



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK-BASED
ASSESSMENT**

**FORMER
YORKE ROAD SCHOOL
CROXLEY GREEN
HERTFORDSHIRE**

ROB BOURN BA MIFA

AUGUST 2009

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

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**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
THREE RIVERS DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

SITE CENTRED AT: TQ 071 953

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1.1 This archaeological desk-based assessment has been researched and prepared by Rob Bourn of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Vincent & Gorbings.
- 1.2 The subject of this assessment, also referred to as the study site the former Yorke Road School, Croxley Green, Hertfordshire. The site is centred at grid reference TQ 071 953 (Fig. 1).
- 1.3 In accordance with government guidance on archaeology and planning (PPG16) this assessment draws together the available archaeological, topographic and land-use information in order to clarify the archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.4 The assessment comprises an examination of evidence in the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (SMR), considers the results of nearby archaeological investigations, incorporates published and unpublished material and charts historic land-use through a map regression exercise.
- 1.5 As a result, the assessment enables relevant parties to assess the archaeological potential of the site and to consider the need for design, civil engineering, and/or archaeological solutions to the potential identified.

2.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy **Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning"**, providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.
- 2.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG16, by current Development Plan policy and by other material considerations. In short, government guidance provides a framework which:
- Protects Scheduled Ancient Monuments
 - Protects the settings of these sites
 - Protects nationally important non-scheduled ancient monuments
 - Has a presumption in favour of in-situ preservation of important remains
 - In appropriate circumstances seeks adequate information (from field evaluation) to enable informed decisions
 - Provides for the excavation and investigation of sites not important enough to merit in-situ preservation.
- 2.3 In July 2009 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued a Consultation Paper on a new Planning Policy Statement 15 - Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 15). **The document is supported by a "Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide"**. The policy document is proposed to replace both PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) and PPG16 (Archaeology and Planning) providing combined historic environment policy. This policy statement is not a material consideration at present however it may become one during the process of this application.
- 2.4 The policy emphasises the need to have a clear understanding of the significance of heritage assets, that is anything with a heritage value (not necessarily designated assets). The need to understand the significance of an asset and its setting should come before the design process and should inform the process.
- 2.5 The East of England Plan was published May 2008 and contains the following policy relating to the historic environment:

POLICY ENV6: THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

IN THEIR PLANS, POLICIES, PROGRAMMES AND PROPOSALS LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES AND OTHER AGENCIES SHOULD IDENTIFY, PROTECT, CONSERVE AND, WHERE APPROPRIATE, ENHANCE THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE REGION, ITS ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORIC BUILDINGS, PLACES AND LANDSCAPES, INCLUDING HISTORIC PARKS AND GARDENS AND THOSE FEATURES AND SITES (AND THEIR SETTINGS) ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND:

- **THE HISTORIC CITIES OF CAMBRIDGE AND NORWICH;**
- **AN EXCEPTIONAL NETWORK OF HISTORIC MARKET TOWNS;**
- **A COHESIVE HIERARCHY OF SMALLER SETTLEMENTS RANGING FROM NUCLEATED VILLAGES, OFTEN MARKED BY ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT MEDIEVAL PARISH CHURCHES, THROUGH TO A PATTERN OF DISPERSED HAMLETS AND ISOLATED FARMS;**
- **THE HIGHLY DISTINCTIVE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE COASTAL ZONE INCLUDING EXTENSIVE SUBMERGED PREHISTORIC LANDSCAPES, ANCIENT SALT MANUFACTURING AND FISHING FACILITIES, RELICT SEA WALLS, GRAZING MARSHES, COASTAL FORTIFICATIONS, ANCIENT PORTS AND TRADITIONAL SEASIDE RESORTS;**
- **FORMAL PLANNED SETTLEMENTS OF THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY, INCLUDING THE EARLY GARDEN CITIES, AND FACTORY VILLAGES;**
- **CONSERVATION AREAS AND LISTED BUILDINGS, INCLUDING DOMESTIC, INDUSTRIAL AND RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS, AND THEIR SETTINGS, AND SIGNIFICANT DESIGNED LANDSCAPES;**
- **THE RURAL LANDSCAPES OF THE REGION, WHICH ARE HIGHLY DISTINCTIVE AND OF ANCIENT ORIGIN; AND**
- **THE WIDE VARIETY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS, SITES AND BURIED DEPOSITS WHICH INCLUDE MANY SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND OTHER NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSETS.**

2.6 The development plan policy framework is provided by the Hertfordshire Structure Plan 1991-2011. However, after the approval of the East of England Plan in May 2008 all but 13 of the policies relating to archaeology or the historic environment have been superseded.

