

Coombe Abbey Setting Assessment

SEGRO

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Note provides an assessment of the relationship between the Site and the setting of nearby designated heritage assets, with particular regard to the Coombe Abbey Registered Park and Garden (RPG) and associated listed buildings.

The purpose of the assessment is to inform an understanding of the extent to which the Land at Walsgrave Hill (the 'Site') contributes to the significance of these assets through their setting, in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance.

Coombe Abbey is a heritage asset of high significance, comprising a Grade I listed building set within a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden of historic and aesthetic interest. The significance of these assets is strongly influenced by the designed landscape in which they are experienced, as well as, to a lesser degree, their wider surroundings.

This Note focuses on the role of the Site within that wider setting, having regard to landscape context, views, spatial relationships, historical associations, and experiential qualities.

The assessment concludes that, while the Site forms part of the wider surroundings of the RPG, it does not contribute to the principal attributes through which the significance of the heritage assets is expressed or experienced. Its role is therefore limited to that of peripheral landscape context, and it makes only a limited contribution to significance.

This work is intended to complement the wider Local Plan evidence base and to demonstrate that the Site can be brought forward in a manner that is both heritage-led and policy compliant, consistent with national policy and best practice guidance.

2. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

2.2 Purpose & Scope

This assessment considers the contribution of the Site to the setting and significance of nearby designated heritage assets, with particular focus on the Coombe Abbey Registered Park and Garden (RPG) and associated listed buildings.

The scope of the assessment is settings-focused and does not constitute a full heritage impact assessment. Instead, it addresses the extent to which the Site contributes to the significance of heritage assets through their setting, to inform an understanding of relative sensitivity.

2.2. Policy & Guidance

The assessment has been prepared with reference to relevant national policy and guidance, including:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which requires that heritage assets be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including consideration of the contribution made by their setting; and
- Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 3 (GPA3): *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, which provides a structured approach to assessing the role of setting in contributing to significance.

2.3 Approach to Assessment

The methodology follows the staged process set out in GPA3 and comprises the following steps:

- Identification of heritage assets with potential to be affected through changes to their setting.
- Assessment of significance, drawing on the historic, architectural and landscape interest of the assets.
- Assessment of setting and its key attributes, including landscape context, views, spatial relationships, historical associations, and experiential qualities; and
- Evaluation of the contribution of the Site to that setting, with regard to whether it supports or informs the attributes through which significance is expressed and experienced.

This approach enables a proportionate and evidence-based understanding of the Site's role within the wider setting of the identified heritage assets.

2.4 Limitations

The assessment is based on publicly available information, site observations, and desk-based analysis. It is proportionate to the scale of the Site and the nature of the assets considered.

The assessment reflects the baseline conditions at the time of preparation, including existing land use, vegetation and the presence of modern development and infrastructure. Seasonal variations in vegetation and longer-term landscape change may influence the degree of visibility and interrelationship within the setting but would not materially alter the overall conclusions of the assessment.

2.5 Data Sources

To determine the historic environment potential of the Site and its surroundings, a broad range of standard documentary and cartographic sources were examined to determine the nature, extent, preservation, and significance of any known heritage assets that may be present. Table 2.1 below provides a summary of the key data sources consulted.

This Setting Assessment was compiled using secondary information derived from several sources. The assumption is made that this data as well as that derived from other secondary sources, is reasonably accurate.

A full list of all sources consulted is provided at **Appendix A**.

Table 2.1: Data Sources

Source	Data	Comment
Historic England	National Heritage List for England (NHLE) with information on statutorily designated heritage assets	Statutory designations (Scheduled Monuments; statutorily Listed Buildings; Registered Parks and Gardens; Historic Battlefields) can present a significant constraint to development.
County Council	Historic Environment Record (HER)	Primary repository of archaeological information. Includes information from past investigations, local knowledge, find spots, and documentary and cartographic sources.
Historic England	National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE)	National database maintained by Historic England. Not as comprehensive as the HER but can occasionally contain additional information. Accessible via Pastscape website.
Local Planning Authority	Conservation Area Appraisal	An area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance, designated by LPAs
	Locally Listed Buildings	Building of local importance designated by the local planning authority due to architectural and/or historic significance. Whilst not statutorily protected, inclusion on the list means that it is a material consideration in the planning process.
British Geological Survey (BGS)	Solid and drift geology digital map; online BGS geological borehole record data.	Sub-surface deposition, including buried geology and topography, can provide an indication of potential for early human settlement, and potential depth of archaeological remains.
Local Record Office	Historic maps (e.g. tithe, enclosure, estate), published journals and local history	Baseline information on the historic environment.
National Library of Scotland	Online maps (OS maps)	Baseline information on the historic environment
Historic England Archives	Historic Designation Description and archival sources	Archival sources, historic photographs, plans, correspondence, and survey material can assist in understanding the evolution of heritage assets and the contribution made by their setting to heritage significance.
Britain from Above	Aerial Imagery from the mid-20 th century.	Historic aerial photography provides evidence of land use, settlement patterns, vegetation cover, and landscape character at a particular point in time.
Archives (Local and National)	Archival records held in British Library, National Archives	Historic documents, estate records, maps, surveys, illustrations, and published sources provide contextual information relating to the development of the historic environment.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF HERITAGE ASSETS

This Assessment considers the potential relationship between the Site and the setting of nearby designated heritage assets, with a particular focus on those whose significance may be influenced by their wider surroundings.

The principal heritage asset relevant to this assessment is the Coombe Abbey RPG and Conservation Area, which represents a designed historic landscape of national importance.

In addition, several listed buildings within and associated with the park have been identified as relevant to the assessment. These include the Grade I listed Coombe Abbey and other listed structures within the estate, which derive significance in part from their relationship with the surrounding designed landscape.

All designated heritage assets within proximity to the Site are shown on **Figure 1, Appendix B**.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSETS

4.1 Overview of Significance

The RPG at Coombe Abbey is a heritage asset of high significance, recognised nationally for its special historic interest. The designated landscape is significant for its evolution from a medieval Cistercian monastic estate into a country house landscape that incorporates 18th century parkland design and 19th century formal garden improvements¹

The historic development of the estate contributes to its significance. Historic England identifies the site as a "late 18th century park landscaped by Lancelot Brown with structures designed by Henry Holland, together with mid and late 19th century formal gardens laid out by William Andrews Nesfield and William Miller which incorporate elements of late 16th and early 17th century formal gardens." This layering of successive periods of design provides evidence of changing approaches to landscape aesthetics and estate management over several centuries.

The significance of Coombe Abbey derives from its surviving historic fabric, architectural quality, and historical associations.

The significance of the RPG derives in part from the survival of its coherent designed landscape structure. The estate comprises extensive parkland, formal gardens, pleasure grounds, woodland, avenues, lakes, and watercourses which together create a legible and highly designed landscape composition. Historic England records that the site extends across approximately 270 hectares and includes formal gardens, walled gardens, parkland, lakes, and avenues which collectively contribute to its special historic interest.

The landscape possesses strong aesthetic value through its picturesque composition, carefully arranged views, mature planting, open parkland, and extensive water features. The damming of the Smite Brook in the late 18th century to create an extensive lake formed a key element of the Capability Brown landscape², while woodland belts and avenues provide important visual structure and enclosure within the wider estate.

The evidential value of the site is enhanced by the survival of features associated with its monastic origins and subsequent estate development. The Cistercian monastery of Combe was founded in 1150 by Richard de Camville³ and that the surrounding landscape retains evidence of the estate's long-term evolution from monastic landholding through post-Dissolution country house ownership and later landscape improvements.

The listed buildings within the RPG and Conservation Area are of exceptional significance. Chief among these is the Grade I listed Coombe Abbey, designated on account of its outstanding architectural and historic interest. Originally established as a Cistercian abbey in the 12th century, the building was converted into a country house following the Dissolution of the Monasteries and retains important evidence of both its monastic and post-medieval phases of development⁴.

The estate also contains a range of associated listed structures and historic landscape features which contribute to the heritage significance of the RPG and Conservation Area. These structures, including bridges, garden features, lodges and estate buildings, help to illustrate the historic functioning and designed character of the estate and contribute to its overall architectural and historic interest. Their significance is enhanced through their physical and visual relationships with the principal house and surrounding landscape.

A key aspect of significance is the group value of the designated assets. The historic buildings, formal gardens, parkland, woodland, water features, and circulation routes form an integrated designed ensemble in which the significance of individual elements is strengthened by their relationship to one another. The designation description for the RPG emphasises the designed nature of the park and gardens and the contribution made by the various phases of development to the character of the estate.

