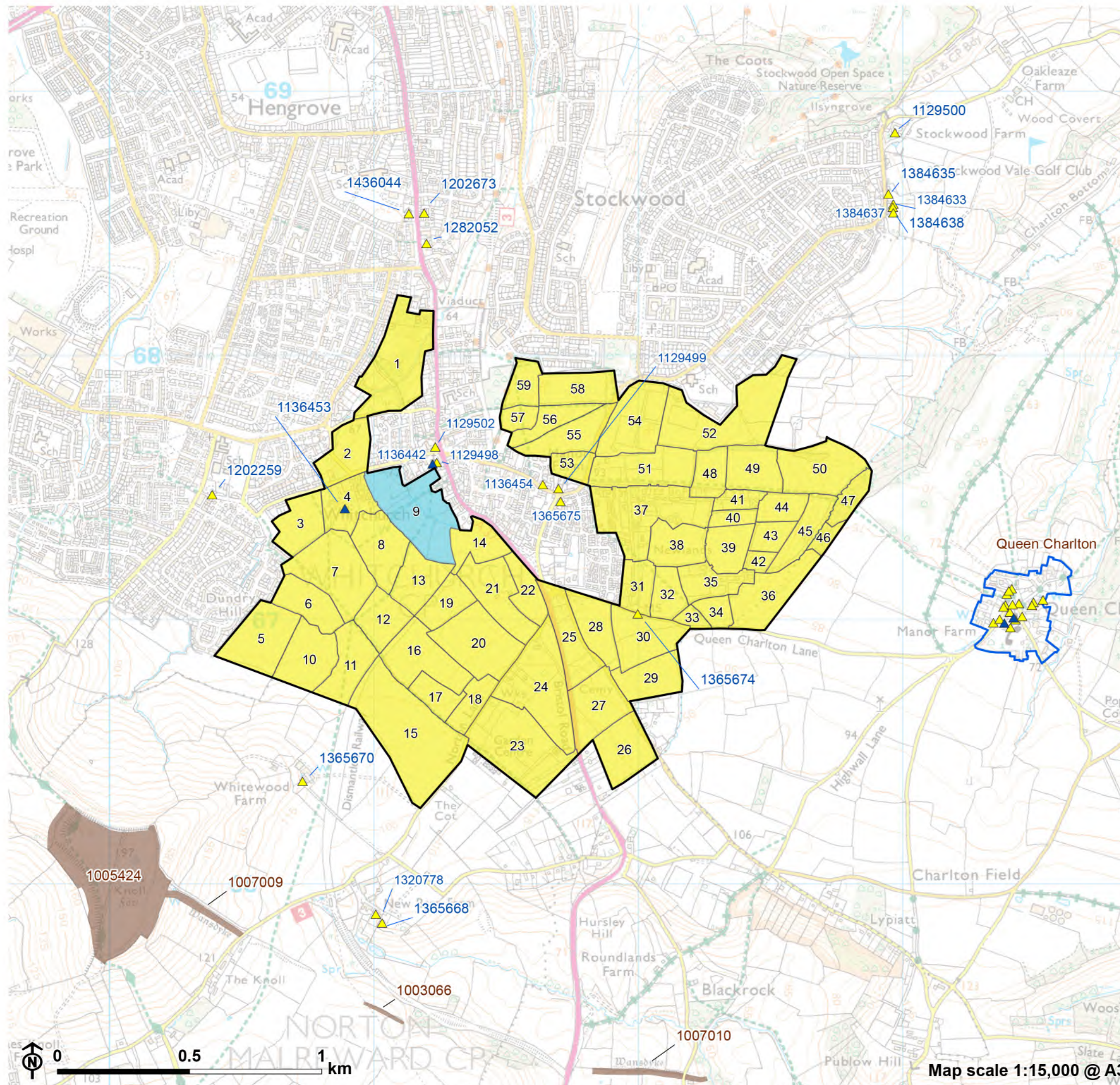
**4.25** Parcel 9 has potential to cause a medium level of harm to the significance of St Nicholas Church as it lies within its setting. A change in this setting could occur due to residential development if tall, multi-storey buildings are used which may compete for prominence with the church tower. This would affect the significance of the church by changing the way it is experienced in the surrounding landscape, affecting its aesthetic value.