2.7 The Three Rivers Local Plan was adopted in 1996. The Plan contains the following saved policy which provides a framework for the consideration of development proposals affecting archaeological and heritage features:

POLICY C.14- ARCHAEOLOGY

- 1. THE COUNCIL WILL NOT PERMIT DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND OTHER NATIONALLY IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS AND THEIR SETTINGS.**
- 2. WHERE THE COUNCIL CONSIDERS THAT A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WILL EFFECT REMAINS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OR AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE THE RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BEFORE THE PLANNING APPLICATION CAN BE DETERMINED THUS ENABLING AN INFORMED PLANNING DECISION TO BE MADE.**
- 3. ON THE BASIS OF THE EVALUATION AND/OR PROFESSIONAL ADVICE SOUGHT BY THE COUNCIL, PLANNING APPLICATIONS AFFECTING SITES WITH**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL OR CONTAINING ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS
WILL BE DETERMINED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:**

- **WHERE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OR MONUMENTS OF LESS THAN NATIONAL IMPORTANCE AND THEIR SETTINGS ARE LIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANTLY ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY DEVELOPMENT PHYSICAL PERSERVATION IN SITU WILL BE THE PREFERRED OPTION**
- **WHERE THE COUNCIL CONSIDERS THAT PHYSICAL PRESERVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SITU IS NOT MERITED, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS OR A PLANNING OBLIGATION REQUIRING THE DEVELOPER TO SECURE APPROPRIATE PROVISIONS FOR THE INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS AND THE PUBLICATION OF RESULTS.**

3.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 Geology

3.1.1 The underlying geology of the site is Winter Hill Gravel overlying New Pit Chalk (BGS Map Sheet 255 - Beaconsfield).

3.2 Topography

3.2.1 The site is flat lying at c. 74m OD.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Timescales used in this report.

Prehistoric

Palaeolithic	450,000 -	12,000 BC
Mesolithic	12,000 -	4,000 BC
Neolithic	4,000 -	1,800 BC
Bronze Age	1,800 -	600 BC
Iron Age	600 -	AD 43

Historic

Roman	AD 43 -	410
Saxon/Early Medieval	AD 410 -	1066
Medieval	AD 1066 -	1485
Post Medieval	AD 1486 -	1799
Modern	AD 1800 -	Present

4.1 Palaeolithic

4.1.1 There are a number of Palaeolithic finds recorded as having been found during quarrying in the vicinity of the study site.

4.1.2 **Palaeolithic finds from 'Long Valley Wood Quarry' were retrieved during the gravel extraction process.** Subsequently the finds were dispersed among a number of Museum collections. Consequently the precise location of the findspots, context and number of finds is now unknown. However, together with finds from nearby 'Pratt' and 'Mill End' pits some 397 handaxes, 5 rough outs, 18 cores, 303 retouched flakes, 131 flakes, 39 miscellaneous, 1 levallois core and 1 levallois flake appear to have been recovered (SMR Ref: 561; TQ 077 949, SMR Ref: 562; TQ 078 948; SMR Ref: 565; TQ 070 950; SMR Ref: 566; TQ 070 950, SMR Ref: 567; TQ 070 950; SMR Ref: 860; TQ 070 950; SMR Ref: 861; TQ 072 948, SMR Ref: 862; TQ 075 948; SMR Ref: 865; TQ 076 947; SMR Ref: 869; TQ 072 948, SMR Ref: 6243; TQ 075 948).

4.1.3 Few finds of Pleistocene animal remains are recorded within a 1km radius of the study site, though partial remains of a *Bos Primalgenius* were identified at the 'Tolpits Lane' gravel quarry (SMR Ref: 1728; TQ 076 942).

4.1.4 As the site lies on the same gravel deposits as the Palaeolithic remains noted above derive from, the site is considered to have moderate potential for further Palaeolithic remains.

4.2 Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age

4.2.1 No Mesolithic finds are recorded within a 1km radius of the study site. The archaeological potential of the study site for this period is therefore considered to be low.

4.2.2 Three struck flints, one of which had been struck from a Neolithic polished axe have been recorded during an evaluation c. 400m to the south west of the site (HER Ref: 15565; TQ067 950). These were residual finds in features dating from significantly later periods.

4.2.3 Due to the relative scarcity of finds and features of these periods in the vicinity of the site, it is considered to have low potential for Neolithic and Bronze Age remains, although their presence cannot be entirely ruled out.

4.3 Iron Age

4.3.1 Two sherds of prehistoric pottery, one of which is of late Iron Age date have been recorded as coming from the Long Valley Wood quarry (HER Ref: 12817; TQ 078 950). Due to the relative scarcity of finds and features of this period in the vicinity of the site, it is considered to have low potential for Iron Age remains, although their presence cannot be entirely ruled out.