4.2 Key Elements Contributing to Significance

The significance of the heritage assets is primarily derived from a combination of:

- Designed landscape qualities, including the spatial organisation of parkland, woodland, water bodies, and formal features, which together form a cohesive and intentionally structured environment; and
- Architectural and historic interest, evident in the form, fabric and evolution of Coombe Abbey and associated structures, as well as their relationship to the historic estate.

These elements are largely contained within the boundary of the RPG, reflecting the importance of the designed landscape in defining the character and significance of the assets.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000408>

² Stroud, D. (1975), *Capability Brown*

Philbbs, J. (2017), *Place-Making: the art of Capability Brown*

³ Victoria County History, *Warwickshire Volume VI* (1951),

⁴ [Coombe Abbey Character Appraisal.pdf](#)

4.3 Role of Setting

The setting of these heritage assets contributes to their significance to varying degrees.

For the listed buildings, the RPG forms their primary setting, providing the designed landscape context within which they are experienced. The contribution of the wider landscape beyond the park is more limited and secondary.

For the RPG and Conservation Area, the surrounding landscape provides a broader contextual backdrop, contributing to its perception as a historic estate within a rural setting. However, the principal experience and appreciation of the RPG are derived from the internal composition of the designed landscape, with the wider setting playing a supporting rather than defining role.

At a high level, therefore, while setting contributes to significance, the key attributes through which that significance is expressed are primarily contained within the designated assets themselves, forming the basis for the more detailed assessment of setting set out in Section 5.

5.1 Definition and Extent of Setting

In accordance with Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (GPA3), the setting of a heritage asset comprises the surroundings in which it is experienced. The extent and nature of that setting is not fixed and varies depending on the asset and the attributes of significance under consideration. It is therefore appropriate to distinguish between the setting of the listed buildings at Coombe Abbey and that of the RPG.

Setting of Listed Buildings

The Grade I listed Coombe Abbey, and its associated listed buildings derive their significance primarily from their architectural, historic and group value, and from their relationship with the designed landscape in which they are situated.

The setting of these assets is primarily defined by the designed landscape of the RPG, including the pleasure grounds, formal gardens, woodland belts, and water features. These elements provide the immediate context in which the assets are experienced and understood.

The parkland structure establishes a strong degree of enclosure and inward orientation, with dense woodland belts, particularly to the north, limiting outward visibility and restricting interaction with the wider landscape (**Appendix C, Plate 1**). As a result, the listed buildings are experienced primarily within the context of the designed landscape, rather than in relation to the wider countryside beyond.

Historic cartographic evidence indicates that the Site formed part of the agricultural hinterland associated with the wider Coombe Abbey estate rather than the designed landscape surrounding the Abbey itself. Beighton's 1729 map⁵ (**Appendix B, Figure 2**) depicts the area occupied by the Site as farmland containing settlements identified as Over Smite to the north and Hungerley to the west, beyond the principal parkland associated with Coombe Abbey.

Documentary evidence suggests that the northern edge of the estate was intentionally planted and managed to reinforce the inward-facing character of the park, as depicted in William Yates map of 1737-1802 (**Appendix B, Figure 3**). This map shows 'Sparrow Hill' to the north of the park, which at the approximate location of Walsgrave Hill Farm.

In Moore's 'A History of Coombe Abbey', he records that the Third Earl of Craven and Head Gardener, William Miller, established

extensive woodland planting, including *Sequoiadendron giganteum* and rhododendron belts, along the northern perimeter of the estate⁶.



Image 1: Appendix C, Plate 1

These planting schemes were specifically designed to direct attention towards the gardens and internal landscape composition, while limiting views towards the wider agricultural countryside beyond. This historic design approach continues to influence the experience of the listed buildings today through the retention of substantial woodland belts along the northern park boundary.



Image 2: Appendix B, Figure 3

5. ASSESSMENT OF SETTING

⁵ Beighton, H., *A Mapp of Warwickshire*, surveyed 1722-1725, published 1729

⁶ Moore, R. (1983). *A History of Coombe Abbey*

Subsequent mapping, including the 1778 Survey of the Manor of Combe (not reproduced, see appendix A for source) and the 1820 Plan of the Earl of Craven's Farm (**Appendix B, Figure 4**), similarly identifies the land within the Site as agricultural holdings distinct from the core designed landscape surrounding the Abbey⁷.

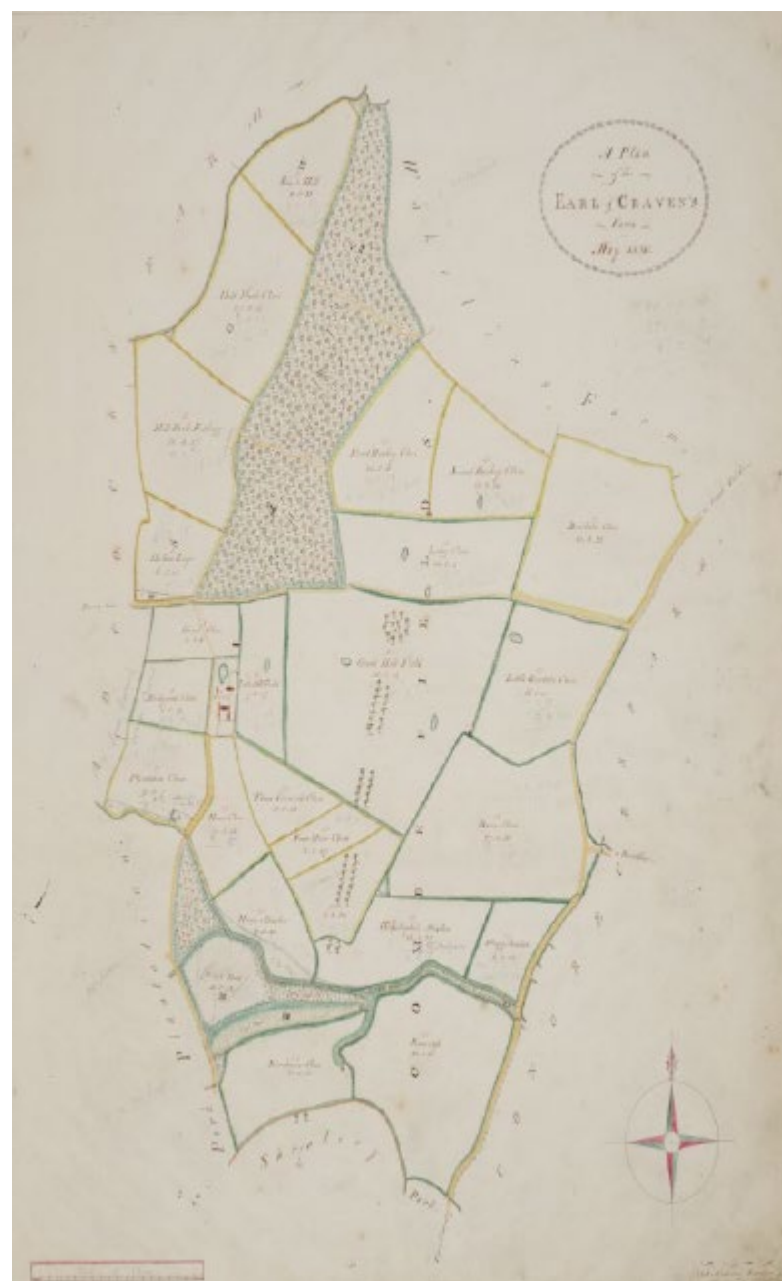


Image 3: Appendix B, Figure 4

⁷ Survey of the Manor of Combe in the County of Warwickshire, 1778 (Warwickshire County Record Office, CR8/184); Plan of the Earl of Craven's Farm, 1820 (Warwickshire County Record Office, D34/1)

Appendix B also includes Figure 4 overlaid on a modern basemap which puts the plan within the context of the site and wider landscape

It is concluded that the wider landscape therefore forms part of a more distant context, distinct from the principal setting of the listed buildings and its influence on the way in which they are experienced is therefore limited.

Setting of the RPG and Conservation Area

The setting of the Coombe Abbey RPG and Conservation Area is broader in its extent and is more complex. The RPG derives its significance from its planned composition, spatial hierarchy, and the relationship between its constituent elements, including parkland, woodland, water features, and architectural structures, which together form the designated asset.

The setting of the RPG is defined as the surrounding landscape beyond the designated boundary, which provides the context within which the asset is experienced. This includes the adjacent agricultural land to the north, which provides a broader rural backdrop and contributes to the perception of the estate within a countryside setting (**Appendix C, Plate 2**).



Image 5: Appendix C, Plate 2

This relationship is evident in early pictorial representations of the estate. The Kip and Knyff engraving of Coombe Abbey⁸, published in 1707 (not reproduced, see appendix A for source), depicts agricultural land and grazing livestock beyond the principal gardens and parkland, illustrating the historic

⁸ [Coombe Abbey hotel, Coventry by Kip & Knyff. "Comb Abby in Warwickshire" 1709 – Antiquemapsandprints.com](https://www.antiquemapsandprints.com/)

relationship between the ornamental landscape surrounding the Abbey and the productive agricultural landscape forming part of the wider estate.

