



## **Heritage Assessment of Townhouse Farm, Church Lane, Ardingly, West Sussex**

August 2022

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

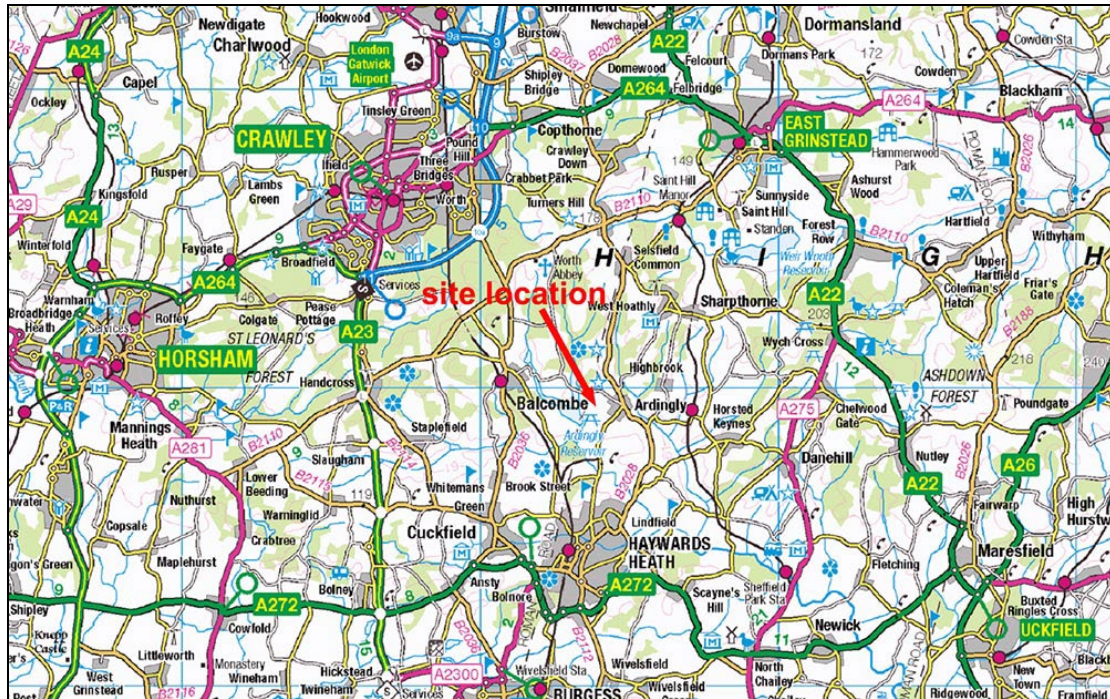
***This Heritage Assessment sets out the archaeological and historical background to the proposed redevelopment of Townhouse Farm, Ardingly, West Sussex. The redevelopment consists of [REDACTED]***

***[REDACTED] Plot 2, within the south-western bounds of the existing farm, to contain a single dwelling and two outbuildings; [REDACTED]***

***Townhouse Farm lies within an area of probable prehistoric and Romano-British field systems and the farm itself is likely to have its origins in the medieval period.***

***The location of Plot 1, at a distance from the historic farm and on a steeper slope, makes it unlikely to contain buried archaeological remains of prehistoric and/or historic date, whereas that of Plots 2 & 3, lying on or near to the historic farm and positioned on a relatively flat site on a south-facing slope, is much more likely to do so.***

## BACKGROUND



**Figure 1** Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

1. Townhouse Farm lies at the southern end of Church Lane, c.0.5km to the south of Balcombe Lane, which runs between the villages of Ardingly and Balcombe in West Sussex. The site sits at 105m aOD towards the southern end of a north-south running spur, and is centred at TQ 3378 2932. It spans the junction of the mudstones of the Lower Grinstead Clay with the sandstone of the Cuckfield Stone Bed, both forming part of the Wealden Group.
2. The landowner is intending to submit an application for the re-development of Townhouse Farm. In order to inform both themselves and the Local Planning Authority of any potential heritage issues relating to the development of the site, they have commissioned West Sussex Archaeology Ltd to draw up this Heritage Assessment (HA).
3. It is not the purpose of this Heritage Assessment to rehearse the clauses of the various publically available planning legislation, guidance and policy documents, suffice it to say that these provide the framework within which the heritage issues relevant to this site will be discussed. With reference to this project these are: the National Planning Policy Framework (2021 revision); the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; and the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014-2031 (2018), p.87-90.