4.4 Roman

4.4.1 A single find of Roman date is recorded within a 1km radius of the study site; a single sherd of Mortarium fragment (SMR Ref; 866; TQ 078 949). The archaeological potential of the study site for this period is considered to be low.

4.5 Anglo Saxon/Medieval

4.5.1 Throughout these periods the study site appears to have lain in agricultural land or woodland. No finds of Anglo Saxon or early medieval date occur within a 1km radius of the study site, while those finds of late medieval date that occur have no relevance for

the study sites archaeological potential. The archaeological potential of the study site for these periods is considered to be low.

4.6 **Post Medieval**

4.6.1 Although a large number of post medieval finds and sites are recorded within a 1km radius of the study site none of these appear to have any relevance for the sites archaeological potential.

4.6.2 **Olivier's map of 1695 (Fig. 2), Drury and Andrew's map of 1766 (Fig. 3),** a reconstruction map of the lands of Croxley Manor in 1766 (Fig. 4), Bryant's map of 1822 (Fig. 5) indicate the site was agricultural land.

4.6.3 The Ordnance Survey map of 1873 show the site as a small rectangular field (Fig. 6).

4.6.4 The school was built in 1875 for 120 children and is first shown on the 1898 OS map (Fig. 7). The history and development of the school is outlined in an Historical Building Report of the school by CgMs (2008) and will not be repeated here. With the exception of some minor alterations to the school, the site has remained unchanged from 1898 until the present day (Fig. 8).

4.6.5 Overall the archaeological potential of the study site for the post medieval period is considered to be low. The historical and architectural significance of the school buildings was considered in CgMs 2008 report and is not considered here.

5.0 SITE CONDITIONS AND THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The site is currently occupied by the former Yorke Road school. This is a Victorian single storey building surrounded by tarmac hardstanding. The construction of the existing school will have resulted in extensive ground disturbance within the footprint of the school building. The construction of the tarmac hardstanding will have required the stripping of the topsoil prior to construction and therefore may have resulted in the ground disturbance across the rest of the site.

5.2 The Proposed Development and Potential Archaeological Impact

5.2.1 At present there are no detailed development proposals available for the site, therefore, precise archaeological impacts cannot be assessed at this stage. Therefore, the following comments are a summary of general archaeological impacts of development on this site.

5.2.2 The site is considered to have moderate potential for Palaeolithic artefactual remains and low potential for all other periods. Should Palaeolithic remains be present, they are likely to be at some considerable depth below ground level. Unless the proposed development has deep foundations or a basement, it is not anticipated that any such remains will be impacted. Due to the low potential for remains of other periods, allied to the ground disturbance associated with the construction of the existing buildings, the proposed redevelopment of the site will have no archaeological impacts.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The former Yorke Road school, Croxley Green is proposed redevelopment.
- 6.2 The site is considered to have moderate potential for Palaeolithic artefactual remains within the underlying gravel geology and low potential for remains of all other periods.
- 6.3 The construction of the existing school buildings and the tarmac hardstanding is likely to have lead top the destruction or significant damage to any underlying archaeological deposits that may be present. Should Palaeolithic remains be present within the underlying gravel deposits, they are likely to be at levels below which ground disturbance from the proposed redevelopment will occur. Therefore, the impact from the redevelopment is considered to be low.
- 6.4 Overall, and on the basis of all the available evidence, we would not recommend the implementation of any further archaeological mitigation measures in this particular instance.

SOURCES CONSULTED

General

Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record
Hertfordshire County Record Office (Hertford)

Bibliographic

CgMs. 2008. Historic Buildings Assessment in Respect of Yorke Road School, Croxley Green, Hertfordshire. Unpublished client Report.

Wymer, J. 1999. The Lower Palaeolithic occupation of Britain. Vol 1, p47, 90, 174, Vol 2, map 18