**4.26** Due to lack of intervisibility and the tight urban grain surrounding the assets along Staunton Lane, there will be low to negligible levels of harm to the significance of the assets along Staunton Lane as a result of residential, other infrastructure or green space development within the site.





**Figure 4.4: Risk of harm for assets within Whitchurch**



- Site boundary
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area
- Listed building**
  - Grade II\*
  - Grade II
- Risk ratings for assets within Whitchurch**
  - Very high
  - High
  - High-medium
  - Medium
  - Medium-low
  - Low

Map scale 1:15,000 @ A3



## Whitewood Farmhouse (Figure 4.5)

**4.27** The asset will not be physically affected by the proposed development and so any harm to the significance of the asset is via setting change.

**4.28** The setting of the asset is defined by its rural character which contributes to the aesthetic and historical values, from which its significance is derived. The part of the setting of the asset that contributes towards its significance is limited to the area north of Whitewood Farm up to Bristol Road as other parts of the site do not lie within the setting of the asset.

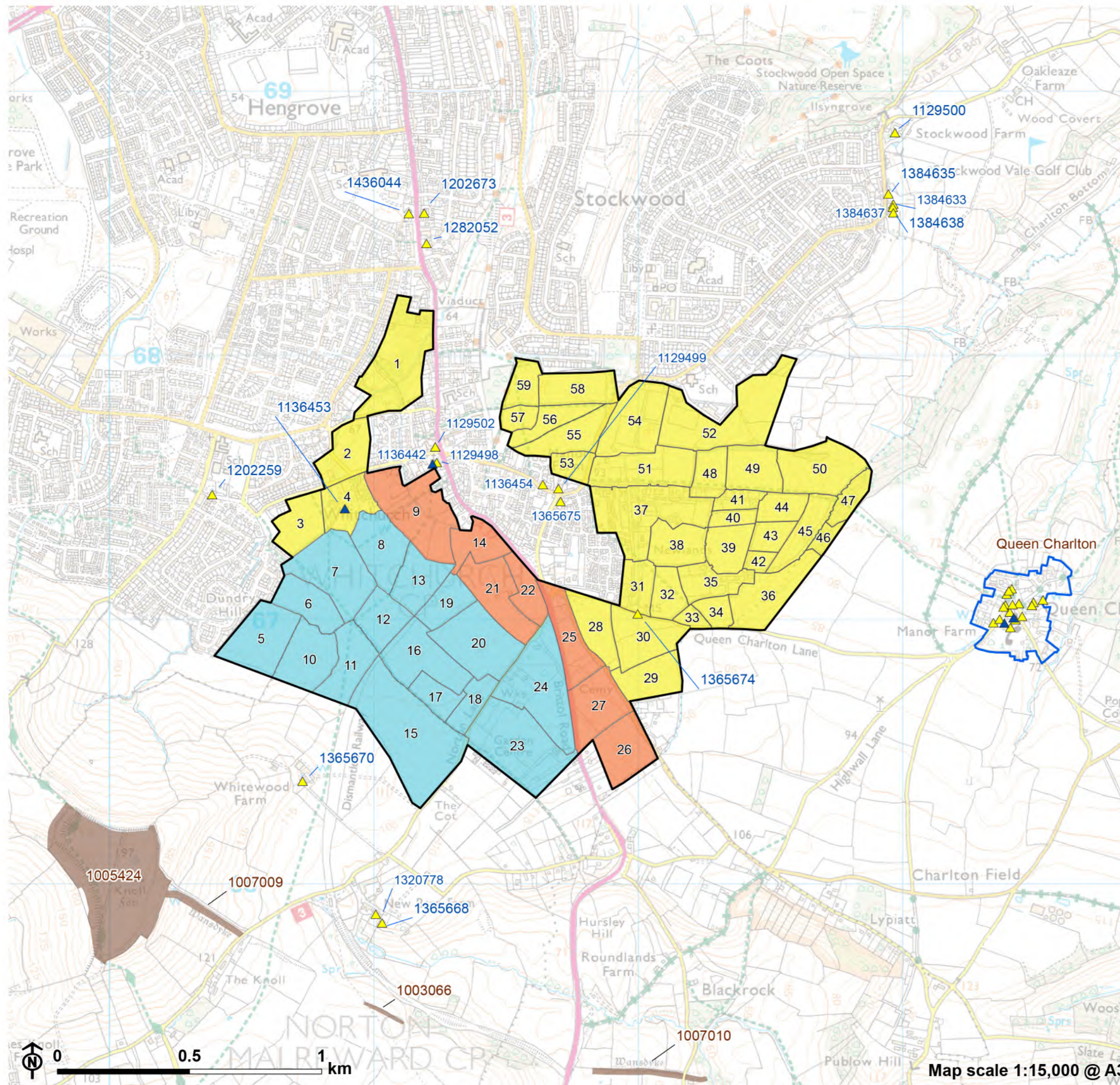
**4.29** There is potential that a large residential development would result in setting change, which would cause harm to the significance of the asset by harming its aesthetic value by affecting the way the asset is currently experienced in its rural and agricultural surroundings.