The RPG is characterised by a strong degree of physical containment, particularly along the northern boundary where woodland belts limit outward views (**Appendix C, Plate 3**). As a result, visual connections with the surrounding landscape are generally limited to localised points along the park boundary where the historic planting has been diminished or lost, or at points of transition via existing public rights of way.



Image 4: Appendix C, Plate 3

This landscape, including the Site reflects the former extent of the Coombe Abbey estate; however, the legibility of these historic associations has been substantially reduced through subsequent changes within the landscape.

Early mapping (**Appendix B, Figures 4-7**) depicts a tumulus and an avenue of trees extending northwards from the park. Whilst the provenance of the tumulus is uncertain, it is considered more likely to have been a man-made landscape feature than an archaeological monument⁹. Together with the tree-lined avenue, it may have formed a minor picturesque feature associated with the 19th century estate, creating a visual termination to views outward to the north of the park. The 1820 Earl of Craven Fram Estate Plan (**Appendix B, Figure 4**) identifies the principal focus of the Craven estate farm to the east of Hill Field Farm.

⁹ [Parishes: Combe Fields | British History Online](https://www.british-history.org.uk/)

By the early 20th century, however, the avenue had disappeared from the cartographic record, indicating that this element of the landscape design had already been lost (**Appendix B, Figure 9**). Subsequent development associated with Ansty Park has removed any surviving trace of the tumulus and its immediate setting.



Image 6: Appendix B, Figure 9

The majority of the Site appears instead to have formed part of the estate's agricultural hinterland. Although the tumulus and avenue may have introduced a limited designed element into this wider landscape, the available evidence suggests that the land was primarily managed for agricultural purposes and did not form a significant component of the intentionally designed parkland associated with Coombe Abbey, which was very much inward focussed around the Abbey buildings.

The surrounding landscape has also been heavily influenced by modern development and infrastructure, which form part of the contemporary context and baseline conditions. Within this overall framework, the Site lies within the outer extent of the RPG setting, forming part of the wider landscape rather than part of the designed composition.

5.2 Key Attributes of Setting

As noted in GPA3, the contribution of the surrounding landscape to the significance of Coombe Abbey and its associated heritage assets arises from a combination of landscape, visual, spatial, historical, and experiential attributes.

The historic distinction between the designed landscape and the agricultural estate beyond its boundaries is evident throughout the cartographic record. The 1778 survey of the estate shows the

designed parkland enclosed by substantial boundary planting, while the land corresponding with the Site remained in agricultural management. Similarly, 19th and 20th century Ordnance Survey mapping (**Appendix B, Figures 7-10**) consistently depicts the Site as enclosed agricultural fields associated with Walsgrave Hill Farm and Hill Field Farm, separated from the parkland by areas of woodland planting and estate boundary features.

The wider landscape forms part of the Dunsmore Parklands character area, comprising agricultural land enclosed by mature hedgerows and woodland belts associated with historic estate landscapes. This provides a rural context within which the RPG and Conservation Area are experienced. However, this context has been subject to considerable change through the introduction of major transport infrastructure, large-scale commercial development at Ansty Park, and eastern expansion of Coventry (**Appendix B, Figures 15-16**). These elements now form part of the baseline character of the area and have reduced the extent to which the wider landscape reflects its historic form.

While the surrounding landscape reflects the former extent of the Coombe Abbey estate, the legibility of these historic associations is limited. The archival evidence demonstrates that the historic setting of the Abbey comprised both ornamental and productive landscapes. The gardens and parkland associated with the Abbey formed the principal designed elements of its setting, whereas the agricultural land beyond the northern boundary served a functional role within the wider estate. Although physically connected to the estate, this agricultural hinterland was not a substantive component of the designed landscape, and its interest is in its contribution to the estate's economic operation rather than its aesthetic composition.

Historic mapping indicates few changes to the Site itself throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, and it appears to have remained in agricultural use throughout this period. There is no evidence that the Site formed part of Capability Brown's 18th century remodelling of the parkland, the 19th century Nesfield gardens, or any associated designed views¹⁰. Although early mapping depicts a possible ornamental feature in the form of a tree-lined avenue terminating at a purported tumulus beyond the park boundary, as noted previously, this appears to have been a localised picturesque intervention rather than an extension of the designed landscape into the wider agricultural estate.

Consequently, while the Site formed part of the wider estate landscape and contributes to an understanding of its historic extent and agricultural operation, its relationship with Coombe Abbey is principally one of ownership and land management rather than landscape design. The historic association therefore makes a limited contribution to the significance of the RPG and Conservation Area, and to the way in which it is experienced and understood today.

In visual terms, the relationship between the RPG and its wider setting is constrained (**Appendix C, Plates 3 & 4**). Woodland belts around the park edge generally restrict outward visibility, such that views towards the surrounding landscape are fragmented, filtered or seasonal. The wider landscape is therefore typically perceived as a background context, rather than as a defining element of the asset.

Aerial photography from 1946 further demonstrates the contained nature of the RPG. The woodland belts surrounding the northern and eastern margins of the park are clearly established by the mid-20th century and continue to limit intervisibility between the Site and the principal heritage assets. The photographs additionally show the Site remaining in agricultural use despite substantial changes occurring elsewhere in the wider landscape (**Appendix B, Figures 11-14**).

Topography further influences these relationships, with variations in landform affecting the visibility of the surrounding landscape. This results in a spatially variable contribution, where some areas are more perceptible than others, but without forming a coherent or structured visual relationship with the RPG.

From a spatial perspective, the surrounding setting contributes to a general sense of openness around the park. However, this characteristic is not unique to any particular parcel of land and is shared across a broad area of the surrounding landscape. It is also noted that the northern parcel of the Site is not appreciable from the boundary of the RPG due to the topography of the landscape and land north of Walsgrave Hill Farm makes little if any contribution to the appreciation of the designated heritage asset.

Taken together, these factors indicate that the experience of the RPG is predominantly derived from within the designated landscape itself, with the wider setting playing a secondary and supporting role in contributing to its significance.

¹⁰ Stroud, D. (1975), *Capability Brown*; Moore, R. (1983), *A History of Coombe Abbey*.

Key Views and Receptors

The key views that contribute most to the significance of Coombe Abbey are internal and inward facing, reflecting the designed nature of the landscape. These views include those across the lake, formal gardens, and parkland, and are fundamental to the appreciation of the significance of the RPG. These views are not related to or dependant on the wider context in which the designation is located.

Outward views from the RPG towards the surrounding landscape, and Site, are limited in both extent and importance. Where they occur, they are generally confined to the northern boundary or to routes that extend beyond the park via public rights of way. In these locations, the surrounding landscape, including the Site, is perceived as part of a wider landscape context, often including existing modern development and infrastructure (**Appendix C, Plate 5 & 6**).



Image 9: Appendix C, Plate 5

The adopted Conservation Area Appraisal identifies Coombe Abbey as a landscape dominated heritage asset in which the principal views are shaped and controlled by the designed landscape. The historic avenue, formal gardens, pleasure grounds, woodland planting, and lake were deliberately arranged to frame views towards the Abbey and to reinforce its prominence within the landscape (**Appendix B, Figure 17**). The Appraisal notes that the landscaping around the Abbey "prevents views escaping and ensures the dominance of the building",

demonstrating the inward-looking and self-contained nature of the designed estate.¹¹

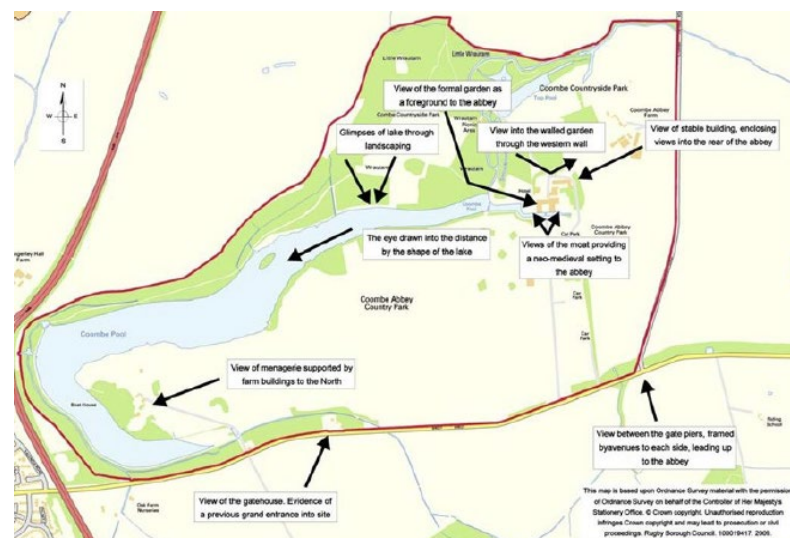


Image 8: Appendix B, Figure 17

The most significant views are therefore internal views within the RPG. These include views along the principal avenue towards the Abbey, views across the formal gardens and pleasure grounds, and views across the lake which forms a key component of the Capability Brown landscape. The Appraisal identifies the lake as a feature which guides the eye through the designed landscape and records that the landscape controls views to and from the Abbey.¹²

Important views include the approach to the Abbey along the southern avenue (**Appendix C, Plate 7**). The appreciation of significance is principally derived from the relationship between the Abbey, the designed parkland, woodland belts, water features, and associated estate buildings.¹³

The Appraisal also recognises that the surrounding countryside contributes to the wider rural character of the estate and that there remain views northwards and north-eastwards across agricultural land beyond the designation boundary. It further notes that remnants of the historic avenue south of the designation assist understanding of the wider historic extent of the estate. However, the document equally observes that the influence of surrounding land is frequently limited by enclosure created through tree planting and woodland belts and that wider

views are often controlled by landscape features within the estate itself.