Cartographic

John Oliver's Map of Hertfordshire 1695

Drury and Andrews 1766

Croxley Manor in 1766

Bryant's map of 1822

Rickmansworth Tithe Map, 1838

1873 Ordnance Survey

1898 Ordnance Survey

1914 Ordnance Survey

1932 Ordnance Survey

1961 Ordnance Survey

1976 Ordnance Survey

1980 Ordnance Survey

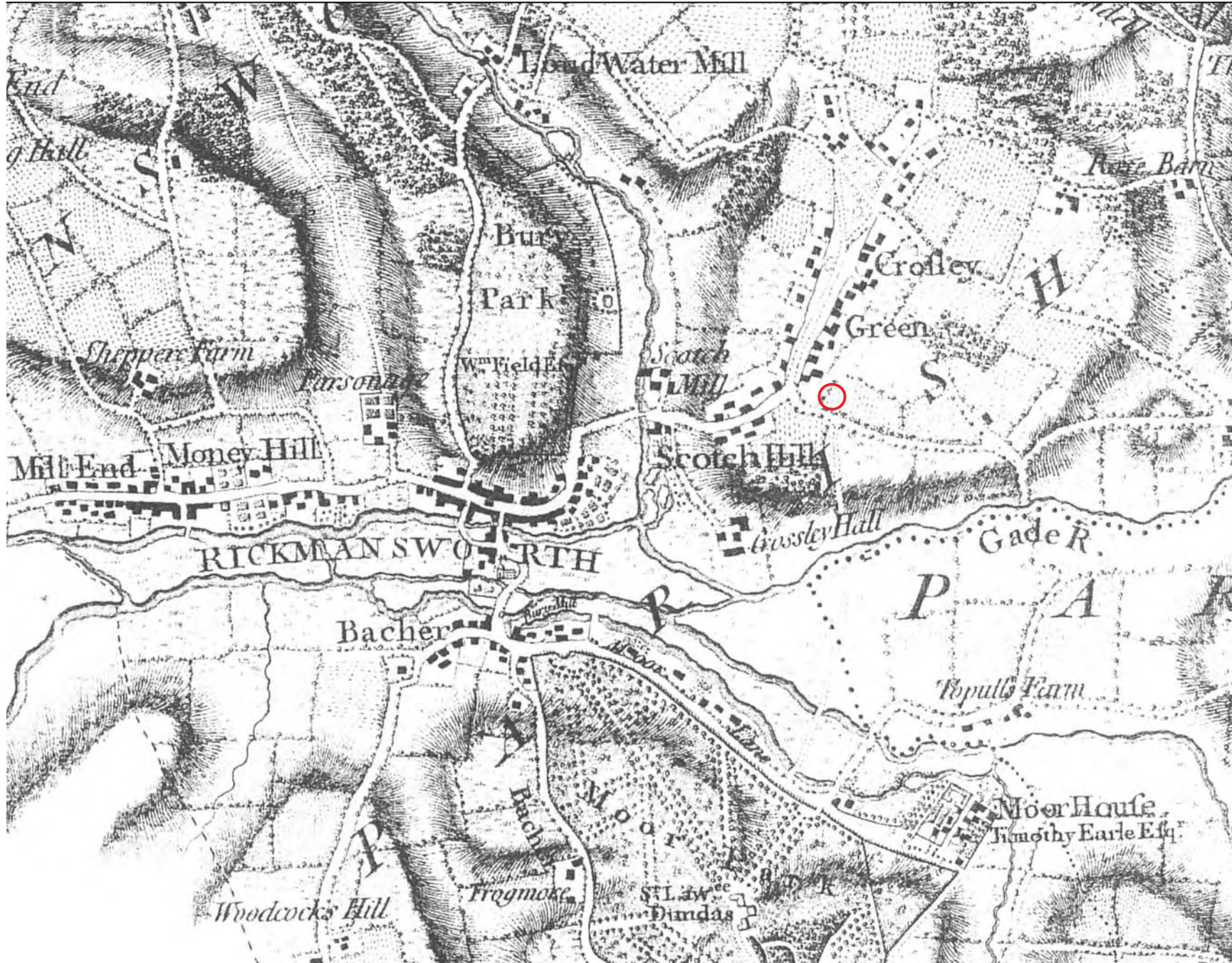
1992 Ordnance Survey

British Geological Survey, England and Wales Sheet 255, Solid and Drift Edition 1970.