**4.30** The primary school/community centre would be less harmful to the significance of Whitewood Farmhouse due to the smaller scale of development compared to residential development, although this would depend on whether it was a single storey or multi storey building.





**Figure 4.5: Risk of harm for Whitewood Farmhouse**



- Site boundary
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area
- Listed building**
- ▲ Grade II\*
- ▲ Grade II
- Risk ratings for Whitewood Farmhouse**
- Very high
- High
- High-medium
- Medium
- Medium-low
- Low



## Lyons Court Farmhouse (Figure 4.6)

**4.31** Potential for physical impacts to the farmhouse as it is within the site although it is currently unclear if the proposed development would include development of the farmhouse or garden.

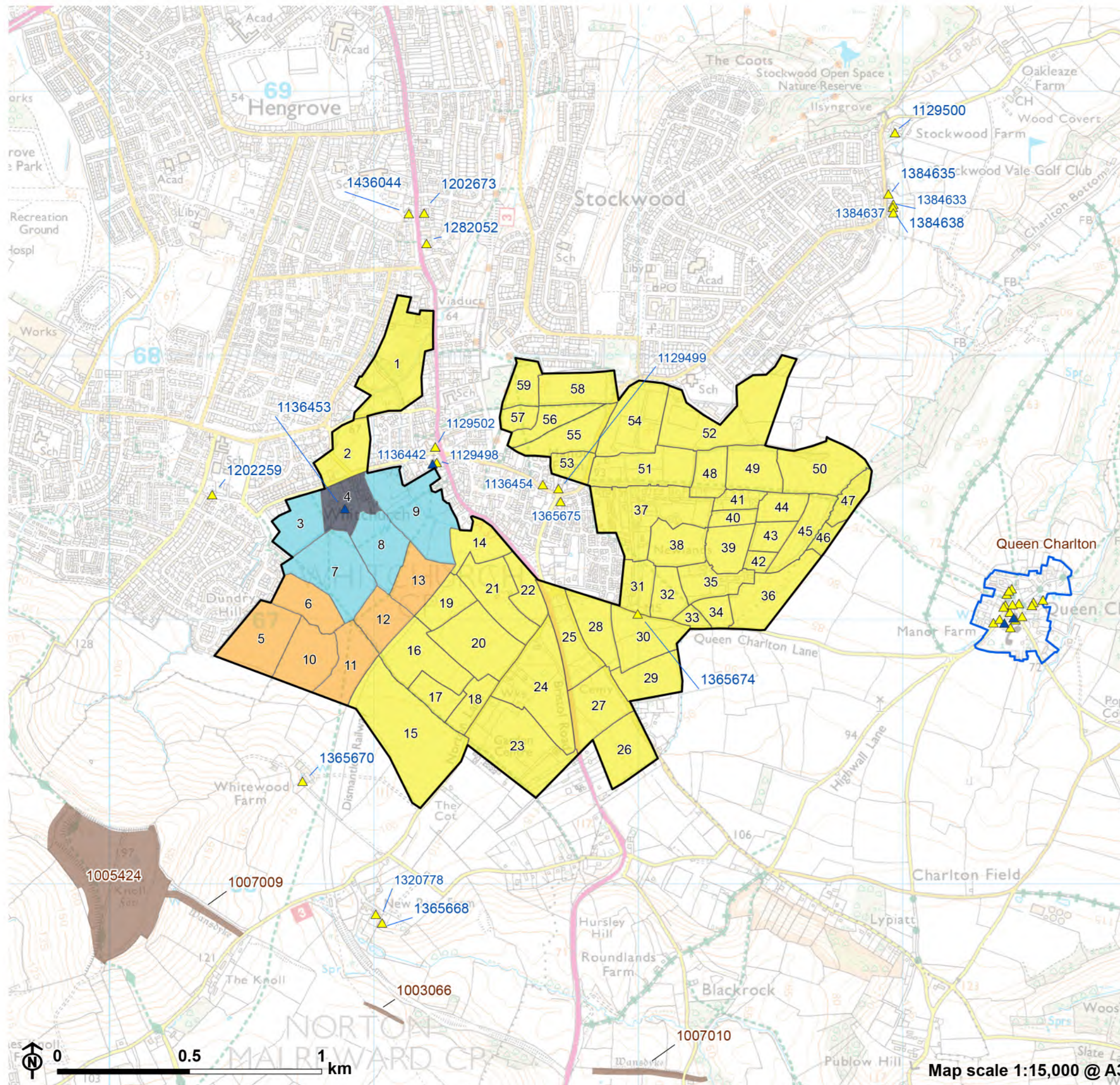
**4.32** The setting of the asset is defined by its semi-rural surroundings, characterised by suburban development to the north and west and fields to the south and east. This setting contributes to the significance of the asset by allowing for its aesthetic value to be understood and appreciated.