Image 7: Appendix C, Plate 7

Historic evidence further indicates that substantial woodland planting was deliberately introduced along the park boundaries during the nineteenth century to focus attention on the internal landscape composition rather than the wider countryside.¹⁴ Consequently, views towards the Site are typically filtered, seasonal or experienced only in limited locations along the northern extent of the Registered Park and Garden.

Whilst the Site forms part of the wider agricultural landscape surrounding the estate and contributes to its broader rural context, there is no evidence from the Conservation Area Appraisal, Historic England Register description, historic mapping or other documentary sources that the Site forms part of any planned vista, designed prospect or key view associated with the significance of the RPG or listed buildings. Its contribution is therefore that of general rural backdrop rather than a component of the designed visual relationships which underpin the significance of the heritage assets.

¹¹ Coombe Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal, pp. 6-7

¹² Coombe Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal, pp. 7-8

¹³ Coombe Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal, Sections: General Character and Form; Landscape Setting

¹⁴ Moore, R. (1983), *A History of Coombe Abbey; Trees and Woodlands of Coombe Abbey Country Park*

6. CONTRIBUTION OF THE SITE TO THE SETTING AND SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Nature of Contribution

In accordance with GPA3, the contribution of the Site to the significance of the Coombe Abbey Registered Park and Garden (RPG) and associated heritage assets has been assessed by reference to the attributes of setting identified in Section 5.2.

Historic evidence indicates that the Site's relationship with Coombe Abbey was principally functional rather than designed. Although historically forming part of the wider estate holdings, the Site remained agricultural land throughout the period during which the park underwent its most significant phases of landscape improvement. Neither the Capability Brown remodelling of the 18th century nor the later Victorian interventions by Nesfield and Miller appear to have incorporated the Site as a substantive component of the designed landscape. While historic mapping records a localised avenue and possible ornamental feature beyond the park boundary, this appears to have been an isolated picturesque intervention rather than an extension of the formal designed landscape.

In landscape and visual terms, the Site forms part of the wider landscape beyond the boundary of the RPG. However, as set out in Section 5, the park is characterised by a strong degree of containment, with woodland belts and landform restricting outward visibility. As a result, the Site is not widely visible from within the RPG and, where it is perceptible, it is experienced as part of a broader and varied background that includes modern development and infrastructure. It does not form part of any designed or intentional views, nor does it contribute to visual relationships that are important to the appreciation of the heritage assets.

In spatial terms, the Site contributes to the general sense of openness in the surrounding landscape. However, this openness is a characteristic shared across the wider area and is not specific to the Site. The spatial structure and organisation of the RPG are defined by the designed landscape within the designation, and the Site does not influence the form, layout, or hierarchy of these elements.

The Site's historical relationship reflects its former association with the wider Coombe Abbey estate, as part of the agricultural land that historically surrounded the designed landscape. As identified in Section 5.2, the legibility of this relationship has been substantially reduced because of changes in land use, the introduction of infrastructure and the influence of modern

development. Consequently, this historic association, which relates principally to patterns of estate ownership and agricultural management, makes only a limited contribution to an understanding of the asset in the present-day landscape.

From an experiential perspective, the Site contributes only indirectly to the wider rural context in which the RPG is located. The key experiential qualities of the asset, including its sense of enclosure, tranquillity and designed character, are derived from within the registered landscape itself. The wider setting, including the Site, plays a secondary and supporting role, and the Site does not make a distinct or specific contribution to these qualities.

6.2 Overall Contribution and Sensitivity

Drawing these factors together, and consistent with the analysis of setting set out in Section 5, the Site is assessed as making a limited contribution to the setting and significance of the Coombe Abbey RPG and associated heritage assets.

While the Site forms part of the wider surroundings of the asset, it does not contribute to the principal attributes through which significance is expressed or experienced. It is not associated with important designed views that contribute materially to the significance of the RPG. Nor does it influence the spatial or visual composition of the designed landscape and makes only a limited contribution to the legibility of historic estate relationships or to the experiential qualities of the asset.

The Site's role is therefore best understood as part of the wider, peripheral landscape context, rather than forming part of the core or sensitive setting of the heritage assets.

Accordingly, the Site makes only a limited and generalised contribution to significance, with the northern parcels being distinctly separate. The specific characteristics of the Site are not fundamental to the way in which the RPG is experienced or understood.

On this basis, the Site is considered to have an overall low to moderate sensitivity in heritage setting terms, with any variation in sensitivity reflecting localised differences in visibility, topography, and proximity to the RPG boundary.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This Note has considered the relationship between the Site and the setting of nearby designated heritage assets, regarding the Coombe Abbey Registered Park and Garden and associated listed buildings.

The heritage assets are of high significance, deriving primarily from the architectural and historic interest of Coombe Abbey and the designed landscape qualities of the RPG. Their significance is principally expressed through the internal composition of the designed landscape, including the spatial arrangement of parkland, woodland, water features, and built form.

The wider setting beyond the designated boundary plays a more limited role. While it provides a broader rural context and reflects the historic extent of the estate, its contribution to significance has been reduced through subsequent landscape change, including the introduction of infrastructure and modern development. The experience and appreciation of the assets are therefore largely self-contained, with the wider setting acting as a secondary backdrop rather than a defining component.

Within this context, the Site forms part of the outer and more remote extent of the setting. Its contribution is limited in visual, spatial, historical, and experiential terms. It is not widely visible from within the RPG, does not form part of designed views, and does not influence the spatial organisation or key characteristics of the heritage assets. While it retains a historic association as part of the former estate, this relationship is no longer clearly legible.

As a result, the Site is best understood as forming part of the wider landscape context of the heritage assets rather than a key component of their setting. Its contribution to the significance of the Coombe Abbey Registered Park and Garden and associated listed buildings is generally limited, arising principally from its location within the wider rural landscape and its historic association with the former estate. This contribution is not uniform across the Site, however, and varies according to factors including visibility, topography, vegetation cover, proximity to the RPG boundary and the nature of views available from heritage receptors.

The sensitivity of the Site to change is therefore similarly variable and is influenced not only by location but also by the scale, form, and visibility of any proposed development. Careful consideration

therefore remains necessary to ensure that change minimises the perceived impacts on the heritage assets.

Notwithstanding these sensitivities, there are opportunities for development to be brought forward in a manner that responds positively to the identified setting, including:

- respecting the degree of enclosure provided by woodland belts and landform.
- managing the interface with the wider landscape; and
- minimising the visual impact of elements that would intrude into the limited outward views available from the RPG.

Taking these factors into account, it is concluded that the Site is suitable for allocation from a heritage perspective, subject to appropriate consideration of layout, scale, massing, and landscape treatment which have been considered robustly in the supporting information and Illustrative Masterplan developed for the Site.

Development of the Site can be achieved in a way which preserves the key attributes of significance of the RPG and associated listed buildings.

Accordingly, the proposals would be capable of aligning with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Historic England guidance, including GPA3, which seeks to ensure that the contribution of setting to significance is properly understood and conserved.