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Figure 1: Site location






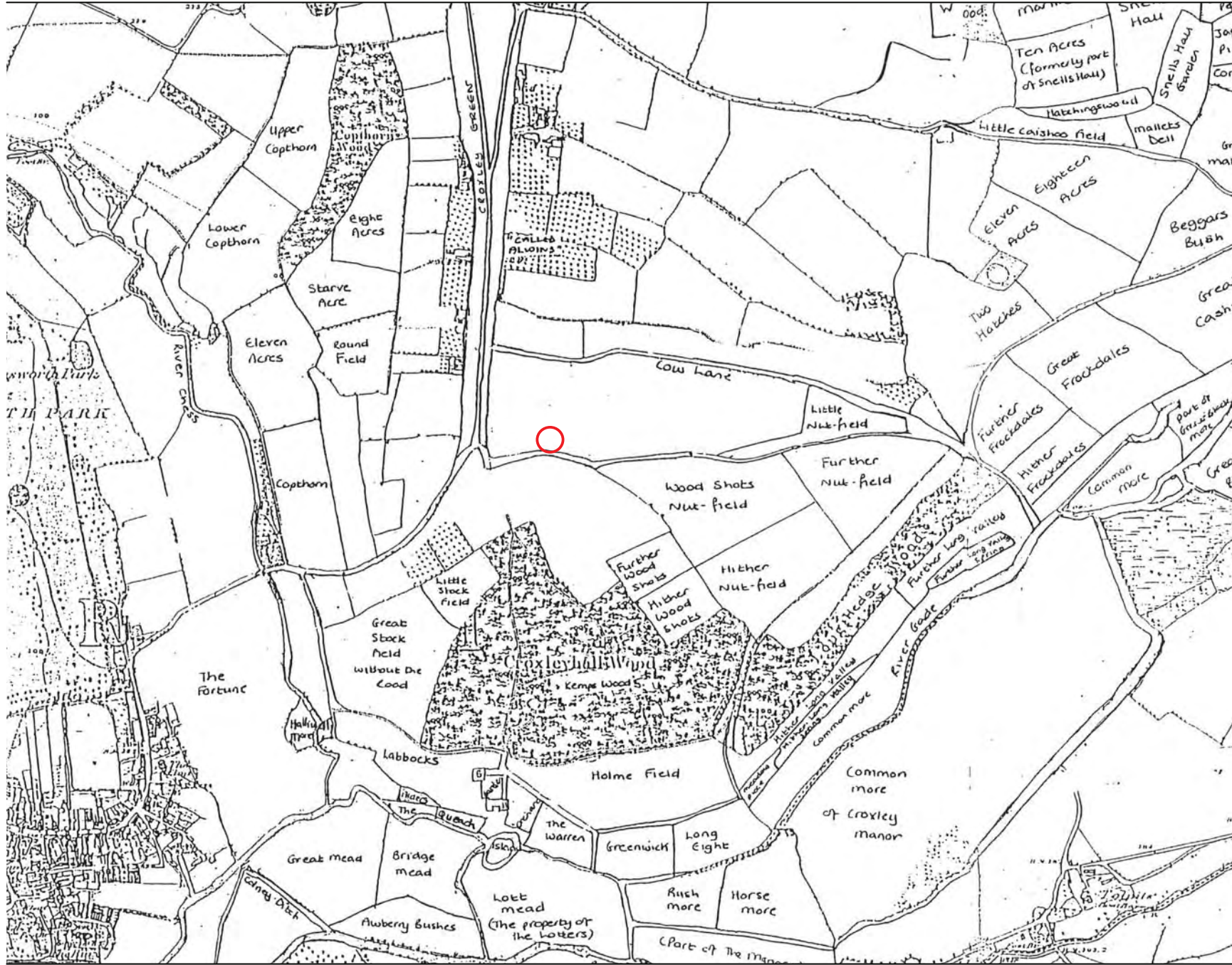
Additional information:	
 Site location	
	
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Figure 3: Dury and Andrews 1766