**4.33** Harm to the significance of the asset as a result of setting change would be limited to the parcels to the east, west and south of the asset (parcels 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9) with residential development resulting in a higher level of harm compared to other infrastructure and green space on the significance of the asset because of its greater contrast with the current rural character and by affecting the way the asset is experienced (in terms of its aesthetic value).





**Figure 4.6: Risk of harm for Lyons Court Farmhouse**



- Site boundary
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area
- Listed building**
- ▲ Grade II\*
- ▲ Grade II
- Risk ratings for Lyons Court Farmhouse**
- Very high
- High
- High-medium
- Medium
- Medium-low
- Low



## Milestone (Figure 4.7)

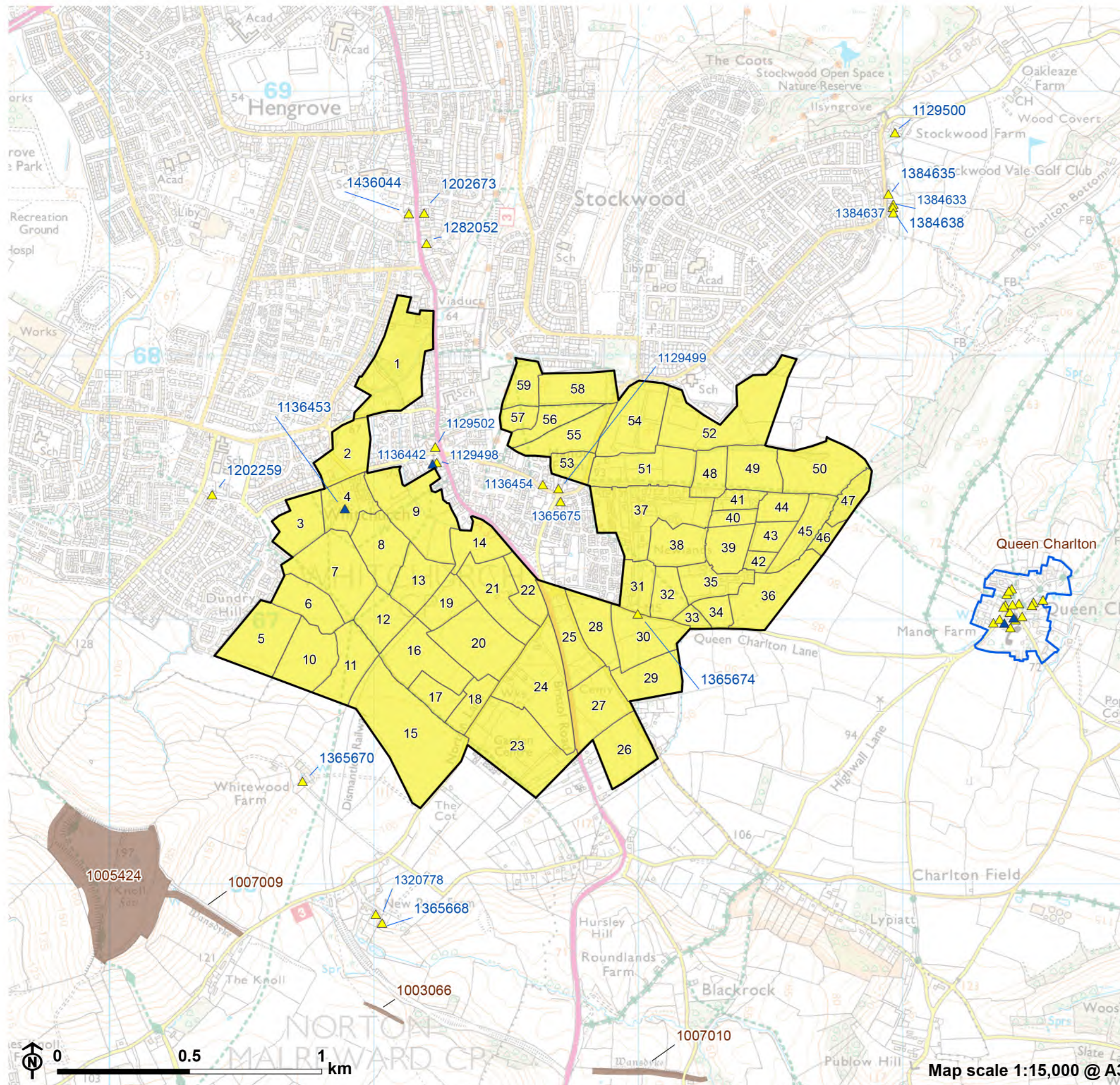
**4.34** Low to negligible level of harm to the significance of the asset as a result of any kind of development within the Site. The proposed development would result in a change in the setting of the asset but this will not cause harm to its significance.

**4.35** An increase in traffic arising from development in the vicinity could, however, increase the risk of accidental damage to the asset through increased probability of vehicular collision, or damage as a consequence of pressure for more intensive hedgerow management.





**Figure 4.7: Risk of harm for milestone along Queen Charlton Lane**



- Site boundary
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area

**Listed building**

- Grade II\*
- Grade II

**Risk ratings for milestone along Queen Charlton Lane**

- Very high
- High
- High-medium
- Medium
- Medium-low
- Low

Map scale 1:15,000 @ A3



## Chapter 5

# Conclusions and Recommendations

**5.1** In summary, the areas of highest sensitivity (where development would have the greatest impact on the significance of the identified heritage assets) are as follows:

