

*Borough of Oadby & Wigston*



# Oadby & Wigston

## Stoughton Grange Development Brief



## Foreword

This development brief has been prepared by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council as additional planning guidance in relation to Stoughton Grange, Oadby.

The purpose of this Development Brief is to:

- Help to deliver specific development policies related to the site
- Take a proactive approach in bringing the site forward for suitable development.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's objectives in relation to this site are:

- To ensure that any new development complements the existing character of the area in terms of siting, massing and design.
- To ensure that the development is accessible to all, whilst maintaining the highest level of sustainability possible.
- To ensure that all interested parties have a chance to voice their opinions on the site and to illustrate their requirements and concerns to prospective developers.
- To ensure that the surrounding area's rural and Green Wedge setting is not spoilt by the development, whilst exploring opportunities to enhance its green infrastructure.
- To ensure that sustainable design is at the forefront of any new development.

If you would like more information or advice on the contents of the development brief, please contact:

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This development brief relates to land at Stoughton Grange to the north of Gartree Road, Oadby (figure 1).
- 1.2 The aim of the brief is to illustrate the positive aspects and the constraints of the site and to show the potential to create a sustainable, well designed and high quality development at this sensitive site.
- 1.3 The site has previously been in use as a Farm Park and currently as a small scale retail, office and leisure complex.

## **2 Site Location and Description**

- 2.1 Stoughton Grange is located north of Gartree Road at the most northern part of the Borough. The site is designated within the Saved Local Plan Proposals Map and the Adopted Policies Map as Green Wedge (figure 4). The north and west of the site is designated Countryside and Green Wedge outside the Borough in Harborough District. The Green Wedge also extends to the south of the site where it is in use as the University of Leicester's playing fields. To the south east are areas of archaeological potential. To the south west is a proposed transport route (previously known as the Eastern District Distributor Road).
- 2.2 The site is adjacent to a number of privately owned buildings that have statutory listings. Grange Cottage, Lodge Cottage and South Lodge are all Grade II listed buildings. As well as statutory listing the Council has a Schedule of Significant Local Buildings which is based on similar criteria to that used for statutory listing except it is applied within a local frame of reference. This reflects the numerous buildings and elements of street scene that contribute significantly to the attractive character of the Borough. Number 85, 'The Pantiles', Vinehouse and Garden, Stoughton Farm Buildings, Coach House and Carriage Turn are all included in this local schedule.

## **3 Landscape and Ecology**

- 3.1 The Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment was published in March 2005 and relates to the natural and built landscape of the Borough. The assessment is used as a planning tool to aid planning decisions and to ensure that appropriate landscape management regimes are developed and applied to the correct areas. Stoughton Grange falls within the 'Leicestershire Vales' in the area character assessments. At a more local level it falls within sub area A1 of the Oadby and Wigston Vales. The recommended landscape Objectives are as follows:

To conserve and enhance the historic landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area, in particular:

- Historic buildings and their settings
- Parkland and other features of the landscape
- Historic rights of way
- Archaeological features

- The rural character of the Green Wedge

Proposals which seek to conserve and enhance these objectives will be actively encouraged.

- 3.2 The site is situated in the highest part of the Borough. The site boasts large areas of former park land and formal gardens that were associated with the former Stoughton Grange Hall. These form a particularly important characteristic in establishing the setting and the character of the site and therefore should be retained them within development proposals.
- 3.3 As part of any development proposals the woodland areas of the site should be enhanced through the introduction of a woodland management strategy. This will strengthen the character of the area and increase its previously established popularity, particularly if the land and the lake were reopened for public access.
- 3.4 Figures 2, 3 and 4 show how Stoughton Grange and the surrounding area have changed since 1886. The Gartree Road and the surrounding area is of historical importance because it is a former Roman Road. There is a linear bank feature to the west of Rook Spinney included in the Sites and Monuments record as a possible medieval track way. Archaeological features such as this should be retained and a survey may be required before any development takes place. Before any development commences the area should be investigated for particular trees and shrubs that fall into the “veteran category” due to a lack of disturbance and are reminiscent of ancient woodland.
- 3.5 The Landscape Character Assessment seeks the conservation and enhancement of the historic landscape and local distinctiveness of the area. This will be a vital consideration in determining applications for development of the site. Whilst it is recognised by the Council that it may be necessary to balance these objectives with any benefits brought by development, any development proposal must take the historic and landscape character of this site into account.
- 3.6 There are limited views to the site from the residential areas in Oadby. However the views to and from the site out to Stoughton and the surrounding areas should be maintained.
- 3.7 Before an application is submitted that may affect the existing buildings or trees it is necessary to locate and record on a plan if and where bat roosts are situated, their access routes in and out of the roof spaces and their routes to feeding sites. A bat survey including mitigation techniques to avoid disturbance should be submitted at application stage if bats are found to be present. It is against the law to disturb bat roosts. Work to buildings that house bats can only be done when the roost has departed. Further information about bats can be obtained from Natural England.
- 3.8 Landscape enhancements will be incorporated with any development proposal in order to protect any exotic species of plant and in order to protect the existing biodiversity of the site. An ecological assessment should accompany a planning application where relevant.