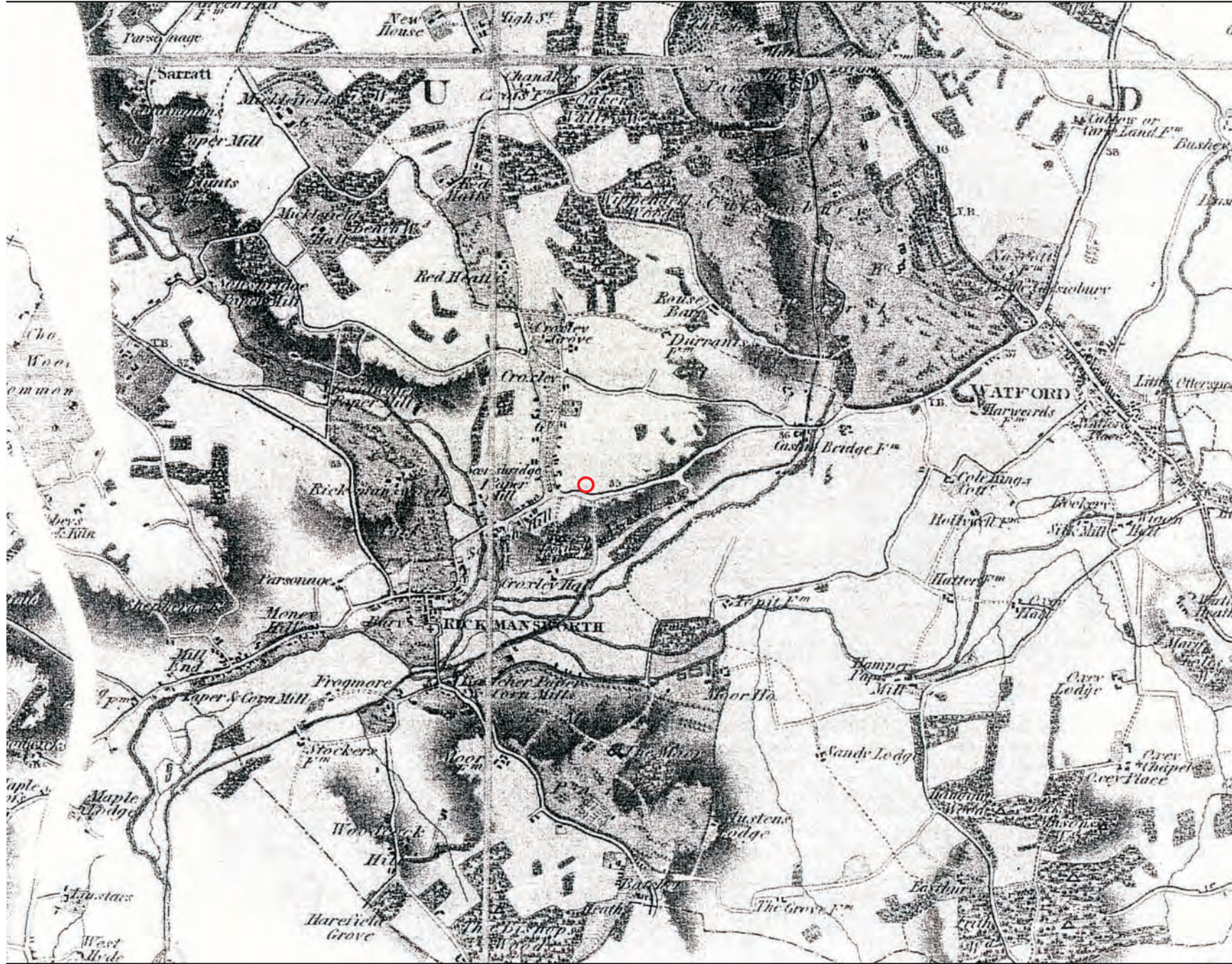
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Figure 4: Croxley Manor in 1766






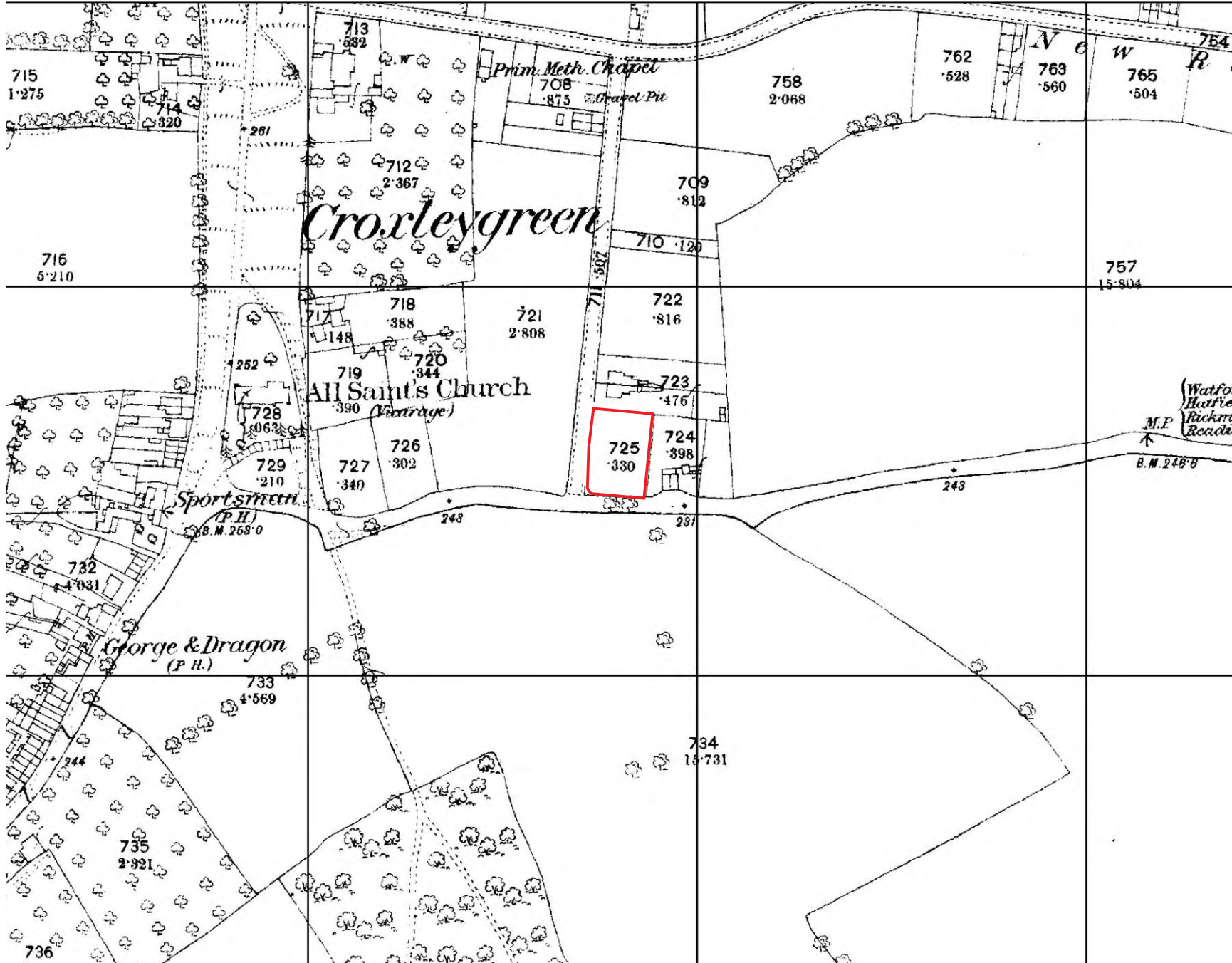
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Figure 5: Bryant's map of 1822






