



Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
**Greater Cambridge Skyline and Tall Buildings
Strategy and Heritage Impact Assessment
Cambourne North**

October 2025

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- January 2026)

Cambourne North

Size (ha): 625

Buffer Zone Site (ha): 717

Study Area:

A study area of 500 metres is considered suitable for assessing potential impacts to heritage within and surrounding the site. Additionally, the Childerly Hall Registered Park and Garden has been included in the assessment, this lies 95m northeast of the study area.

Site Description

This large site sits beyond the A428, to the immediate north of Cambourne, approximately 400m south of Elsworth, 600m southwest of Knapwell, and 850m east of Papworth Everard.

The site is bound to its south by the A428, to the west by Ermine Street, to the east by Honey Hill and Battle Gate Road, and to the north by open agricultural fields south of Elsworth. A substantial landscape buffer zone has been planned around the proposed development areas, which serves to separate them from the surrounding villages, and break up the site to buffer its built form from nearby roads and footpaths.

The site currently comprises multiple open agricultural fields, small water courses, and small disused quarries. The landscape buffer zone holds patches of woodland, including Knapwell Wood and Elsworth Wood. There are two small farm complexes: Coldharbour Farm to the south, and Gelve Farm to the north. The landscape buffer zone surrounds two further, larger farms: Lawn Farm and Knapwell Wood Farm.

The development site incorporates the northern edge of the slight upland spur Cambourne occupies. This slopes down to the north, rising from c.75 metres above Ordnance Datum in the southeast, to c.38 metres above Ordnance Datum in the northeast. Despite the slope, there is little visibility north, and the villages of Knapwell, Papworth Everard, and Elsworth, aren't prominently visible from within the site, due to intervening foliage. However, in views from the north, especially from Rogues Lane between Elsworth and Papworth Everard, the ridgeline the site occupies is prominent.

HIA Summary

Summary of Relevant Baseline and Value

Characteristics of Cambridge

The site is situated a considerable distance from Cambridge and does not affect any of the identified characteristics of the setting of Cambridge.

Designated and significant non-designated heritage assets – Site:

Conservation Areas

No Conservation Areas sit within the site.

Scheduled Monument

No Scheduled Monuments sit within the site.

Listed Buildings

A cluster of two Grade II listed buildings sits within the site, and the site plays a significant role in their setting. These are:

- The Grade II listed New Inn Farmhouse in the south of the site. It is a late 18th and early 19th century farmhouse.
- The Grade II listed Barns to North of New Inn Farmhouse. These are the barns to the New Inn Farmhouse, and date to the 18th century.

Historic Environment Record

Within the site, the HER notes a wide range of prehistoric, Roman, medieval, and post-medieval archaeological remains.

There are probable Bronze Age barrow earthworks at Elsworth, as well as several Iron Age and Romano-British settlement enclosures and cropmark complexes at Knapwell and Elsworth. These include rectilinear enclosures, pits, and other settlement evidence. There is also a notable concentration of undated enclosures and cropmarks suggesting sustained settlement and land-use activity across the area from the later prehistoric into the Roman period.

The alignment of the Roman road from Cambridge to Bolnhurst (Margary 231) is conjectural, with the Historic Environment Record (HER) placing it to the south of the area, broadly following the route of the modern St Neots Road. Other evidence for Roman activity includes findspots and possible Romano-British enclosure sites.

There is also evidence of medieval and post-medieval agricultural activity, including earthworks, cropmarks of field systems, extraction pits, and a bank and ditch. The surrounding villages are likely to be of late Saxon origin, with continuous settlement into the modern period. While deserted or shrunken medieval villages (DMVs) are present, they are significant for what they reveal about the decline in rural settlement patterns during the medieval period, rather than for their representation of agricultural land use.

Designated and significant non-designated heritage assets – 500 metre Study Area:

Conservation Area

Two conservation areas sit within 500m of the development site and landscape buffer zone: Elsworth, and Knapwell. The landscape buffer zone is bound around the southern side of these, which effectively separated the conservation areas from the development site.