Appendix A: Summary of Sources Consulted

Source	Type	Description	Relevance to Site / Assessment
A History of Coombe Abbey, Robin Moore, Jones-Sands Publishing, 1983 *Accessed Warwickshire County Record Office	Text	A detailed history of Coombe Abbey from its origins as a Cistercian monastery to its modern day use as a country park. The book discusses the costs and methodology associated with the landscaping by 'Capability' Brown including discussion of the listed buildings within the estate. The book references several 19 th century maps of the Estate.	There is reference to the extent of ownership of the manor of Coombe within the 19 th century with discussion of the annual revenue of the land, the use of the land be it agricultural, settlement or woodland and the location of ownership. Information is derived from a 1823 survey commissioned by the estate. Whilst the site is not specifically referenced it can be assumed that the site fell under such assessment due to its proximity to the estate. The book discusses the implementation of planting along the northern border of the estate during the 19 th century instructed by the 3 rd Earl of Coombe with the help of the head Gardener William Miller. Miller introduced a colony of 75 Sequoiadendron giganteum or 'big trees' which were planted in association with Rhododendron to create visual interest in those undertaking rides along the extremities of the estate. This garden feature was introduced to channel views inwards and focused on the gardens of the estate rather than to the wider countryside including the Site.
Trees and Woodlands of Coombe Abbey Country Park 1989.8.4106 *Accessed Warwickshire County Record Office	Text	A landscape Study of Coombe Abbey Country Park. The Report focuses on the 49 ha of woodland which covers the parkland, with specific reference to the history and evolution of the Abbey and 'Capability' Brown landscape.	The document contains useful figures of early mapping of the Coombe Abbey parkland landscape. Whilst not actually depicting the Site, it provides contextual information into the nature and extent of the park at the time.
J Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, 33 (1865), pp 441-2; 42 (1869), pp 126-7; 50 (1873), pp 420-2 *Accessed: BHL-Biodiversity Heritage Library	Text	The <i>Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener</i> (published from 1861 to the early 20 th century) provides insights into 19 th century Victorian plant cultivation, pomology, domestic gardening, and the social history of horticulture in Great Britain.	Nothing of direct relevance to the Site. However, it includes text relating to the Head Gardener MR Miller and his use of planting within the RPG.
Gardeners' Chronicle, ii (1898), pp 229-31 * Accessed: BHL- Biodiversity Heritage Library	Text	British horticultural magazine founded in 1841 which discussed Victorian horticulture and botany.	Nothing of direct relevance to the Site. The journal discusses the revival of formal, geometric gardens and their specific plant schemes at Coombe Abbey.
C Holme, Gardens of England in the Midland and Eastern Counties (1908), pls 45, 46 *Accessed: British Library	Text	Book cataloguing the formal gardens of the Midland and Eastern Counties	Nothing of direct relevance to the Site. Provides a discussion of the RPG with some illustrations of the interior of Coombe Abbey Park.
Country Life, 26 (4 December 1909), pp 794-805; (11 December 1909), pp 840-9 *Accessed Historic England Archives, Swindon	Text	Magazine launched in 1897, including articles on country houses and gardens.	Images relating to the Coombe Abbey main building - no reference to the Site.
Victoria History of the County of Warwickshire VI, (1951), pp 72-4 * Accessed: BHO-British History Online	Text	A detailed History of the county of Warwickshire which is subdivided into the assessment of Parishes. Coombe Abbey falls within the Combe Fields Parish. The Cistercian monastery and establishment of Manorial estate is discussed.	Not directly relevant to the Site; however, it does provide contextual evidence to the wider landscape around the RPG. The references give a description of the landscape comprising the Parish with discussion of transport infrastructure including Oxford Canal and Trent Valley section of the old L.N.W. Railway.
C B Andrews (ed), The Torrington Diaries (1954), pp 210-11 *Accessed British Library	Text	The travel journals of the Hon. John Byng, covering his 1790-1791 travels into Kent and his broader observations on English country houses, gardens, and society.	Nothing directly relevant to the Site. The source provides a descriptive record of Coombe Abbey House.
N Pevsner and A Wedgwood, The Buildings of England: Warwickshire (1966), pp 236-8	Text	Pevsner provided an architectural guide to significant buildings for each county in England. Coombe Abbey and its associated estate is discussed in detail with a	Not directly relevant to the Site; however, provides contextual evidence to the historic extent of the estate and building history.

* Accessed Historic England Archives, Swindon		history and architectural record of the building discussed.	
D Stroud, Capability Brown (1975), pp 143-4, 219	Text	Biography of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's career which comprises a definitive catalogue of his work. Brown's work at Coombe Abbey is detailed.	Chapter discusses the design elements in which Brown was commissioned to enhance the parkland, including the large sweeping serpentine lake and the historical transformation of the immediate setting to the Coombe Abbey grounds. Although the Site is not explicitly mentioned, the work provides descriptive detail on the transformation on which Brown's interventions had on the Coombe Abbey landscape.
* Accessed British Library			
B Elliott, Victorian Gardens (1986)	Text	Examines developments in landscaping, and new thinking in the use of garden features during the Victorian period.	Not relevant to the Site, descriptive record of gardening techniques used within the RPG.
* Accessed British Library			
J Brown, The Art, and Architecture of English Gardens (1989)	Text	Examines developments in landscaping, and new thinking in the use of garden features during the Victorian period.	Not relevant to the Site, descriptive record of gardening techniques used within the RPG.
* Accessed British Library			
M Hall, The English Country House (1994), pp 53-9	Text	A collation of the Country Life magazine into a book. Includes series of articles on Coombe Abbey and its surrounding gardens.	Nothing directly relevant to the Site. The source includes images of the principal buildings at Coombe Abbey rather than the wider estate.
* Accessed Historic England Archives, Swindon			
G Tyack, Warwickshire Country Houses (1994), pp 57-63	Text	Detailed study of the country houses within the county of Warwickshire.	Not directly relevant to the Site; however, provides contextual evidence to the extent of the estate and building history. No mention of estate surrounding the RPG but includes image of the Kip & Knyff engraving.
* Accessed Historic England Archives, Swindon			
'Gateway to Heaven', The Daily Telegraph, 16 October 1999	Text	Article details the restoration of 18 th century landscape features and ironwork at Coombe Abbey.	Nothing directly relevant to the Site; however, provides some information on the restoration work undertaken to the Capability Brown landscape in the 20 th century.
* Accessed: Daily Telegraph			
J Philbbs, Place-making: The art of Capability Brown	Text	Detailed study of Capability Brown's work across the UK.	Numerous references to Coombe Abbey throughout the text, primarily focussed on the key landscape features present within the RPG including the waterways, avenue, tree planting. Nothing relating to the wider estate or Site.
L Knyff and J Kip, Britannia Illustrata i, (1707), pl 47	Illustration	Britannia Illustrata, also known as Views of Several of the Queens Palaces and of the Principal Seats of the Nobility & Gentry of Great Britain is a 1707–09 map plate folio of parts of Great Britain.	The illustration depicts the relationship between Coombe Abbey, its formal gardens and the wider agricultural landscape. The eastern extent of the Site is partially represented as open agricultural land beyond the principal designed landscape, indicating that it formed part of the wider estate setting rather than the ornamental core.
* Accessed: Coombe Abbey hotel, Coventry by Kip & Knyff			
J Beeverell, Les delices de la Grande Bretagne V, (1707), p 872	Illustration	Double page engraved title to each volume and 240 folding engraved plates of maps, views, town plans	A historical guidebook which reproduces Samuel Mathias map of Coombe Abbey dated 1778.
* Accessed: Les délices de la Grand' Bretagne, & de l'Irlande			
H Beighton, A Map of Knightlow Hundred, surveyed 1725, published 1730	Map	County subdivision map depicting the Knightlow Hundred of Warwickshire, showing settlements, principal roads, churches, manorial estates and notable landscape features during the early eighteenth century. The map provides a broad regional overview	The map depicts Coombe Abbey as a significant manorial estate within the wider Warwickshire landscape and illustrates its relationship with nearby settlements and routeways. Although the mapping is not sufficiently detailed to depict the Site or its land use, it provides useful contextual evidence for understanding the historic position of Coombe Abbey within the wider landscape and demonstrates the long-established presence and importance of the estate within the region. (Appendix B, Figure 2).
* Accessed: H Beighton, A Map of Knightlow Hundred, surveyed 1725, published 1730			
Samuel Mathias map of Combe Abbey dated 1778.	Illustration	1778 Plan of the Parkland of Coombe Abbey, showing parkland as 'Capability' Brown envisioned. It records the extent of parkland, woodland, water features, and estate landholdings associated with Coombe Abbey.	Although the Site is not on the map, the plan depicts the landscaping treatments between the RPG and Site with dense woodland depicted along the northern boundary. The survey illustrates the extent of woodland planting along the park boundary and demonstrates that land within the Site formed part of the wider agricultural hinterland rather than the core designed landscape. This evidence assists in understanding the historic relationship between the Site and the RPG.
* Accessed Warwickshire County Record Office			