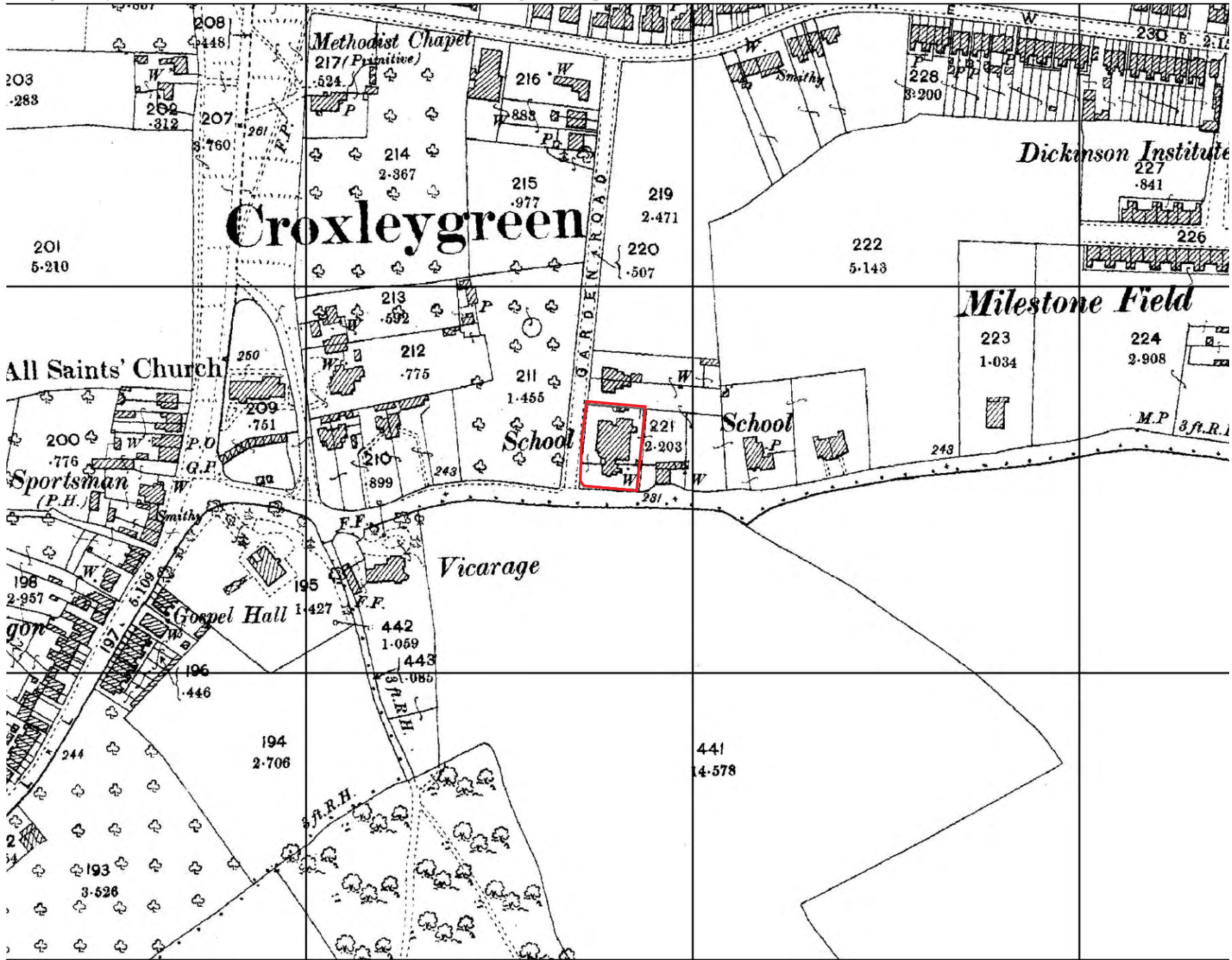
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 Site boundary	
	