**Figure 2** Site location. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

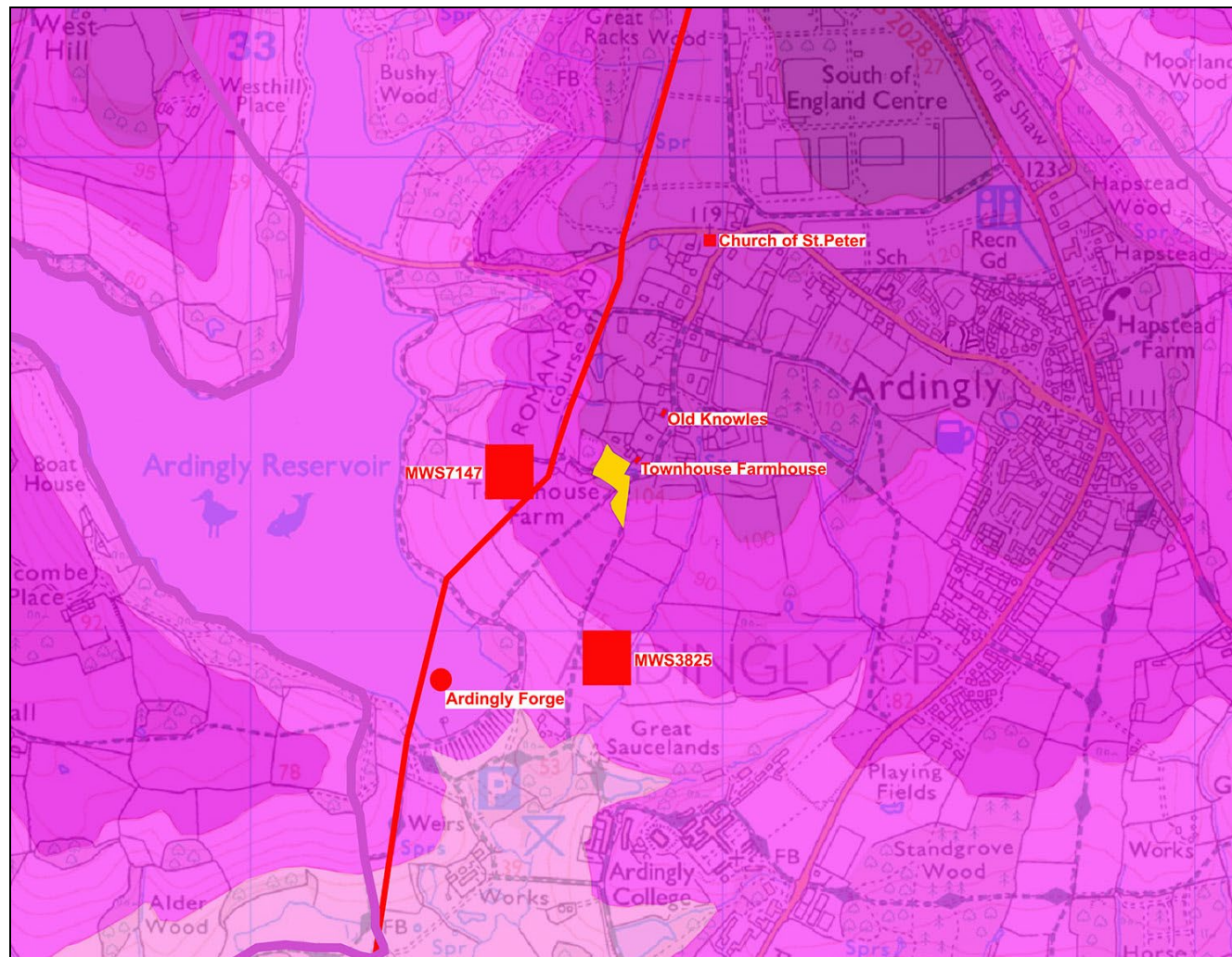
## THE HERITAGE ASSETS

### Designated Assets

1. The site lies partially within Ardingly Conservation Area, although there is as yet no Conservation Area Appraisal, and within 1km of 20 Listed Buildings. Two of these Listed Buildings lie within the core of the historic hamlet of Hapsteadgreen, c.1km to the east of the site, five are associated with Ardingly College, c.850m to south-east of the site, two are the late medieval or post-medieval dwellings of Little and Great Saucelands, c.550m to the south of the site, one is the late medieval or post-medieval dwelling of Brook House, c.900m to the north-west of the site and eight are associated with the historic settlement of Ardingly, the nearest of which, The Croft, lies c.350m to the north-east of the site. None of these are considered to be of relevance to the current application due to their distance from, and lack of intervisibility with, the site. The remaining two are:

- Townhouse Farmhouse No. 1192346 Grade II 11<sup>th</sup> May 1983 Undated farmhouse [dating to c.1475 according to WSRO AM881/1/29]
- Old Knowles No.1025793 Grade II 28<sup>th</sup> October 1957 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier house [dating to c.1575 according to WSRO MP6378]

## WEST SUSSEX ARCHÆOLOGY



**Figure 3** Map of the relevant known heritage assets (in red, the Roman road is marked as the line from south to north) within the vicinity of the development site (in gold) with the contours shaded in purple (darkest is highest) © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

## HER Records

1. A search was made of West Sussex County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER), covering a 1km radius from the site. Records of relevance to this project, in addition to the designated heritage assets described above, include:
  - MWS764 arrowheads and chipped flints – no precise grid reference known, just “from Ardingly”.