## **4 Trees**

- 4.1 There are numerous trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders adjacent to the site along the Gartree Road. All significant trees and vegetation close to and within the site should be protected. In addition, the Borough Council would wish to see additional landscape enhancements in connection with development of the site.
- 4.2 Existing landscape features such as walls, hedges, trees and the lake should be retained, in order to promote and enhance the aesthetic quality and character of the area. Proposals that plan to promote the replanting of parkland trees will be actively encouraged and sought as part of any development proposal.

## **5 Flood Risk**

- 5.1 Development proposals should take into account the potential impact of climate change on water resources, water quality and on the level of flood risk posed. Development should be made safe without increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere. The Environment Agency's Flood Zone maps indicate that parts of the site are at risk of flooding and part of the site is designated Flood Zone 3a/b. Any proposal for the development will require consultation with the Environment Agency and should be accompanied by a Flood Assessment to demonstrate compliance with sequential and exception tests where appropriate. Further advice on this can be obtained from the Environment Agency.

## **6 Green Wedge**

- 6.1 Stoughton Grange is located within the Oadby/Thurnby/Stoughton Green Wedge. Core Strategy Policy 6 relates to Green Wedges. The objectives of this policy are to:
- retain the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedges
  - retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban area
  - retain and enhance public access to the Green Wedges, especially for recreation
- 6.2 The following land uses will be acceptable in Green Wedges, provided that they are consistent with these objectives:
- Agriculture, horticulture and allotments not accompanied by retail development
  - Outdoor leisure, recreation, and sporting facilities
  - Forestry
  - Footpaths, bridleways and cycleways
  - Burial grounds
- 6.3 Road proposals or dedicated public transport routes will only be acceptable where

there is no alternative route available outside the Green Wedge and provided appropriate mitigation measures are implemented to minimise and adverse impacts on the amenity of the Green Wedge.

- 6.4 In addition, the Council has prepared a Management Strategy in partnership with the Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project that relates to the Green Wedge. This will be taken into careful consideration when determining any application for development on this site. In particular, development proposals should support the objectives for the Green Wedge.

## **7 Development Plan**

- 7.1 The development of the site must conform to the policies established within the Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Local Plan and relevant national policy guidance.

## **8 Principles of development**

### **Existing Infrastructure**

- 8.1 The site consists of a large parking area. Uses on the site at present include a public house and restaurant and small retail and office units. Uses must be sensitive to the countryside setting in which Stoughton Grange is situated.
- 8.2 The existing buildings add character to the area and many of the features currently in place should be actively maintained. The re-use of buildings is an important consideration in retaining the character of the site. New development should contribute in scale, form and materials to the quality of the environment and be carefully related to existing development. Detailed brickwork, slate roofs and white paint should be used to blend the new and old development together. Restoration, enhancement and maintenance of historic landscape features including restoration of the ornamental gardens and pond will be actively encouraged. All planning applications must be accompanied by a design and access statement.
- 8.3 The courtyard and entrance area should be maintained and improved at all costs since they form part of the original farm buildings and are important features in maintaining the character of the area.
- 8.4 Opportunities for reusing building materials already on the site will be actively encouraged. Where possible, materials from sustainable sources or that have low environmental impacts should be used for refurbishment or new buildings.