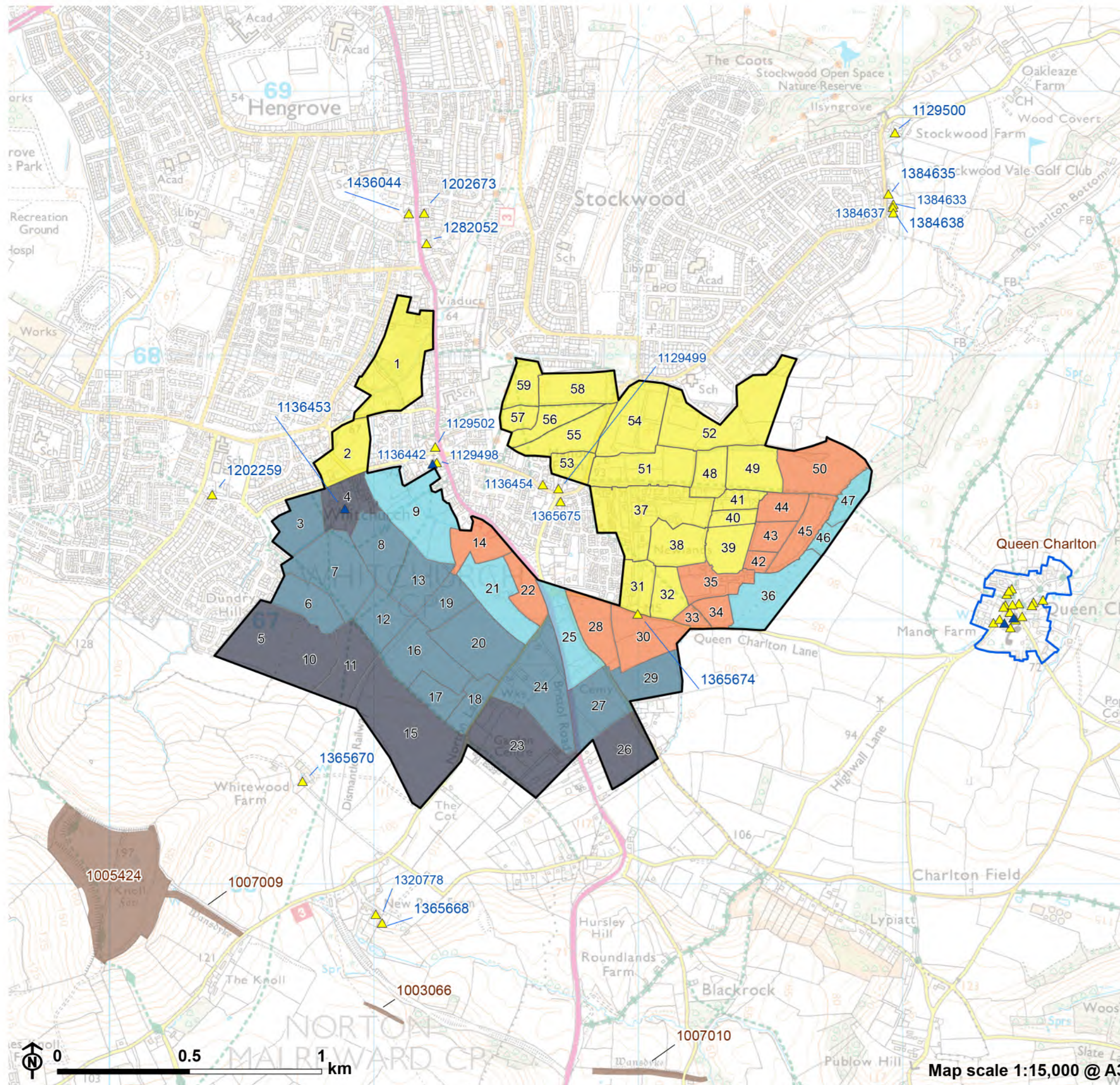
- the land parcels to the south and west of Whitchurch (nos. 4-24);
- parcels to the east of the A37 and up to Queen Charlton Lane (nos. 25-30), and
- the parcels to the west of Queen Charlton (36, 46 and 47).

**5.2** These are illustrated on **Figure 5.1**. This figure shows a worst-case scenario approach and is intended to be read in conjunction with **Table 2.1** which presents a more nuanced approach based on the impacts of different types of development to heritage assets.





**Figure 5.1: Overall risk of harm for the site**



- Site boundary
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area
- Listed building**
  - Grade II\*
  - Grade II
- Overall risk ratings for the site**
  - Very high
  - High
  - High-medium
  - Medium
  - Medium-low
  - Low



**5.3** In the areas to the south and west of Whitchurch village (parcels 4-30), residential development could cause harm to the significance of the Scheduled Monuments of Maes Knoll hillfort and the Wansdyke and also to the significance of the Grade II listed Whitewood Farmhouse, Lyons Court Farmhouse and, to a lesser extent St Nicholas Church. Any harm to the significance of these assets would be via a change in their setting, with the exception of Lyons Court Farmhouse where there is the potential for direct physical impact to the asset as it lies within the Site.