The site plays a limited role in the historic rural setting of the Elsworth and Knapwell Conservation Areas. This is due to a combination of factors: the intervening distance, the buffer zone, and topography; the presence of mature vegetation and built form that limit intervisibility; and the continued presence of open rural landscape on the other sides of the villages, which preserves their wider rural context.

Nonetheless, mitigation measures should be taken to avoid any harm to their rural character, particularly in views from the north.

Scheduled Monuments

One Scheduled Monument sits within 500m of the site. This is the Moated site 140m east of Papworth Hall, which sits near the centre of Papworth Everard. Due to the surrounding built form of the village and the extensive buffer between the site and the monument, the site plays no role in the setting of the monument.

Listed Buildings

There are 49 listed buildings within 500m of the development site and landscape buffer zone: 46 Grade II listed, two Grade II* listed, and one Grade I listed. Most of these sit within the villages to the north and retain much of their local historic setting via the Conservation Areas.

Those that are grade I and II* listed are detailed below:

- The Grade I listed Parish Church of Holy Trinity sits near the centre of Elsworth. It is a well-surviving 13th-14th century church, with rebuilt elements from the 16th, 17th, and 19th centuries. As it sits at the centre of the village, it is heavily buffered by its built form and foliage, particularly toward the site. Therefore, the site plays no role in the setting of the building.
- The Grade II* listed Parish Church of All Saints sits in Knapwell. It is a 14th century church, with large portions rebuilt in the 19th century. It sits down a small lane off the High Street through Knapwell and is significantly buffered by tall trees. Because of its buffering by both the built form of Knapwell and its surrounding treed boundary, the site plays no role in its historic rural setting.
- The Grade II* listed Papworth Hall sits in the southern quarter of Papworth Everard. It is a large country house by George Byfield. It is well enclosed within its surrounding park, which it sits on the western site of, and itself is surrounded by the built form of the village. Due to the lack of intervisibility and the enclosed nature of the building, the site plays no role in its setting.

Registered Parks and Gardens

The Grade II* listed Childerly Hall sits just outside the study area, 95m to the northeast. The park and garden cover approximately 56 hectares and incorporates two Listed Buildings: the Grade II* listed Childerly Hall, and the Grade II listed Lower Farm. The asset is heavily buffered by vegetation and the undulating terrain to the west, and does not have views toward the site. Development of the site would result in low risk of impact on the asset.

Historic Environment Record

HER data records a range of prehistoric, Roman, medieval, and post-medieval features in the 500m Buffer Zone. These include possible Bronze Age barrows at Elsworth and Iron Age to Romano-British enclosures and cropmarks at Knapwell and Elsworth, including rectilinear features, pits, and undated land divisions.

The Cambridge to Bolnhurst Roman Road (Margary 231) crosses the area, alongside several findspots and enclosure evidence, indicating integration into a broader network of Roman occupation.

The landscape buffer zone includes further earthworks and cropmarks, particularly to the north near Knapwell and Elsworth, many of Roman / Iron Age origin. Medieval and post-medieval remains include Deserted Villages field system cropmarks, earthworks, lost moated sites, and landscaped parkland, reflecting a continuity of settlement and agricultural use.

Key Issues

The key issues for this site relate primarily to the risk of impacting heritage assets both within the site and in the immediate surrounding area. Risks include:

- Disturbing archaeological remains spanning the prehistoric to post-medieval periods, including enclosures, barrows, and potential settlement sites.
- Impacting the rural character and setting of the Grade II listed New Inn Farmhouse and associated listed barns within the site.
- Introducing urbanising elements visible from the north, particularly from Rogues Lane, affecting the perceived ridgeline and rural backdrop of Elsworth and Papworth Everard

There is high potential for further archaeological remains across the site, including evidence of Iron Age and Romano-British activity, as well as medieval settlement remains and agricultural evidence. Notably, the Roman Road from Cambridge to Bolnhurst (Margary 231) traverses the area and may be associated with several clusters of Romano-British enclosures to the southeast, which may hold further significance through associated finds and features. Additionally, there is a large deserted medieval settlement southwest of Childerley Hall (MCB25494), which is currently undesignated, but of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments and should be considered accordingly (as per footnote 75 of the NPPF).