### **Lighting**

- 8.5 Lighting on the site needs careful consideration. Currently it is dimly lit with small fixtures attached along the buildings. In order to provide a safer atmosphere the lighting may need to be improved but in order to safeguard the nature of the site and surrounding area measures should be taken to eliminate light pollution.
- 8.6 Consultation on the position of lighting should take place with Natural England to avoid detrimental impact on bat roosts that may be present on the site.

## **Noise**

- 8.7 Noise disturbance from new and existing uses will be taken into account in determining planning applications, particularly in relation to any impact upon nearby residential properties. In some circumstances it may become necessary to restrict the hours of operation to avoid noise disturbance from both the uses and any increase in vehicular traffic visiting the site.

## **Advertisements**

- 8.8 Any advertisements on the site must enhance the quality of the area, and not detract from the character of the setting or the buildings. They should relate in scale and design to the location in which they are to be fitted. Illuminated advertisements would not be appropriate, neither would large and obtrusive advertisements in the main entrance. The area is designated as subject to special control for advertisements.

## **Anti-Social Behaviour**

- 8.9 Appropriate measures should be taken to minimise opportunities for crime, reduce trespass, vandalism and litter through the design of any proposed new development. Developers should consult with Leicestershire Police who will be able to advise in more detail regarding design, boundary treatments and means of enclosure.

## **Drainage and Service Provision**

- 8.10 At the earliest opportunity, developers should contact the local statutory authorities to ensure that the site can accommodate the predicted needs of the proposed development. Any foul drainage arising from new development should be directed to the foul sewer that drains to the sewage pumping station, providing capacity is available.

## **Energy and Water Conservation**

- 8.11 Regard should be had to maximising opportunities for energy efficiency in relation to the design and future use of any new buildings. Technologies that should be considered include sustainable options for insulation, use of natural ventilation systems, orientation of the buildings to maximise long periods of daylight, and waste and water use minimisation. Renewable energy technologies should be incorporated where appropriate and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be explored. A Statement of Energy Efficiency should accompany any application.

## **Disability Access to the site**

- 8.12 Measures should be taken at all times to accommodate those with mobility difficulties. Buildings used and open to the general public should have level or ramped access in line with legislative requirements. Slopes should be provided on footpaths as an alternative to steps and handrails should be provided where necessary. It is also important that doorways are sufficiently wide enough so that wheelchair users can gain access.

- 8.13 There should be designated parking spaces of sufficient number and layout to accommodate people with disabilities.
- 8.14 Aspects such as ramps and railings should be included in design schemes for the site at an early stage to avoid features having a detrimental impact on the appearance of the development.

### **Transport**

- 8.15 There is currently no public transport access to this area. It may be necessary to provide better public transport links to the site as part of a Section 106 agreement dependant on the type of uses proposed.
- 8.16 New development should take into account traffic speeds near to the development, and the visibility in and out of the site so as to enhance safety and accessibility for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. As part of any application for development, an improved access junction should be incorporated, particularly if the use will generate an increase in the number of visitors. The enhanced access should be improved so as to be appropriate to the speed of traffic that uses Gartree Road. It is important to ensure that vegetation does not obstruct the visibility splays at the site access junction on Gartree Road and vegetation should be maintained in the interests of highway safety.
- 8.17 New development must conform to highway design standards and not prejudice highway safety. Account should be taken of Core Strategy Policy 4: Sustainable Transport and Accessibility. This policy ensures that new development can be successfully integrated into existing highways infrastructure and have minimal detriment to the local area. Particular care is needed to ensure that new development does not impair road safety.
- 8.18 In conjunction with the provision of cycle and pedestrian access, provision should also be made for changing facilities and secure cycle parking. Pedestrian and cycle routes should where possible be linked to existing routes to ensure that these options are viable travel alternatives.
- 8.19 Parking provision should be in accordance with highway standards. Any additional space would need to be justified by the applicant by demonstrating that a higher parking level is required through a Transport Assessment.
- 8.20 As part of any application, a Transport Assessment should be included along with a Travel Plan. The assessment should address traffic issues and impact on the local road network.
- 8.21 Before submission of any application reference should be made to Leicestershire County Council's 'Highways, Transportation and Development'. The document provides policies and principles as well as more detailed standards, specifications and procedures relating to Highway issues. The document can be found at [www.leics.gov.uk/htd](http://www.leics.gov.uk/htd). It is advised that advice should be taken from the Highway Authority at an early stage prior to submission of an application.