  - MWS3825 “a few flints and a microlith” of unspecified age, aside from the microlith, which is assumed to be Mesolithic, found within a 100m<sup>2</sup> area.
  - DWS8680 Roman road through Mid Sussex (London to Portslade Way), which is an Archaeological Notification Area as defined by West Sussex County Council. It is to be noted that the exact route of the road, as it passes to the immediate west of Townhouse Farm, has never been proven by excavation and its assumed line must therefore be treated with caution, allowing for a re-adjustment either to the east or west.
  - MWS976 & DWS8631 The Parish Church of St. Peter, Ardingly, the current building is 14<sup>th</sup> century and later, although there are documentary references to a church in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century.
  - MWS5794 Ardingly Forge and fulling mill (see below for more details), excavated in 1975 and now submerged under the reservoir constructed in 1979.
  - MWS7147 a WWII anti-aircraft battery was located in this position, although the grid reference only pinpoints it to within a 100m<sup>2</sup> area.

## Documentary Evidence

1. The present day village of Ardingly is composed of two older settlements, much expanded: Ardingly to the west and Hapsted Green (in 1808, Hapsteadgreen in 1875) to the east, which had merged under the name of the former by 1897. A detached hamlet centred upon Knowl Farm (Old Knowle's Farm from 1875-1910), and Town House (Townhouse Farm from 1875) existed to the south of the original village of Ardingly. Both were part of the manor of Ditchling in the medieval and post-medieval periods (Anon, p.16 & WSRO Add Mss 33937-33951).
2. An Alice de la Toune is recorded in the Assize Rolls for 1279 (Anon, p.16), and the Subsidy Rolls of 1327 list Henry, William and Thomas de Toune in Ardingly (Hudson, pp.168-183). It is however not certain whether it was the farm or the individuals who first bore the name, nor, if the latter, whether a dwelling existed on the site as early as these dates.