W Yates and Sons, Map of Warwickshire, surveyed 1787-9, published 1793 *Accessed: Caburdenraremaps	Map	County map of Warwickshire recording principal settlements, roads, estates, and landscape features during the late 18 th century.	The map depicts Coombe Abbey and identifies the surrounding road network and agricultural land. Although limited in detail due to its scale, it provides contextual evidence for the geographical relationship between Coombe Abbey and the surrounding countryside, demonstrating that the Site formed part of a wider rural landscape beyond the designed parkland. (Appendix B, Figure 3)
Plan of Earl of Cavens Farm, Map 1820 (Warwickshire County Record Office, ref: D34/1) *Accessed Warwickshire Country Record Office	Map Illustration	Detailed estate plan prepared for the Earl of Craven showing agricultural landholdings, farms, field boundaries, routes, and estate ownership associated with Coombe Abbey during the early 19 th century.	The plan partially depicts the eastern part of the Site and demonstrates that the land formed part of the wider agricultural estate associated with Coombe Abbey. The Site is shown as farmland centred on Hill Farm and associated field systems, distinct from the ornamental parkland and designed landscape surrounding the Abbey. The map confirms that the Site historically functioned as productive agricultural land within the wider estate. (Appendix B, Figure 4)
Six Inch 1 st Edition Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, 1840s – 1880s	Map	One-Inch Old Series map Sheet LIII NW Daventry	The map depicts the topography of the Coombe Abbey and the Site (Appendix B, Figure 5) . The Site is depicted as open agricultural land in which Walsgrave Hill Farm is labelled as Hill Farm. A road from Sowe runs east to west through the Site immediately to the south of Hill Farm. An area labelled Hill Park is located to the north of Hill Farm. Several routeways connect Coombe Abbey parkland with the Site.
OS Six Inch, 1830s – 1880s (County Layers)	Map		Depicts the Site and RPG (Appendix B, Figure 6) . The map provided the first detailed depiction of the Site as divided into agricultural field parcels. Ponds are scattered throughout the Site, a coppice of trees located atop Walsgrave Hill, a Gravel pit and field boundaries appear as land divisions with scattered mature trees. Both Walsgrave Hill Farm and Hill Fields Farm are labelled with a trackway connecting the farms to Walsgrave on Sowe. The landscape features of the RPG are clearly depicted with the serpentine lake labelled as “the pool.”
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1886	Map	Warwickshire XXII.6 Surveyed: 1886, Published: 1887	Depicts the Site and its relationship with Coombe Abbey (Appendix B, Figure 7) . The Site is clearly separated from the formal gardens by mature ornamental woodland. The Site comprises agricultural fields which are post enclosure in character and appearance. A small coppice of trees is located atop Walsgrave Hill.
OS One Inch, 1885 - 1900 (Outline)	Map		Depicts the Site and Coombe Abbey with its ‘Deer Park’ and ‘Menagerie’ (Appendix B, Figure 8) . Insufficient detail in surrounding area shown. Walsgrave Hill visible but not annotated. Fishponds shown to the north of the estate.
OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1905-6	Map	OS 6" to 1 mile: Warwickshire XXII.6	Depicts little change from the earlier maps (Appendix B, Figure 9) . Within the grounds of the RPG there has been little change. Within the Site, the field parcels remain intact with a continued agricultural character.
SP48SW – A Surveyed / Revised: 1958 to 1964, Published: 1966	Map		Shows the extent of development within the wider landscape, particularly the extent of Coventry to the west. Ansty Park is visible to the north of the park. (Appendix B, Figure 10) .
raf_106g_uk_1539_rs_4063 *Accessed Aerial Photo Explorer – Over 400,000 aerial photos in Historic England's digitised collections Historic England	Aerial Photograph	RAF 23 May 1946- Aerial Photo	Coombe Abbey RPG and Site depicted. Land within the site appears to be in agricultural use. (Appendix B, Figure 11)
raf_106g_uk_1539_rs_4065 *Accessed Aerial Photo Explorer – Over 400,000 aerial photos in Historic England's digitised collections Historic England	Aerial Photograph	RAF 23 May 1946- Aerial Photo	Photograph depicts serpentine lake and modern devolvment of Coventry located to the west of the Site. Site appears to be in agricultural use. (Appendix B, Figure 12)
raf_106g_uk_1539_rs_4062	Aerial Photograph	RAF 23 May 1946- Aerial Photo	Photo depicts Coombe Abbey RPG, with site in agricultural use. Airfield located to the north of the image (Ansty Park). (Appendix B, Figure 13)

*Accessed Aerial Photo Explorer – Over 400,000 aerial photos in Historic England's digitised collections Historic England			
29886_045	Aerial Photograph	Damian Grady 24 May 2016	Image of Coombe Abbey with modern development at Ansty Park to the north within the setting. (Appendix B, Figure 14).
*Accessed Historic England Archive			
Aerial image (client's own)	Aerial Photograph	Clients Own	Aerial view looking northwest across Combe Abbey, with City of Coventry visible in the background. (Appendix B, Figure 15)
Aerial image (client's own)	Aerial Photograph	Clients Own	Aerial view looking east across the Site from Coventry Hospital towards Ansty Park. (Appendix B, Figure 16)