### **Possible uses for the site**

- 8.22 The uses that could be considered for the site are varied however they must be sensitive to the rural and historic landscape setting. Proposed uses must also be acceptable in a countryside setting and in accordance with Core Strategy Policy 6: Green Wedges.
- 8.23 It may be possible to accommodate A1, A2, A3 and/or A4 uses or small craft workshops or similar where the products which are made are sold on site. Proposal to encourage recreational uses for pedestrians, cyclists and equine uses and small scale diversification activities such as small business and leisure uses may also be appropriate.
- 8.24 However, any development proposals must be in keeping with the current scale and style of buildings on the site, which includes single storey structures and reinforced brickwork. Development proposals must be complementary to the existing surroundings and sensitive to existing landscape features.
- 8.25 Where appropriate, it would be beneficial if a comprehensive application was submitted as this would avoid individual units being developed and ensure coherent consideration of the whole site.
- 8.26 Built development should be limited to the area of the site defined as brownfield land.

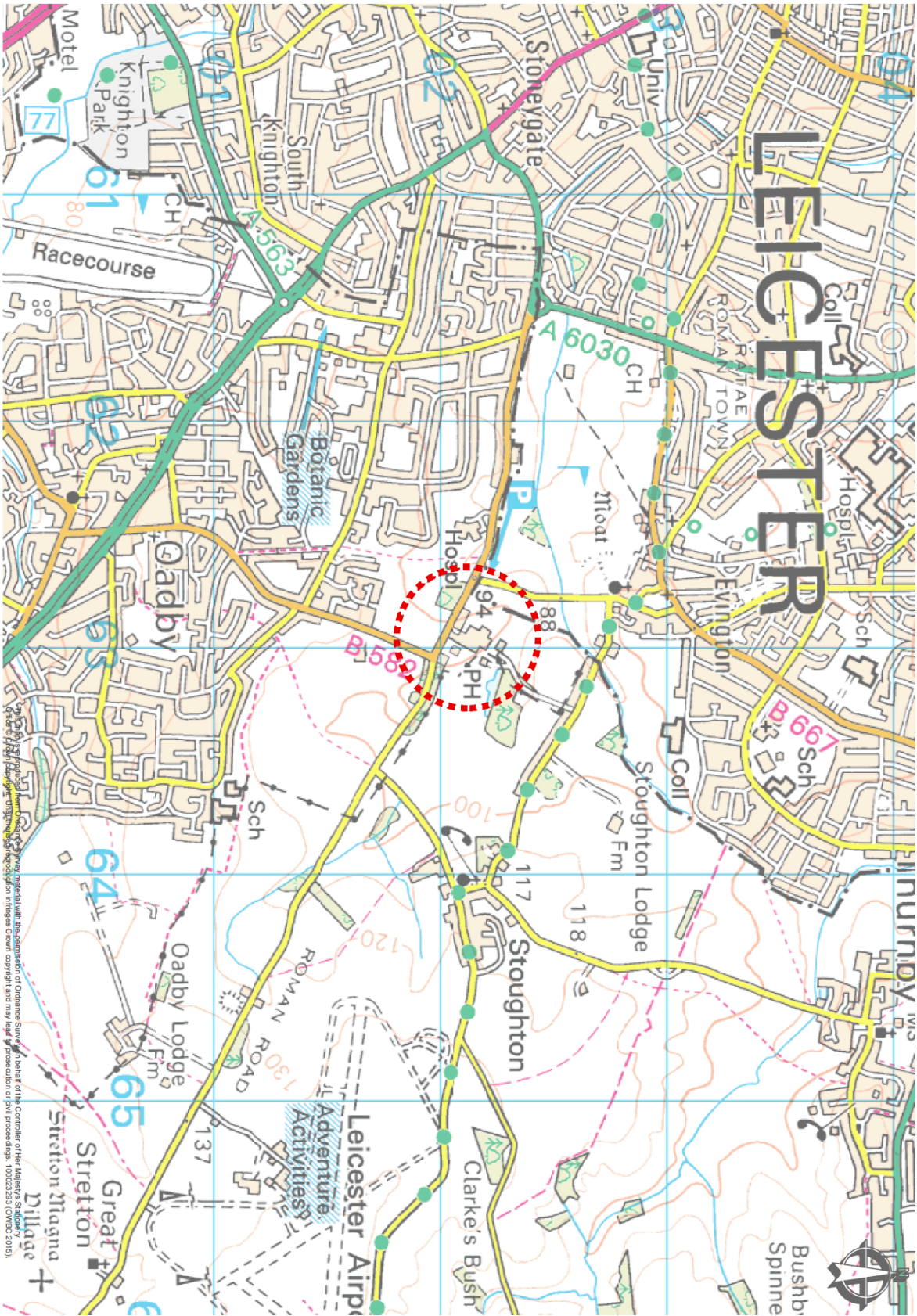


Figure 1: Location Plan