3. The present Townhouse farmhouse dates to the later 15<sup>th</sup> century (WSRO AM881/129), however the first definite documentary reference relating to “a messuage called Townhouse in Ardingly” comes in 1586 in a bond between John Pilbeam of Ardingly, yeoman, son of Richard Pilbeam, and Richard Cripps of Ardingly, yeoman (WSRO Add Mss 44433). This begins a long association between Townhouse and the Pilbeam family, which only ends c.1739 when a John Pilbeam is the last of that name to live in Ardingly (WSRO Add Mss 44438). Townhouse would appear to have been linked to an iron hammer/forge, located c.450m to the south, from at least 1661 (WSRO Add Mss 44445). This was probably first active in 1559 (Wealden Iron Research Group Database), but it is unclear whether it was tied to Townhouse at this time, when the hammer/forge was owned by Francis Challenor (*Ibid.*). It ceased operation c.1700 (*Ibid.*). After the departure of the Pilbeams, c.1740, Townhouse was acquired by the Sanders family, to become Sanders Robinson through marriage, who would appear to have let it out to tenant farmers (WSRO Add Mss 44438, 44491-2 & 44439-40). A William Sanders Robinson owned the farm in 1852 when it was sold at auction to Joseph Esdaile of Wakehurst Place (WSRO Add Mss 44611-6), before being sold again in 1871 to John Alexander Hankey of Balcombe Place (Tobin Dennis, pers. comm.).

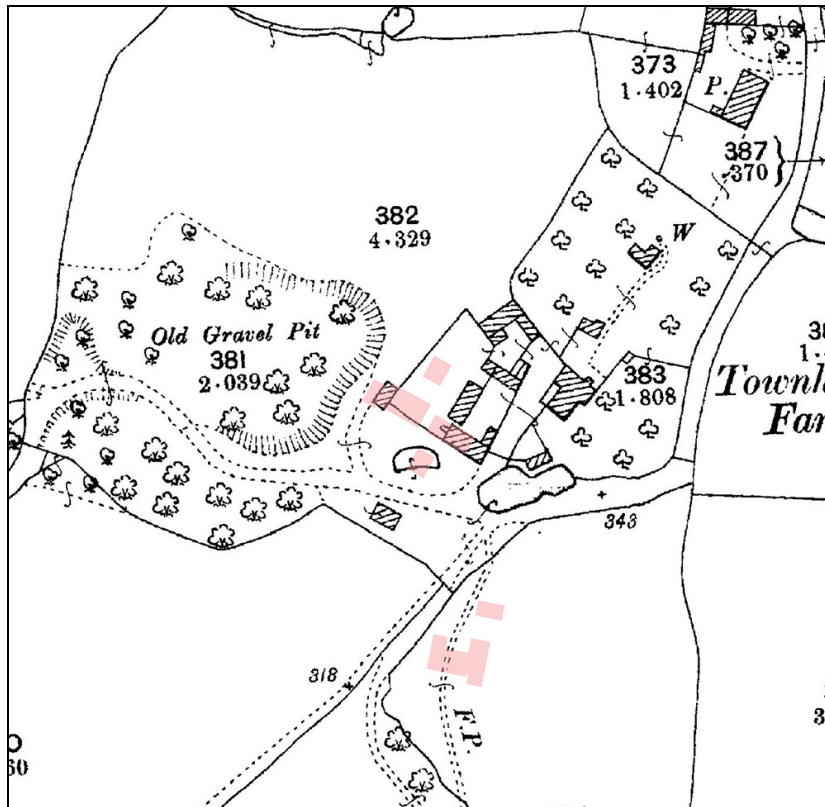
### Historic Maps

1. The earliest detailed map showing “Townhouse” is the Ardingly Tithe map of 1841 (WSRO TD/E32) although two earlier maps survive, of smaller scale, showing buildings in the same location. Of these, the first is one entitled “A Map of Several Farms & Lands of Richard Lyddal Esq Lying in Ardingly, Westhoadly, Worth & Balcomb in Sussex” and dated to 1727 (WSRO Add Mss 29847). This marks a single building in the position of Townhouse Farm situated against a track leading to “Ardingly Hammer Pond and so to Balcombe”, with the land around owned by “Mr John Pilbeame”. The second is the 1808 Ordnance Survey map which shows “Town House” as a cluster of buildings at the end of Church Lane. The scale is too small to be certain of the identification of individual structures. The Tithe map, however, clearly marks the farmhouse, while a total of eight outbuildings lie to the north, west and south, together with two ponds. The farm would appear to consist of two yards, an “L”-shaped one extending from the farmhouse to the west before turning south, and a broadly square yard formed within the angle of the “L”. A “Marlpit” lies to the west of the complex, dug into the Lower Grinstead Clay. A slightly later, but clearer, map, appended to sale particulars dating to 1852, marks little change, save that one of the outbuildings has been extended and the “L”-shaped yard has now been divided into two.