The site also lies within proximity to two conservation areas - Elsworth and Knapwell - although the planned landscape buffer zone would help mitigate impacts by maintaining separation and filtering views. Nonetheless, care must be taken to preserve the rural landscape character that contributes to their wider setting.

Potential impacts on the significance of designated and significant non-designated heritage assets

Designated and significant non-designated heritage assets – Site

Listed Buildings

The development of the site would directly affect the setting of two Grade II listed buildings: New Inn Farmhouse and the associated barns to its north. These buildings, which date from the 18th and early 19th centuries, currently retain a clear historic rural context. Introduction of built form in the immediate surrounds of these assets would significantly alter their character, urbanising what is presently a clearly agricultural landscape. The sense of isolation and historical continuity tied to their farmhouse function would be significantly affected, and their contribution to the wider historic rural setting around Cambourne's northern fringe would be undermined. There is a **high risk** that there would be a significant conflict with national and local policy. This may be partially addressed through design-based mitigation measures such as amendments to the site boundary, careful treatment of layout, and building scale.

Historic Environment Record

Development of the site is almost certain to result in the disturbance / removal of below-ground archaeological remains. The Historic Environment Record identifies a broad range of features across the site, including Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age and Roman enclosures, and a network of cropmark features suggesting long-term and intensive land use. Of note is the Roman Road (Margary 231) which crosses the site, presenting high archaeological significance.

Associated subsurface remains and findspots could contribute valuable understanding of regional Roman infrastructure and settlement patterns. The presence of medieval and post-medieval field systems, extraction pits, and deserted medieval village earthworks also signals prolonged continuity of rural activity across the area. Although parts of the site have been affected by past quarrying, extensive areas remain as undisturbed greenfield, increasing the likelihood of well-preserved archaeological deposits.

Some features may be of national importance, but this would need to be assessed through further archaeological investigation. Overall, there is a **moderate / high risk** that there would be a conflict with national and local policy. This may be partially addressed through the design of layout options to safeguard known archaeology.

Further detailed archaeological investigation will be required to inform planning applications and any associated Environmental Statements, including consideration of the site and its landscape buffer. The potential for the presence of previously unidentified archaeological remains may be of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments. Archaeological recording is also very likely to be required to address remains that would be affected by the development.

Designated and significant non-designated heritage assets – 500 metre Study Area

Conservation Areas

The development site lies within 500 metres of the Elsworth and Knapwell Conservation Areas but is separated from them by the buffer zone and intervening vegetation. As such, the site plays only a minor role in their immediate setting. However, views toward the site from the northern approaches, particularly along Rogues Lane and other elevated points, could affect the wider rural backdrop of these historic villages. Visual encroachment or perceived merging of settlements could erode the sense of isolation historically characteristic of Elsworth and Knapwell. Design treatments in the northern part of the site will therefore need to preserve this spatial distinction and visual buffer.

Due to the proximity of the Conservation Areas and the prominence of the ridgeline in northern views, prior to mitigation the development of the site there is a **moderate risk** of conflict with national and local policy, this may be wholly or partially addressable through design-based mitigation measures.

Listed Buildings

The site does not contribute directly to the setting of the Grade I listed Parish Church of Holy Trinity in Elsworth, the Grade II* listed Church of All Saints in Knapwell, or the Grade II* listed Papworth Hall. These buildings are heavily buffered by vegetation and surrounding built form, and do not have views toward the site. Development of the site would result in low risk of impact on these assets.

The site plays no immediate setting role in relation to most of the remaining 49 listed buildings within the study area; however, it may feature in distant or filtered views and contributes to the wider rural setting that defines much of the historic landscape character. As such, development of the site poses a **low risk** in terms of conflict with national and local policy, and any impacts are likely to be wholly or partially addressed through design-based mitigation measures.