Appendix B: Figures

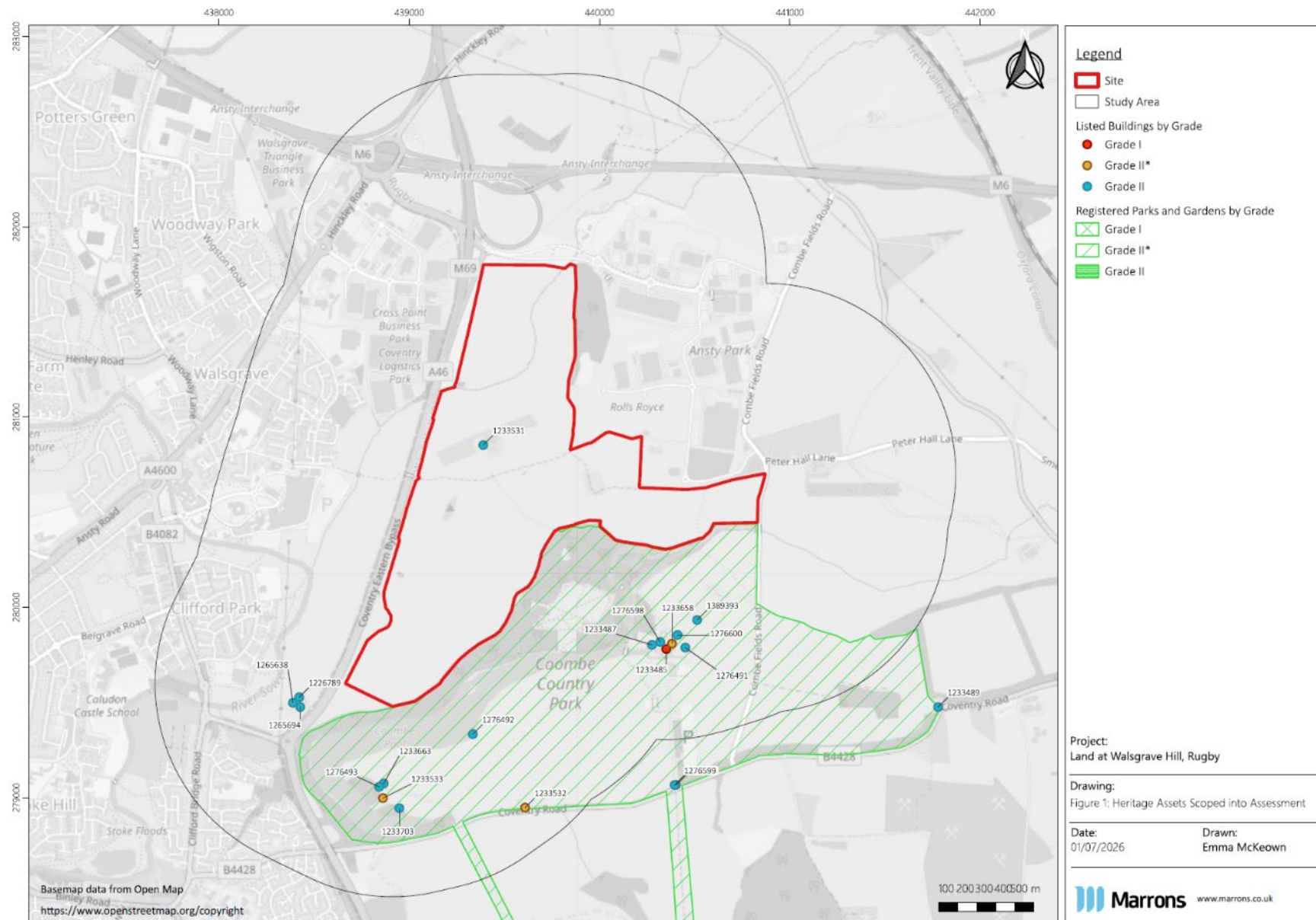


Figure 1: Heritage Assets Plan

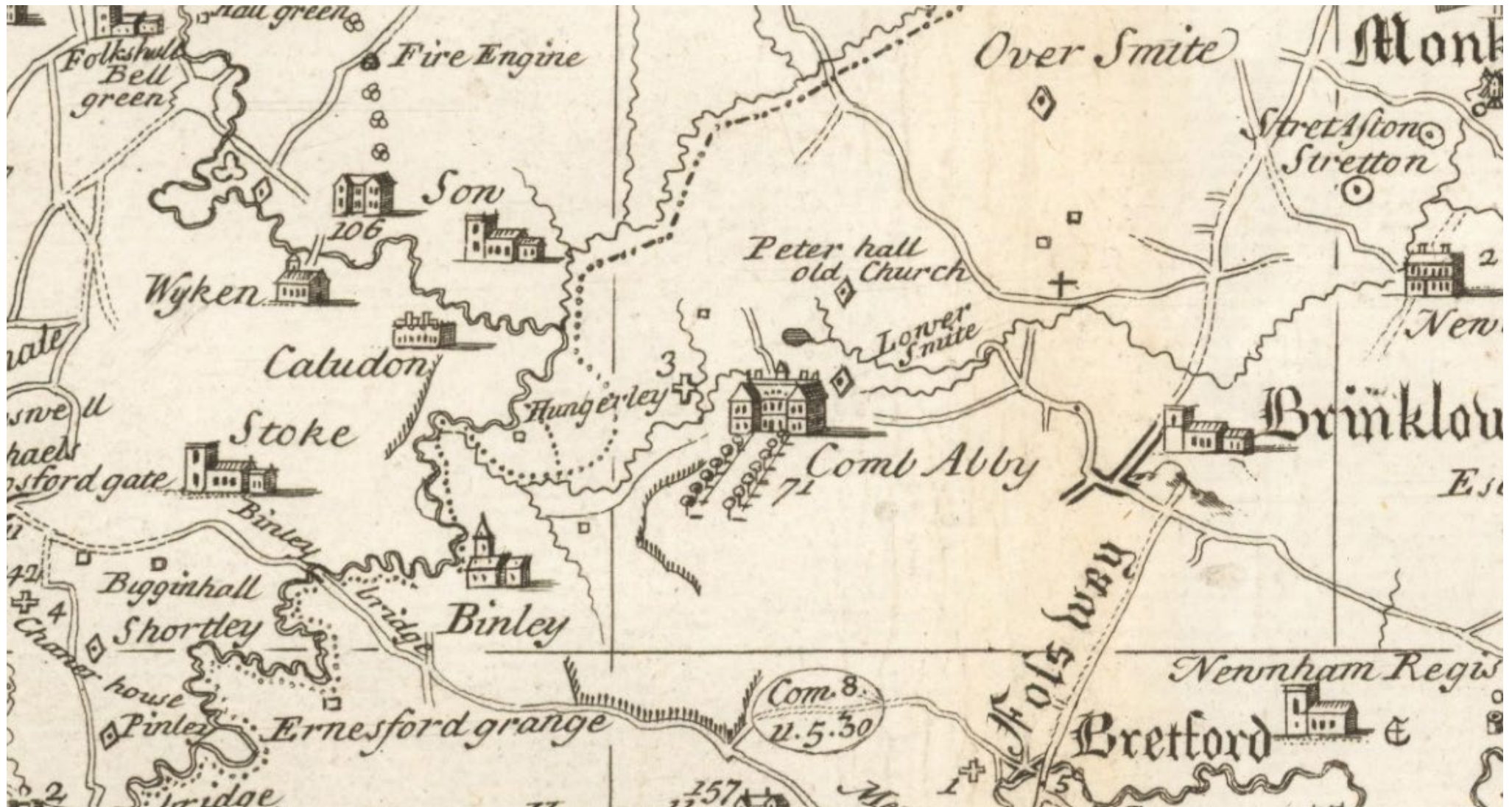


Figure 2: Extract from H. Beighton, A Map of Knightlow Hundred, surveyed 1725, published 1730

Figure 3: Extract W Yates and Sons, Map of Warwickshire, surveyed 1787-9, published 1793

Figure 4: 1820 Plan of the Earl of Craven's Farm.



Overlay showing Figure 4 on modern aerial image to show relationship of Earl of Craven Farm and the wider site / Ansty Park

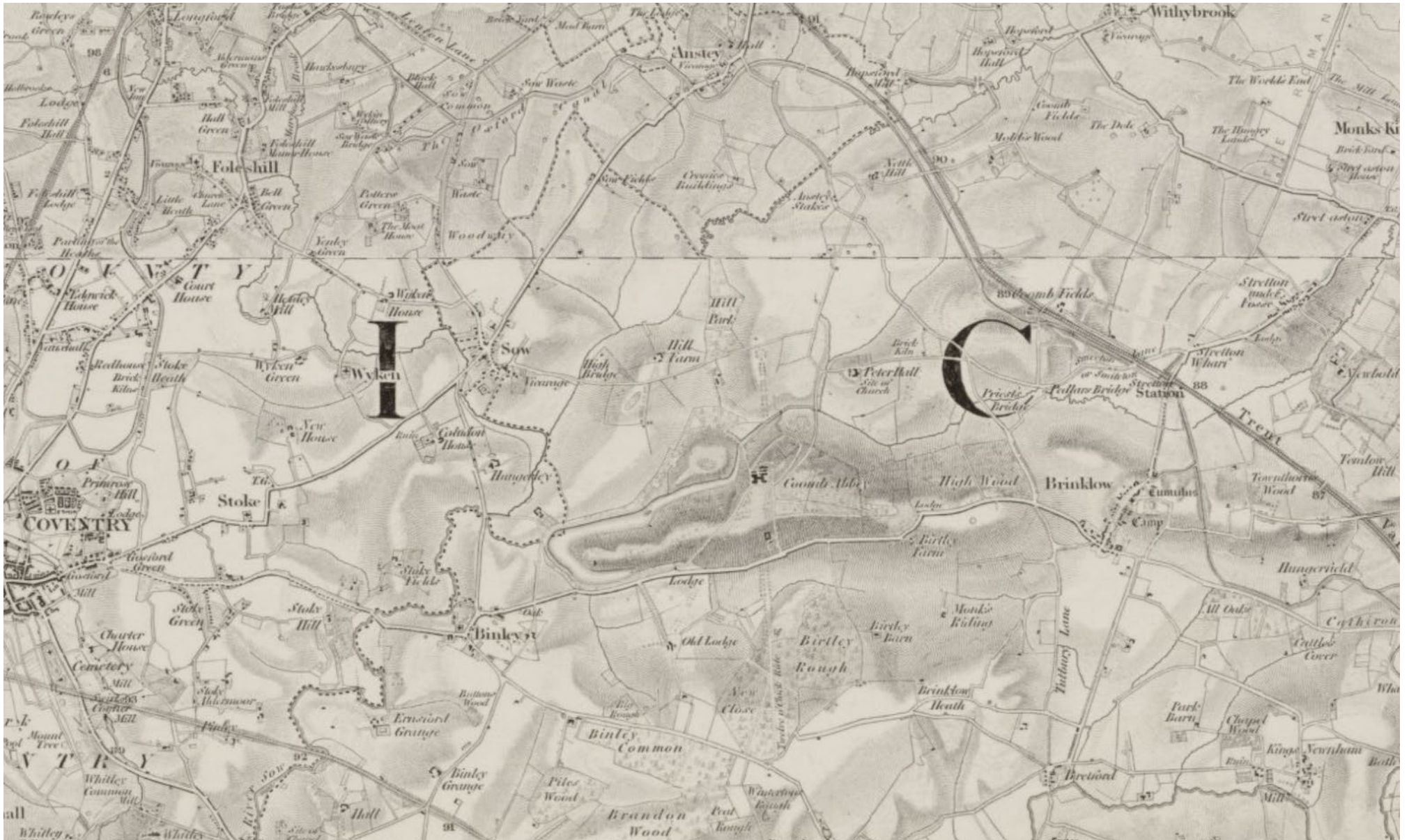


Figure 5: Six Inch 1st Edition Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, 1840s – 1880s



Figure 6: OS Six Inch, 1830s – 1880s (County Layers)



Figure 7: Warwickshire XXII.6 Surveyed: 1886, Published: 1887 (stitched together to show majority of site and Coombe Abbey park)



Figure 10: SP48SW – A Surveyed / Revised: 1958 to 1964, Published: 1966



Figure 11: Raf_106g_uk_1539_rs_40633 May 1946- Aerial Photo



Figure 12: Raf_106g_uk_1539_rs_406523 May 1946-



Figure 13: Raf_106g_uk_1539_rs_4062



Historic England Archive: 29886_045

Figure 14 : Aerial View looking north along the avenue to Coombe Abbey. Ansty Park visible beyond.