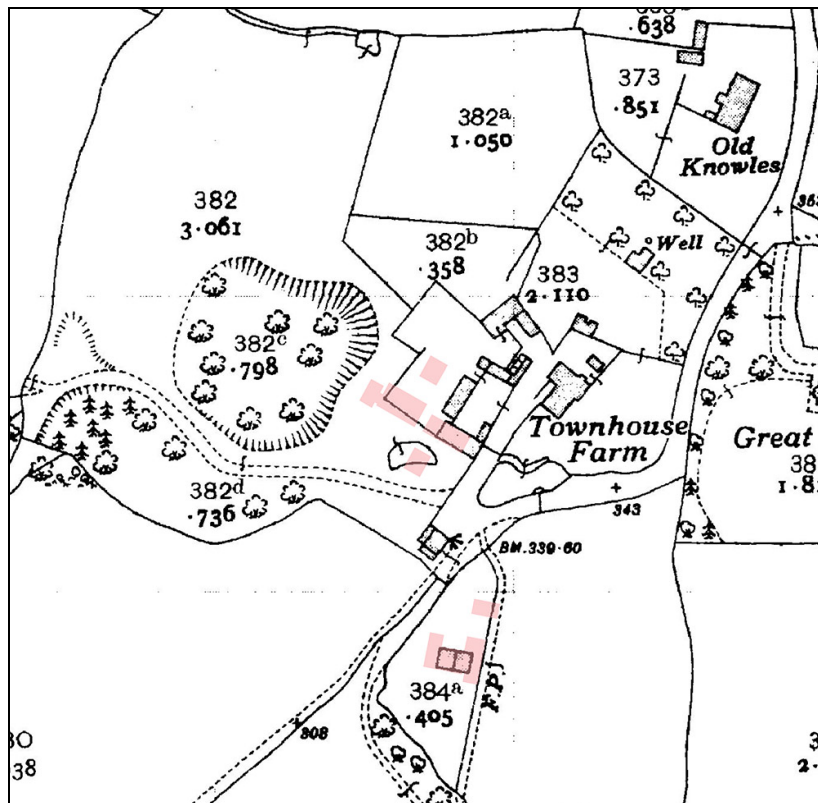


**Figure 4** Extract from the 1852 map (WSRO Add Mss 44611-6). The proposed new buildings of the current application are shown in faded red

2. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1875 shows the same three farmyards but with the addition of another outbuilding on the boundary of the southern two, and a new structure to the south, on the other side of the lane. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of 1897 is unchanged save for the loss of a small outbuilding immediately to the north-west of the farmhouse and an extension added to the building lying along the southern edge of the south-east yard. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of 1910 again shows one gain, another structure to the south of the lane, and one loss, the building adjacent to the south-west corner of the south-western yard. The 1937 edition shows the loss of the western of the structures to the south of the lane, but the addition of a small outbuilding to the north-east of the farmhouse, and, more significantly, the construction of a pair of semi-detached cottages in the field to the south of the farm. The 1956 edition shows no change, but that of 1972 depicts a significant alteration, with the building along the southern side of the south-east yard demolished, and several new barns erected to the south-west. In addition a second pair of semi-detached cottages is added to the north-west. This is largely the situation today (see Figure 10). Of the 19<sup>th</sup> century farm, the farmhouse, and the yard to its immediate west, survive, but of those to the south, only a single outbuilding (the Old Dairy), built between 1852 and 1875, remains.



**Figure 5** Extract from the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:2500 OS map of 1897, with the proposed new buildings highlighted in faded red



**Figure 6** Extract from the 1956 edition 1:2500 OS map, with the proposed new buildings highlighted in faded red

## Aerial Photographs & Lidar

1. The Coronavirus outbreak meant that it was not possible to consult the Historic England Archive and, as a result, only those images available on Google Earth were viewed, these dated to the years 1985 (poor quality), 2001, 2005, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2018 & 2020. No significant additional features were noted.
2. Environment Agency Lidar coverage for the area was also consulted, which again did not show any additional features, possibly due to only the 2m low resolution being available.