Historic Environment Record

The surrounding area also contains substantial archaeological interest, consistent with patterns found within the site itself. These include additional Iron Age and Romano-British enclosures, field systems, moated sites, and remnants of medieval settlement. The buffer zone plays a key role in reducing the potential for cumulative impact on this broader historic landscape, though it remains essential that

archaeological mitigation strategies are incorporated across the development footprint to avoid loss of subsurface significance.

Mitigation and opportunities for enhancement

Design-based mitigation is required to reduce potential impacts on archaeological remains, the rural skyline, and the setting of the Grade II listed New Inn Farmhouse and its associated barns. This should include identifying development zones that avoid encroachment on these heritage assets, managing building heights and massing, particularly along the northern ridgeline, and using materials sympathetic to the historic agricultural character of the area.

The site is not considered appropriate for tall or visually prominent buildings, especially in its northern and eastern zones where visibility from Rogues Lane is highest. These requirements should inform any layouts and design codes for future development on the site.

Recommendations related to the Grade II listed New Inn Farmhouse and its associated barns.

The setting of the New Inn Farmhouse and its barns is highly sensitive due to their clear rural character and historic agricultural function. To preserve their significance, development should be excluded from a buffer area immediately surrounding these assets. This area should retain a rural and open landscape character and could form part of the site's green infrastructure. Built development should be set well back and the buffer zone extended, with careful landscape design to filter views and maintain the buildings' historic context.

Recommendations related to Conservation Areas

The ridgeline visible from Rogues Lane and surrounding viewpoints plays a key role in shaping the rural backdrop of Elsworth and Papworth Everard. A broad, well-vegetated landscape buffer along the northern edge of the site is essential to soften the visual impact of development on these views. This buffer should include naturalistic planting and treelines that respond to the topography, helping to break up built massing and filter views from key northern vantage points.

The design of the buffer should reflect the local landscape character: a more open, pastoral structure should be maintained in areas closest to Elsworth and Papworth Everard to preserve their historic rural setting and the sense of separation between settlements. Denser woodland planting may be appropriate in areas further removed from these villages, particularly where it can effectively screen development without intruding upon the openness historically associated with the village fringes.

Planting should also be informed by archaeological constraints; proposals must avoid significant subsurface assets and maintain the legibility of any heritage features that contribute to landscape character.

Although the Elsworth and Knapwell Conservation Areas are physically separated from the site by buffer zones and tree cover, development must still avoid any

suggestion of coalescence with these historic villages. This means maintaining strong vegetated boundaries and open space within the buffer zones. Northern parts of the site should avoid dense or tall development that might visually link Cambourne to neighbouring settlements.