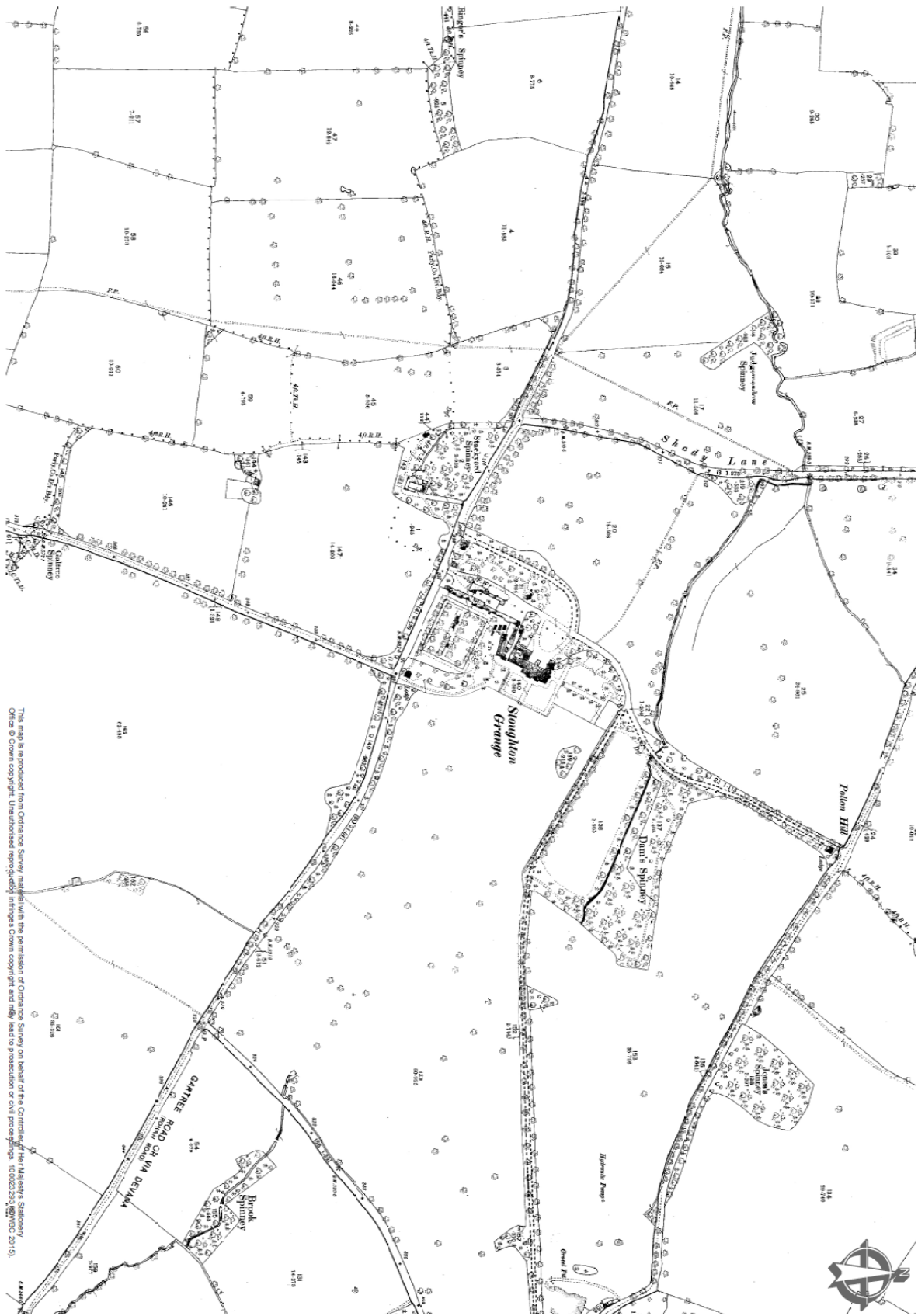


Figure 2: Stoughton Grange 1886 - 1888

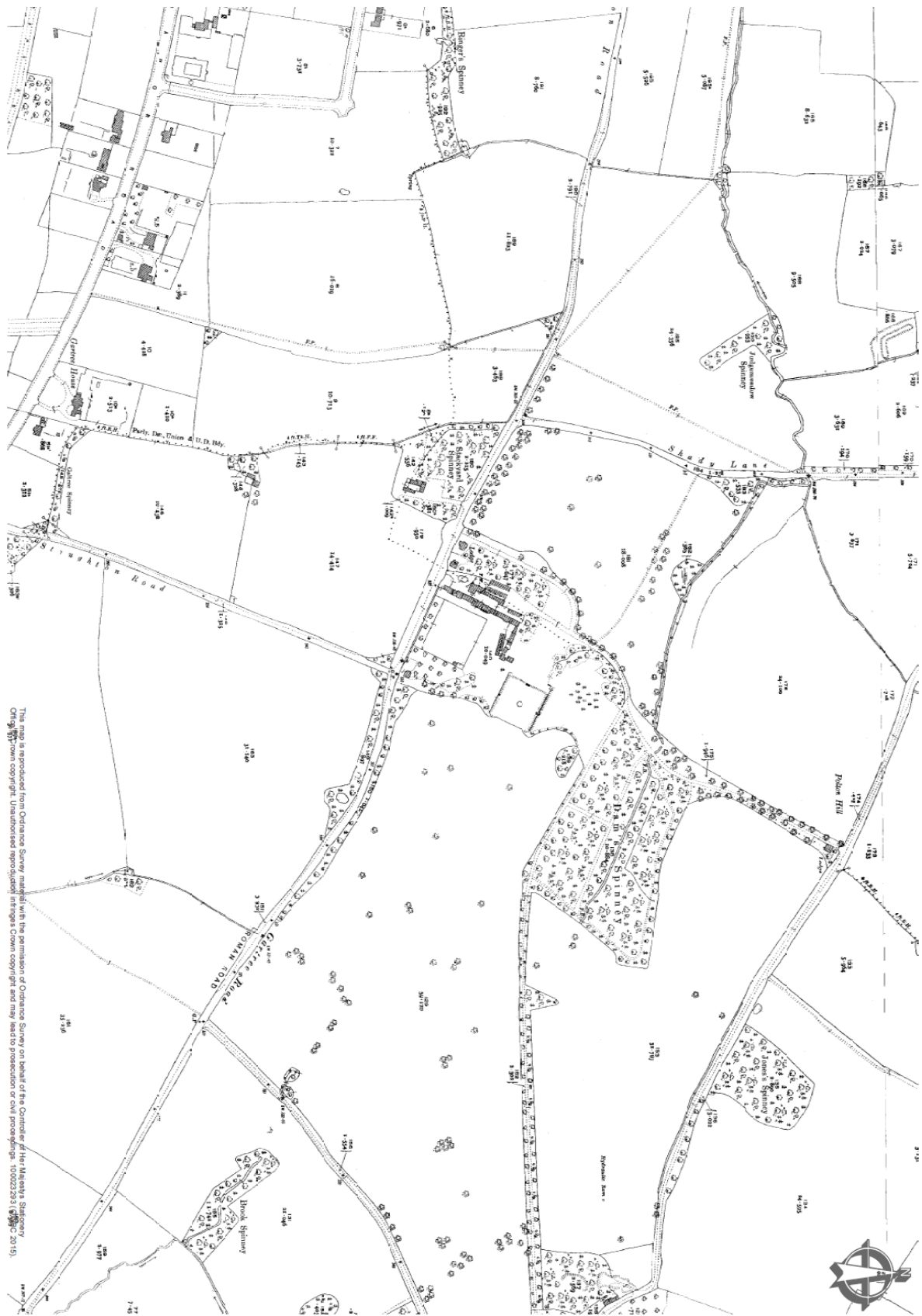


Figure 3: Stoughton Grange 1929 - 1930

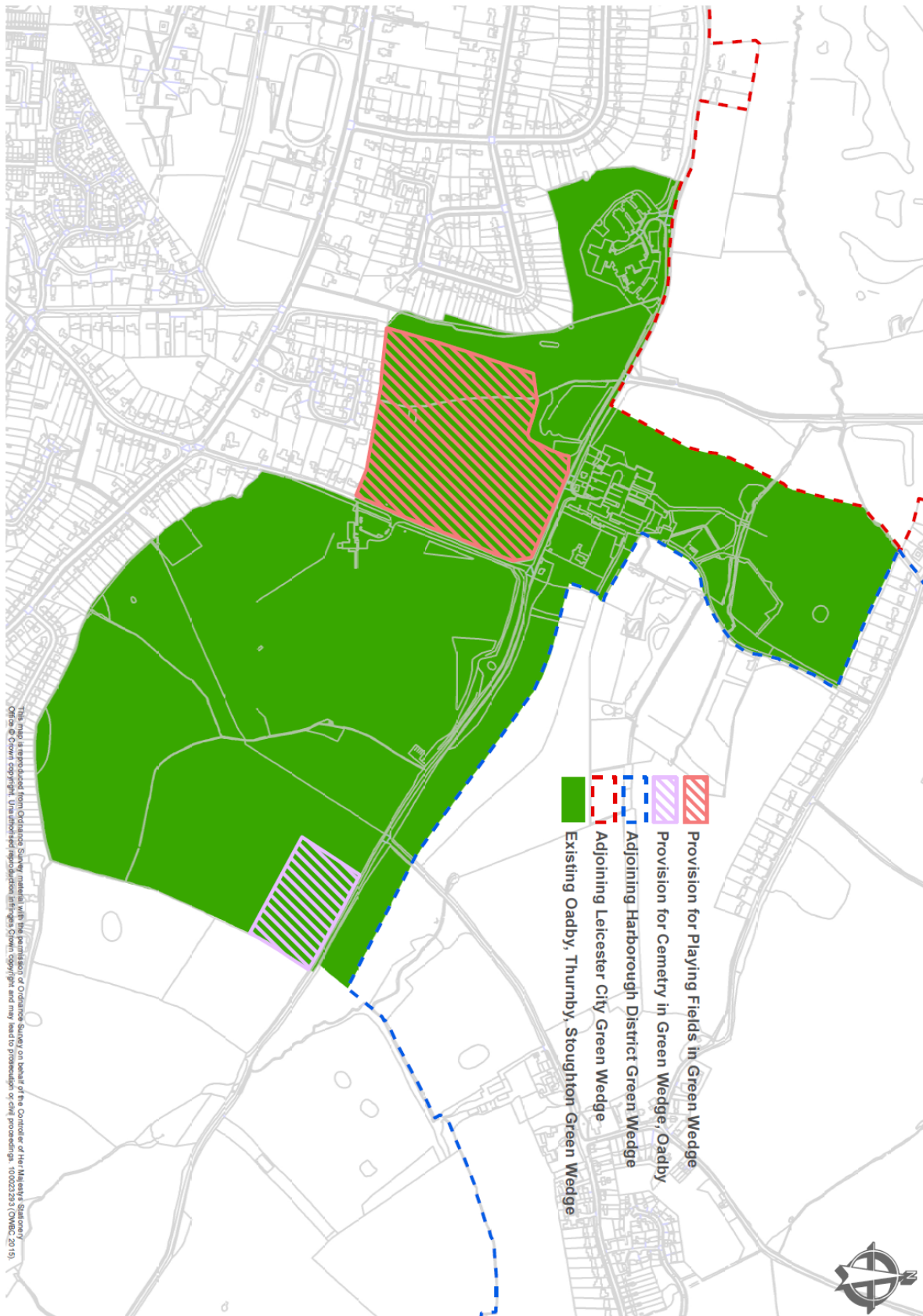


Figure 4: Extract of Adopted Policies Map

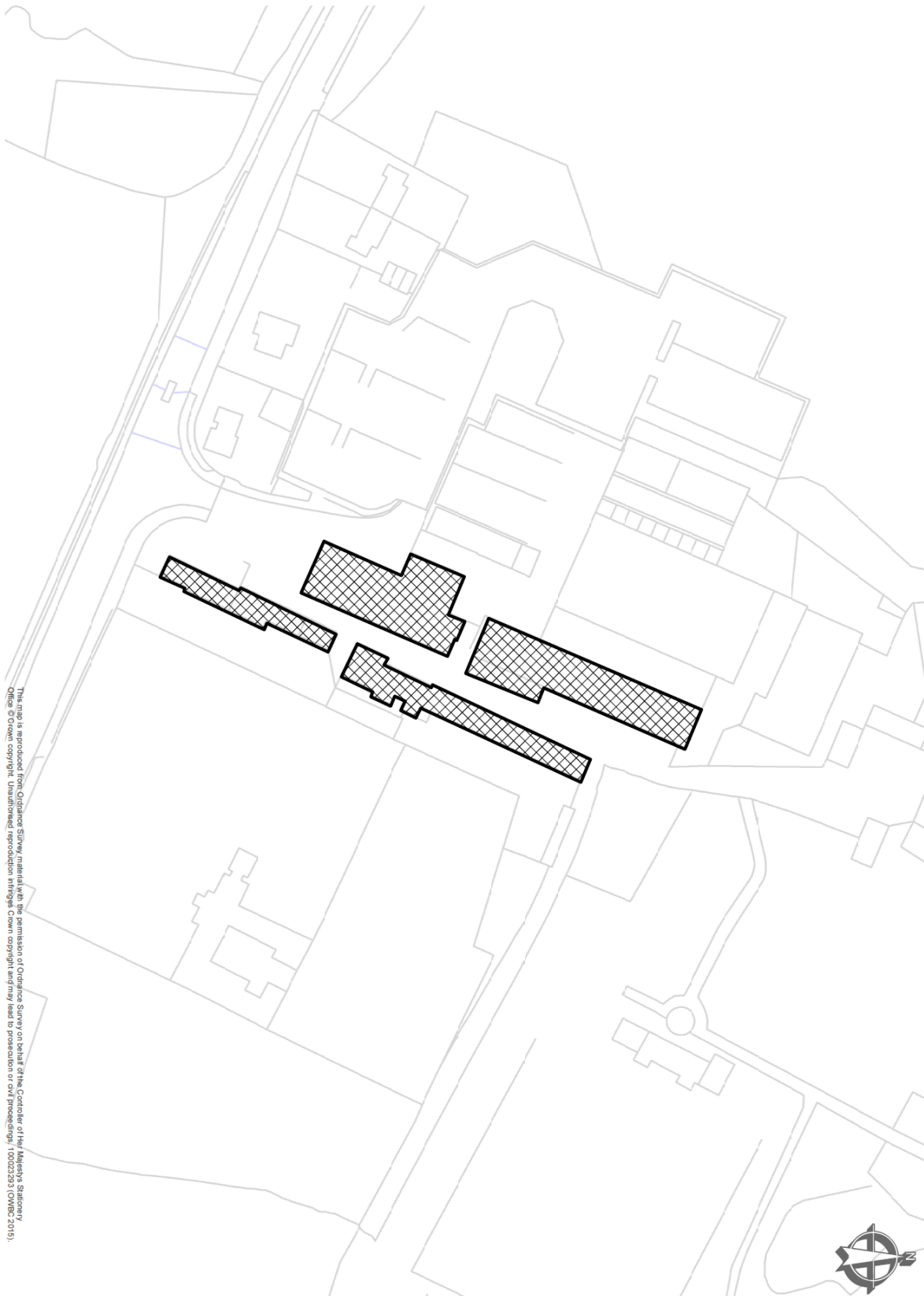


Figure 5: Buildings to be retained