**5.4** In this area, residential development has the potential to cause the highest risk of harm to the significance of the assets due to the encroachment of residential development which would change the rural setting of Maes Knoll, the Wansdyke, Lyons Court Farmhouse and Whitewood Farm and affect the way these assets are experienced in the landscape, thereby affecting their significance. Residential development in the land parcels immediately to the south of the A37 and to the west of Norton Lane (nos. 14, 21 and 22) is more likely to be less harmful to the significance of the assets due to distance and the existing suburban grain and it is likely that any impact could be mitigated.

**5.5** Other infrastructure, such as a school or community centre and green infrastructure which would enhance or maintain open green space between Maes Knoll and Whitchurch village would result in the lowest level of harm to significance of the assets. However, in the case of the construction of a community centre or school, this would depend on the scale and massing.

**5.6** In the area of the Site to the west of Queen Charlton, residential development in parcels 25-30, 36, 46 and 47 could harm the significance of the Queen Charlton Conservation Area by altering the setting of the asset and cause harm to its significance by affecting its aesthetic value, changing the way the asset is experienced from the west by the introduction of a 'hard' edge of development in an otherwise rural landscape. The preference for this area in order to avoid harm would be for green infrastructure.

**5.7** Residential development in the area to the east of parcels 25 to 36 and 46 and 47 could equate to a medium level of harm to the significance of the conservation area due to a change in setting but the level of harm is reduced by the limited visibility due to intervening vegetation and therefore these parcels could accommodate residential development with appropriate mitigation.

**5.8** Parcels 1, 2, 22, 31, 32, 37-41, 48, 49, 51-59 are areas of low sensitivity and could accommodate any type of development. Development in these parcels is likely to result in a minimal or no impact to the significance of the assets and it is likely that no mitigation would be required.

## Recommendations

**5.9** This report comprises statements of significance for both Maes Knoll and the Wansdyke Scheduled Monuments, and an appraisal of the risk of harm to the significance of heritage assets, should the site be developed. This focused on effects to the significance of the assets in line with NPPF and considers the significance and importance of the assets and the likely level of harm of the potential development type, split into that arising from residential, other infrastructure (this category comprises uses such as a primary school or community centre) and green space, as well as a summary.

**5.10** These ratings are a measure of the risk of harm an asset would experience if the site were to be developed and should not be read as precluding/allowing development within the Site, but act as an indicator for highlighting where the risk of harm may occur if the site were to be developed.