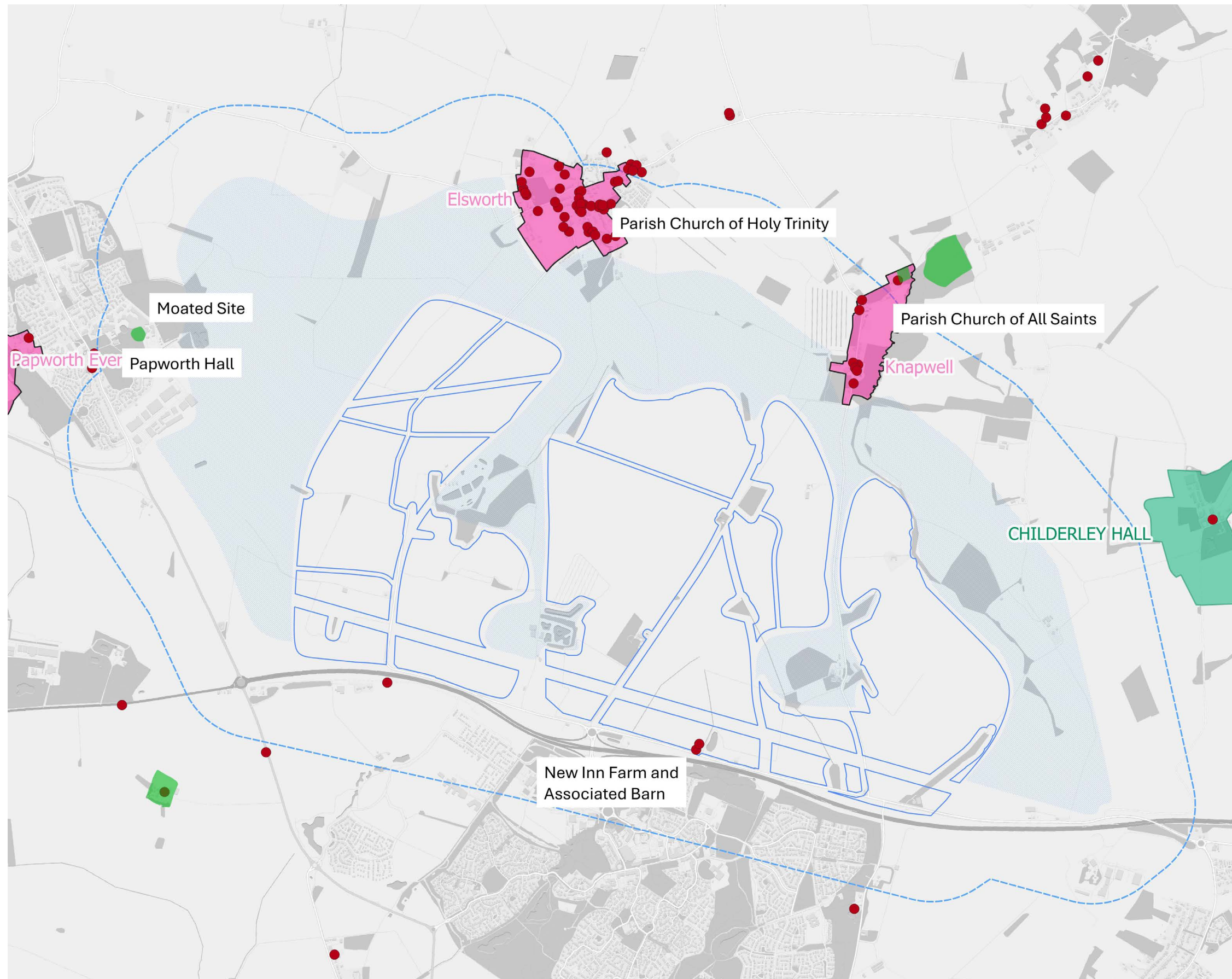
Recommendations related to archaeological remains.

There is a high risk of disturbing buried archaeological remains, particularly those associated with the Roman Road (Margary 231) and a network of prehistoric and Roman enclosures. Archaeological investigation, starting with a desk-based assessment and followed by appropriate field evaluation, is needed. Where significant remains are found, mitigation may include preservation in situ by altered layout of development. Archaeological excavation and recording will also probably be required. An area of dense Roman archaeology in the southeast of the site, has been determined to be of particular risk, and should be included in the buffer zone.

Residual risk of harm

The site has been identified as a potential location for a large-scale extension to Cambourne. However, given the scale and density of development proposed, and based on the current level of available information, it cannot be stated with confidence that there is no risk of conflict with heritage policy and that there is no risk of significant residual harm to heritage assets. Consequently, the site is considered to be a **Moderate Risk** as it is likely to affect the significance of assessed heritage assets to a degree that results in some conflict with national and local policy, but which may be wholly or partially addressed through design-based mitigation measures.