## Site Visit

1. A site visit was undertaken on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021. A report by the High Weald AONB from 2017 had noted the presence of lynchets and hollow-ways in fields to the south and east of the Townhouse Farm (Anon, p.2), and these were again noted. Indeed it was apparent that the hillside below the farm contained at least four parallel rows of lynchets following the contours and running down to the modern reservoir. In addition to these, four sunken trackways were observed running down the spur slope, three of which are marked on historic mapping (see Figures 4-6), the western following the presumed line of the Roman road, with the two eastern still used by public footpaths (see Figure 3). The fourth now consists of only a short stretch, masked by vegetation, immediately to the south-west of the farm between the hollow-way that follows the Roman road, and that under the western of the two footpaths. The date of these lynchets and sunken ways is not certain, however it is probable that the former are prehistoric or Romano-British in origin, and some or all of the latter may also be of this date.
2. The site visit also examined the buildings of Townhouse Farm itself, and it was noted that the barn lying along the north-west side of the surviving north-east farmyard is a modern replacement of the earlier structure, with a steel frame infilled with brickwork and partially clad in timber. It is likely to have been replaced in the third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition the Old Dairy, within Plot 3, has been heavily restored in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with all the original doors, windows and downpipes replaced, the roof re-tiled, a porch added to the east elevation and all the brickwork thoroughly repointed with modern cement, to the extent that externally it looks modern rather than of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date. The loss of the barn and the modernisation of the Old Dairy mean that the only intact survivals of the historic farm are the single storey outbuildings that form the southern and northern sides of the farmyard immediately to the west of the farmhouse, and of course the farmhouse itself.



**Figure 7** View looking north-east from across the reservoir to Townhouse Farm, the modern barns of which are just visible through the trees at the highest point of the slope. The fields under crop directly below the farm are framed on either side by sunken trackways, followed by the existing hedgerows, and contain at least four rows of lynchets: the lowest is the hedge-line just behind the reservoir; the next follows the hedgerow behind; the third can be seen in the field behind (most clearly in the pale track at the right-hand side as it rises and then falls before rising again); and the fourth is at the top of the field where the ground begins to flatten, above which is the farm. The fourth trackway referred to on p.10 lies within the trees at the back of the field towards its centre.