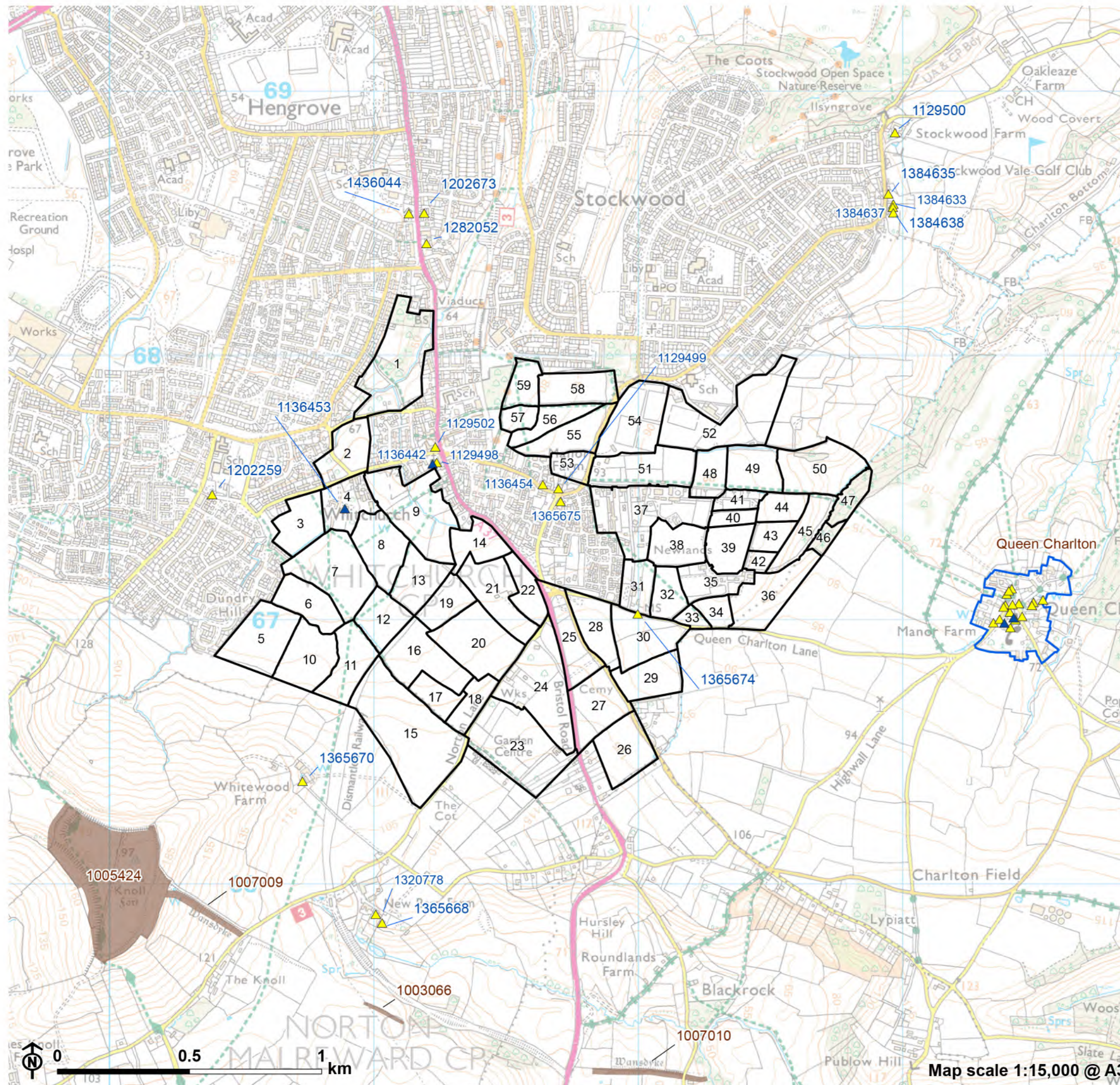
**5.11** Once the detail of the options has been decided, these will then need to be appraised further via a Heritage Impact Assessment for the preferred options to be taken forward. The results of this can then be used to provide detailed commentary on design and masterplanning options.

# Appendix A

## Site parcel boundaries



Figure A.1: Site parcels



- Site boundary
- Scheduled monument
- Conservation area
- Listed building**
- ▲ Grade II\*
- ▲ Grade II



# References

- 1 Available at:  
[https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/j30361\\_iema\\_principlesof\\_chia\\_v8.pdf](https://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/j30361_iema_principlesof_chia_v8.pdf) (Accessed 08/12/2023)
- 2 Available at: <sup>2</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/historic-environment-and-site-allocations-in-local-plans/> (Accessed 08/12/2023)
- 3 Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/> (Accessed 08/12/2023)
- 4 Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/commercial-renewable-energy-development-historic-environment-advice-note-15/heag302-commercial-renewable-energy-development-historic-environment/> (Accessed 08/12/2023)
- 5 Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-principles-sustainable-management-historic-environment/conservationprinciplespoliciesandguidanceapril08web/> (Accessed 08/12/2023)
- 6 Available at: The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3' (GPA3)  
<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa3-setting-of-heritage-assets/> (Accessed 19/10/23)
- 7 Historic England 2008, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/>
- 8 NPPF Annex 2 Glossary. Available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary> (Last Accessed 10/12/2023)
- 9 Historic England 2008, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*, paras 78-79. Available at:

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<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/constructive-conservation/conservation-principles/>

**10** Fragments too small to enable definitive identification.

Barton, K.J., and Rahtz, P.A. (1963) Maes Knoll camp, Dundry, Somerset

**11** 36/1992/192 Medieval archaeology journal of the Society for Medieval Archaeology. Available at:

<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archsearch/record?titleId=1911690>



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