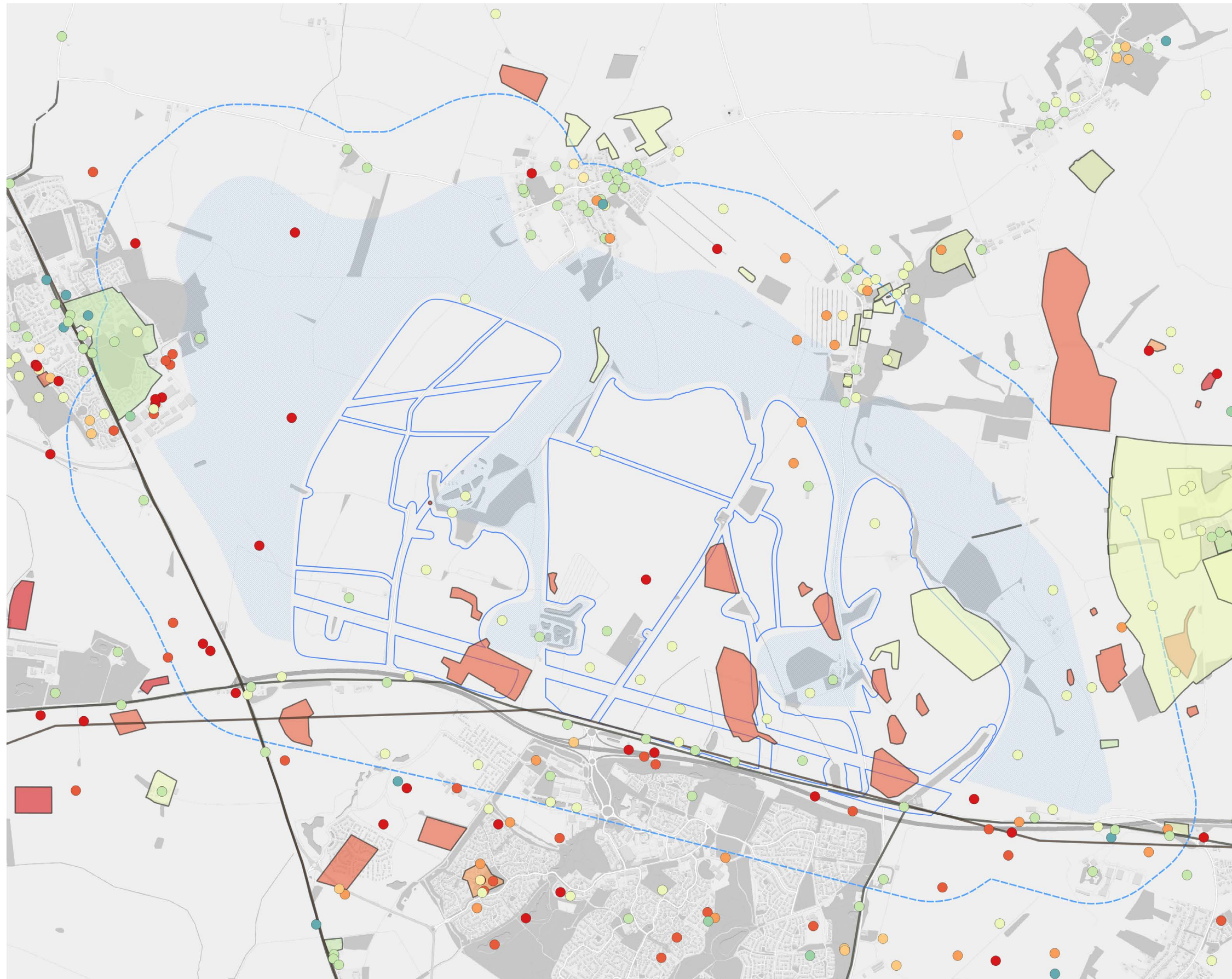
Given this, extensive and well-considered mitigation measures will be required to address potential adverse effects, particularly on archaeological remains and the setting of listed buildings. Following the application of suitable mitigation strategies, it is considered that the risk could be reduced to **low**, this is however entirely dependent on the application of rigorous mitigation strategies.



- Development Site
- 500m Study Area
- Preexisting Site Buffer
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Park and Garden
- Listed Building
 - I
 - II*
 - II

0 350 700 m





- Development Site
- Development Site Buffer
- 500m Study Area

HER

- Prehistoric
- Iron Age/Roman
- Roman
- Romano-British
- Early Medieval
- Medieval
- Post Medieval

0 350 700 m