Figure 15: Aerial View looking northwest across Combe Abbey, with City of Coventry visible in the background.



Figure 16: Aerial View looking east across the Site from Coventry Hospital towards Ansty Park.

MAP 4 KEY VIEWS AND VISTAS

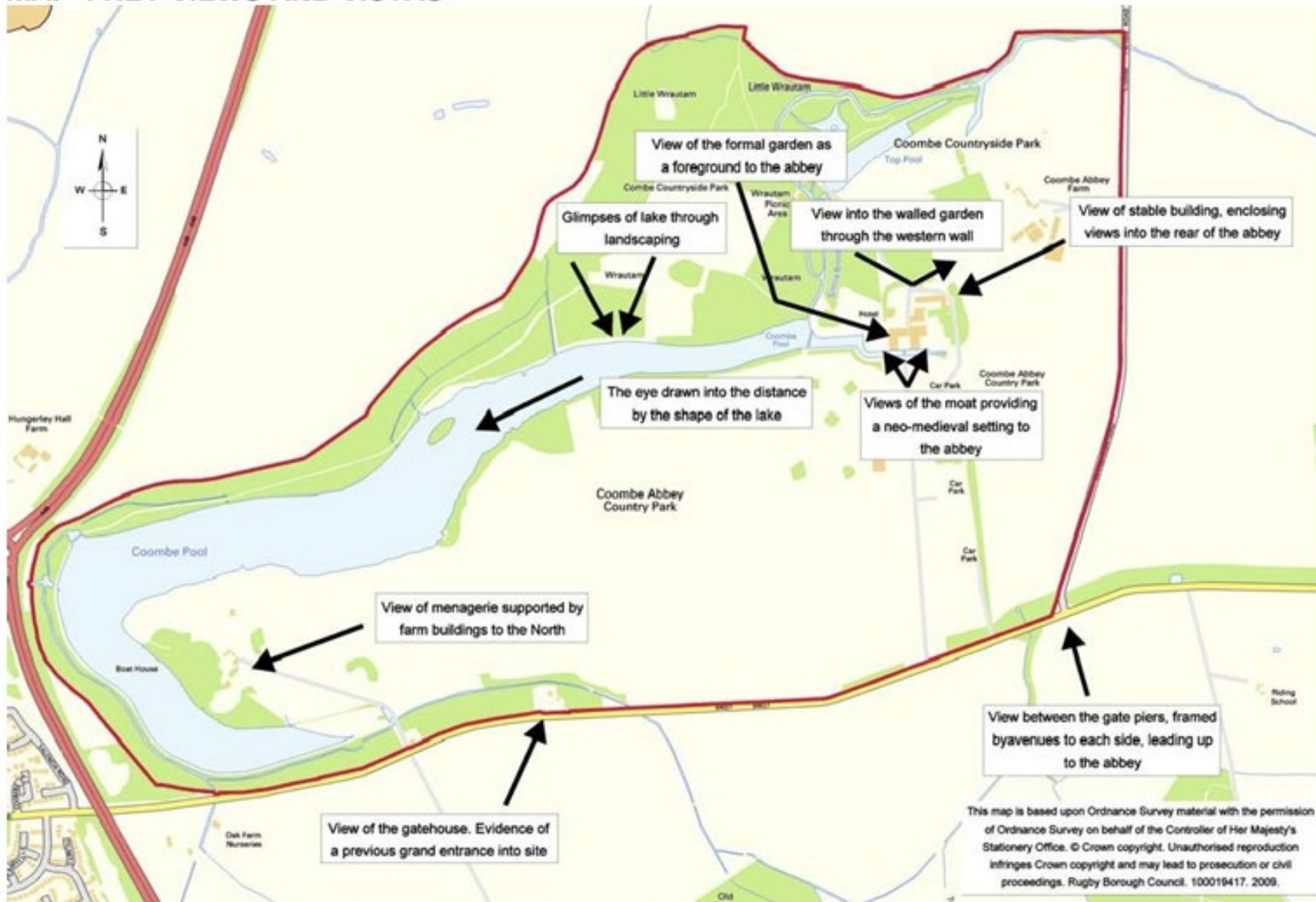
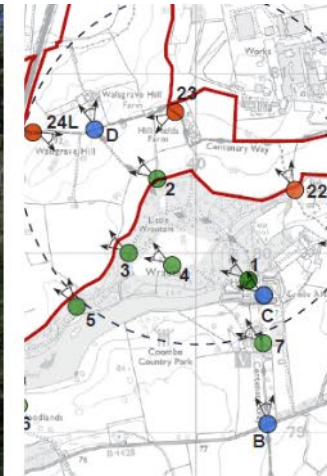


Figure 17: Key Views and Vistas Plan taken from Coombe Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal



Viewpoint Location

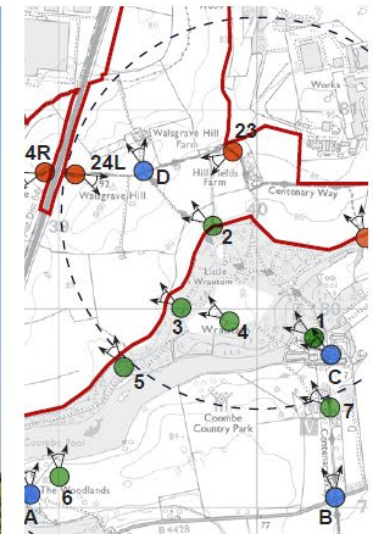
Photo taken: 17/03/2026

Height: TBC

Easting: TBC

Northing: TBC

Plate 1: LVIA Viewpoint 1 looking NW towards the Site from Coombe Abbey Hotel



Viewpoint Location

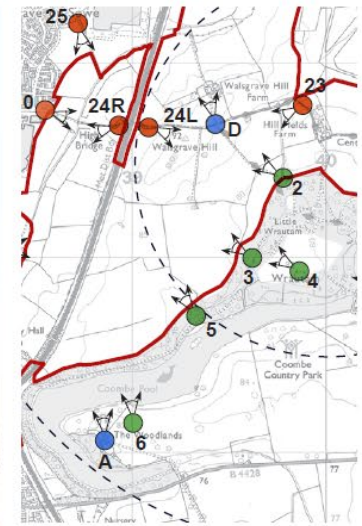
Photo taken: 17/03/2026

Height: TBC

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Northing: TBC

Plate 2: LVIA Viewpoint 2 looking north from boundary of RPG



Viewpoint Location

Photo taken: 17/03/2026

Height: TBC

Easting: TBC

Northing: TBC

Plate 3: LVIA Viewpoint 6 looking north towards the Site

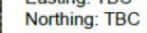
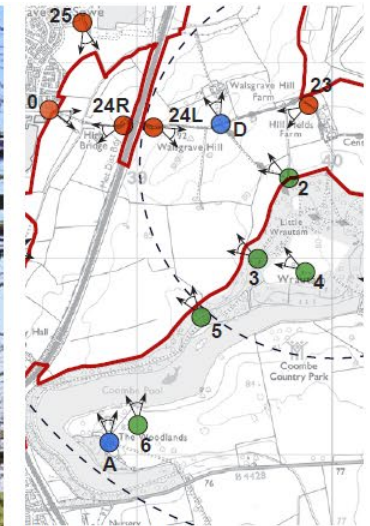


Plate 4: LVIA Viewpoint 3 looking towards the northern boundary of the RPG



Plate 5: LVIA Viewpoint 5 looking NW towards Coventry Hospital



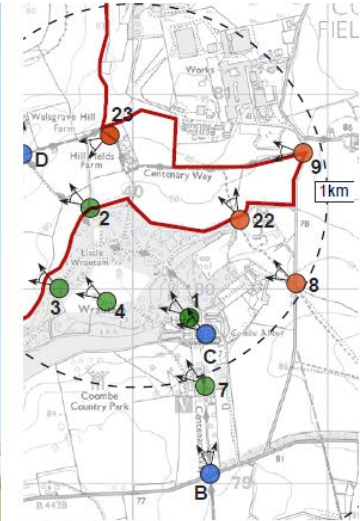
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Photo taken: 17/03/2026

Height: TBC

Easting: TBC

Northing: TBC



Viewpoint Location

Photo taken: 17/03/2026

Height: TBC

Easting: TBC

Northing: TBC

Plate 6: LVIA Viewpoint 22 looking north towards Ansty Park



Viewpoint Location

Photo taken: 17/03/2026

Height: TBC

Easting: TBC

Northing: TBC

Plate 7: View looking north along avenue towards Coombe Abbey Hotel