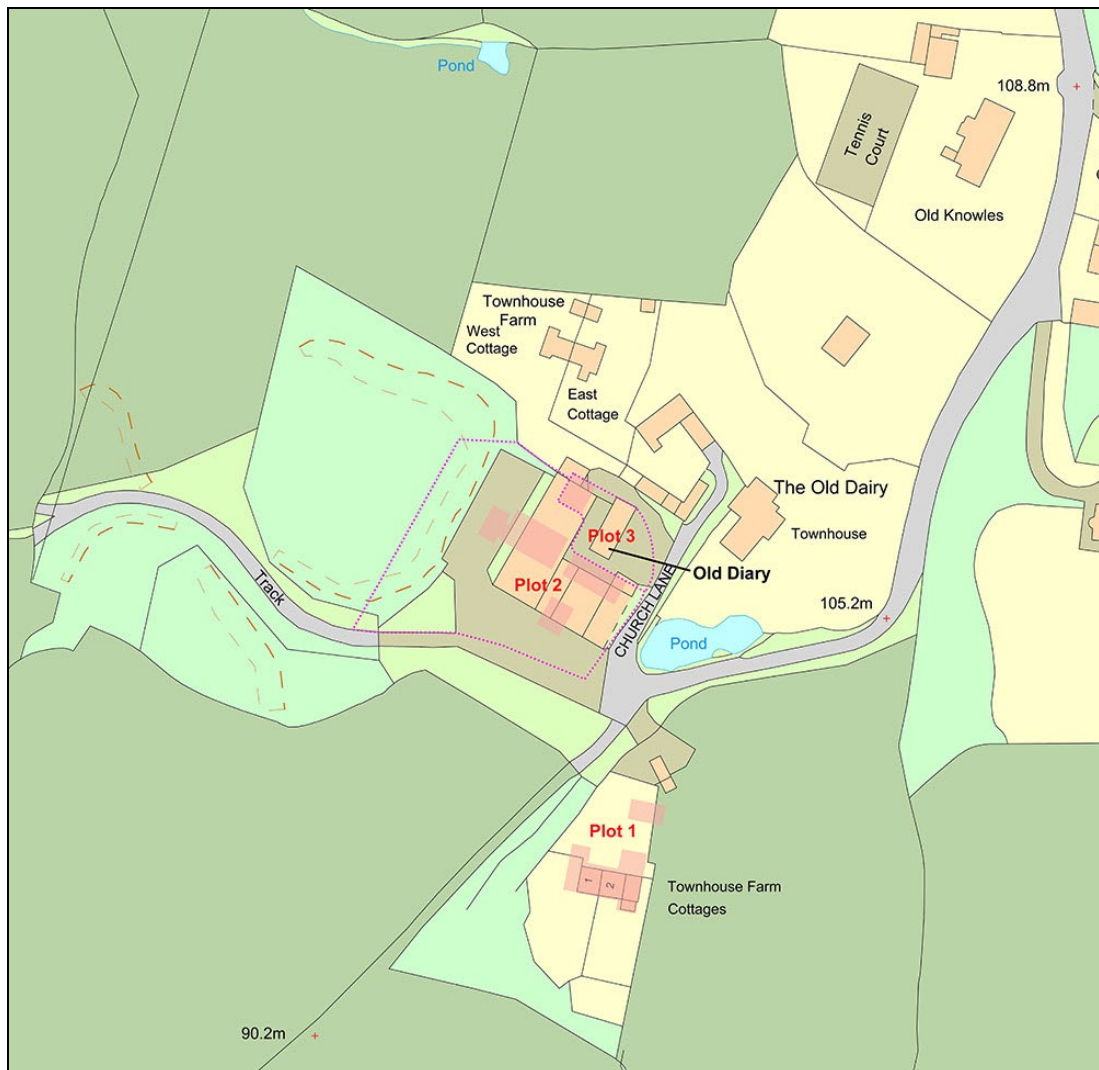


**Figure 8** Plot 1, looking north up the slope of the garden towards the existing cottages, constructed between 1910 & 1937



**Figure 9** Plot 2, looking north-west at the 1960's barns which are to be demolished

## THE DEVELOPMENT



**Figure 10** Townhouse Farm showing the existing buildings and the proposed new structures (in faded red) with the plot boundaries outlined in purple © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License number: AL100036068

1. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Plot 2, which lies over the modern barns to the south and west of the Old Dairy, will comprise a new dwelling extending further to the west than the existing barns, together with two single-storey outbuildings to the east. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

## CONCLUSION

1. The evidence presented above would suggest that the development site lies within a landscape that has been farmed from prehistoric/Romano-British times to the present, with lynchets forming terraces of varying gradients covering the slopes of the spur on which it sits. Trackways cutting through these lynchets allowed for movement from the higher ground to the lower through the fields. The confluence of four of these trackways towards the flatter ground upon which Townhouse Farm sits would suggest that it has been a favoured site for occupation for some time, although given the uncertain date of these routeways, it is not clear whether settlement here started with the medieval farm or dates back into earlier periods.
2. In the light of this analysis, the proposed development of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Plot 2 [REDACTED] lie above, in the area upon which the trackways converge, and to the east of where this slight plateau has been quarried away by the marl pit. As such they have a greater potential to contain buried remains associated with any earlier settlement in this location, whether of prehistoric, Romano-British or earlier medieval date.
3. What is clear is that the proposed location of the northern outbuilding within Plot 2 lies over that of the barn marked on historic mapping from 1841 until 1956, which was positioned along the southern side of the south-eastern historic farmyard, the remains of which may survive below ground. This barn is said to have been dismantled and relocated to Deanlands Place, Horsted Keynes, c.4.5km to the north-east, but it is not clear whether this involved the complete removal of all sub-surface features. The barn at Deanlands Place is of 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century date, with later 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> century alterations and additions, and as such may have been contemporary with the earliest phases of Townhouse Farmhouse. In addition, the proposed new dwelling within Plot 2 lies along the south side of the south-western historic farmyard and includes the position of the smaller farm building marked on historic mapping from 1841 until 1897, the remains of which again may survive below ground. The potential for impacting buried remains relating to the post-medieval and modern farm at Townhouse is therefore high.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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