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Figure 6: OS 1:2500 scale map 1873




Additional information:

Site boundary

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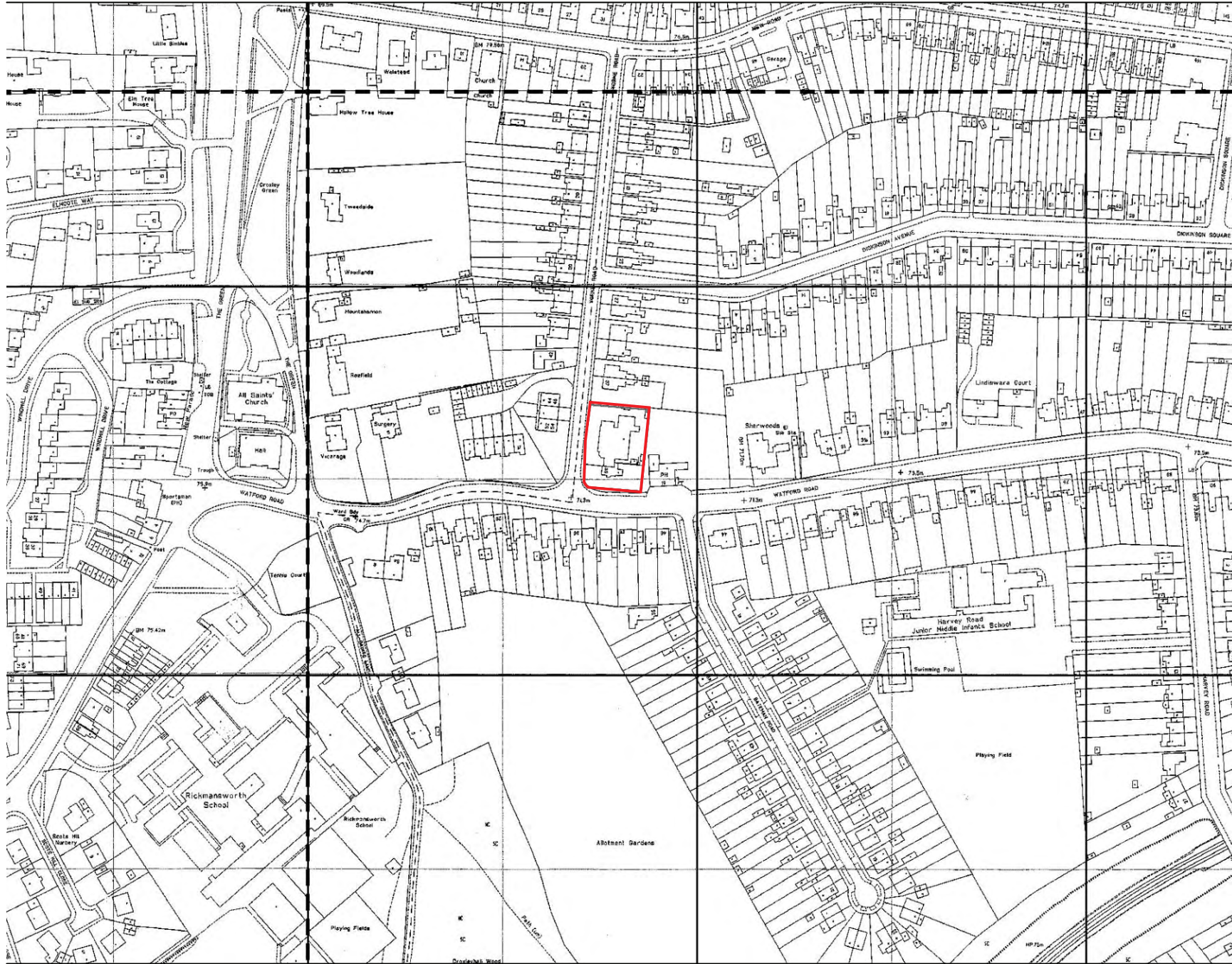
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Figure 7: OS 1:2500 scale map 1898




Additional information:

Site boundary

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Figure 8: OS 1:2500 scale map 1992



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