

Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy

**B3: Technical**

This area is the ‘heart’ of AWE Burghfield, where technical works are undertaken. The area contains the most significant buildings within the site, the ‘Gravel Gerties’.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Period:     | Cold War 1950s – 1980s<br>Post Cold War     |
| Form:       | Small complex with access to adjacent zones |
| Buildings:  | 2 mounded buildings                         |
| Survival:   | As built                                    |
| Condition:  | As built                                    |
| Complexity: | Continuous single use                       |



*The Gravel Gerties, from the southwest*

The Technical area is located at the eastern end of the site, directly south of the stores. It is surrounded by an internal security fence.

B3 is a planned and compact complex of assembly and support buildings, their interrelationship and nature are not easily visible or readable from outside the internal security fence. The overwhelming sense of the area is one of security and formality. The main buildings, known as the ‘Gravel Gerties’ are tall and highly visible landmarks that dominate the landscape. Their distinctive domed roofs differentiate them from surrounding flat roofed buildings. The vertical landscape is generally more striking in B3 than in other areas, in particular the ‘field’ of large steel latticed conducting towers that, like the Gravel Gerties, are highly visible from both within Burghfield and from offsite.

The area has not been altered significantly since construction, although internal arrangements will have been adapted and modernised.

**Values**

The Gravel Gerties assembly buildings have been identified by English Heritage as being ‘remarkably similar in design to those of the main American warhead Pantex assembly plant in Carson County, Texas, and through their architecture reflect the close co-operation between Britain and the United States in

the development of nuclear weapons.’ They are still used today for their original purpose.

As the processes that take place in the area are at the heart of Burghfield’s work, so the vertical landscape in B3 is part of the fundamental character of the site.

Surviving documentation relating to this area is likely to exist on site, but has not been viewed.

**Management**

The area continues to be used for the same activities for which it was built.

B3 demonstrates a low capacity for change, as the Gravel Gerties represent an important example of the sharing of technologies and design between the UK and the USA during the early days of the Cold War. While they are under strict security and safety measures may prevail, the opportunity should be taken to ensure that historic features of the structures are retained as an integral part of the site.

In addition, further investigation of structures in B3 might identify particular features of historic significance.

Should development be unavoidable, it is recommended that the buildings and landscape within this Character Area have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared.

**B4: Process**

B4 is the largest character area occupying roughly ¾ of Burghfield. The area retains the original ROF gridded path network, and the single north-south running access road. A large number of the buildings are mounded and are well spaced out within grassy areas, giving the area a parkland atmosphere.

Period: WWII

Cold War 1950s – 1980s

Post Cold War

Form: Planned clusters of process and storage buildings set along a grid of streets.

Buildings: Mounded storage buildings, brick-built process buildings, brick-built ROF buildings, decontamination shower blocks, water treatment plant and associated infrastructure

Survival: As built

Condition: As built

Complexity: ROF use, followed by use for developing components and non-metallic components for warheads.

B4 is open with buildings spaced out along a gridded network of streets and paths with raised areas and stands of trees interspersed with clusters of buildings. A number of features in B4 that are out of use, boarded or overgrown give the area an abandoned feel, quite different from the other areas of the site.

Most buildings and the layout in B4 date to the original ROF and early AWRE phases of the site, and with no development taking place in later periods, the original character and layout has been well preserved. Prior to construction of the Gravel Gerties, mounded buildings on the eastern side provided the first assembly facility on the site.

The original path network survives, mainly comprising poured concrete slabs with expansion joints fringed by grass and pebbles. Paths are also sunken with raised lawns and banks, the opposite of Aldermaston. Some of the buildings in B4 also have narrow pavements immediately around them. Flow within the area is restricted, and vehicles are not granted access except to use the main north-south running fire road which

is usually fenced off. All movement within B4 is therefore on foot, adding to its quiet character.

B4 contains a number of characteristic single storey yellowish white painted buildings dating to WWII, spaced evenly along paths and roads. In other parts of B4 earth banks divide WWII buildings into small groups. The earth banks around the non-metallic component stores are regularly constructed with few gaps. The stores also have characteristic lines of chimneys that add to the distinctive character of the area.

The vertical landscape is characterised by prominent high steel towers and concrete angled blast walls, which are out of scale with the single storey WWII buildings, representing distinct later development of the area.

B4 has a number of original lamp-posts, manhole covers and signs as well as later versions. The area also contains very prominent fire signs displaying a large 'X'. External metal piping, characteristic of



8P2



8S19

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Burghfield and Aldermaston, is found throughout this area, and both used and disused gantries for the piping are located across B4, some of which have the appearance of gallows. Areas of hardstanding are also visible where structures are no longer present. Each of these features add to the sense of abandonment in this area.

The western area boundary is fringed by a line of tall trees and closes views out of the site from the western perimeter road. Large oaks in the area presumably reflect original field boundaries, and are the only mature trees on the site.

B4 also encompasses the two lane tarmac perimeter road and facility boundary on the southern and eastern edges of the site. At the southern end of B4 within a line of grassed embankments runs the canalised brook. These embankments and their associated foliage screen the site to the south-east, where land falls away to the main road. A WWII pillbox lies in the bottom south-eastern corner and overlooks a small group of fenced off single storey flat-roofed red brick service buildings (11R group), which are of the characteristic type seen at AWE Aldermaston. From this corner of the site the Gravel Gerties dominate the view northwards.

A very large ditch and bank runs alongside the perimeter road on the eastern side of B4. The top of the grass embankment undulates, and is marked by occasional trees along its length. This is accentuated by the embankments of explosive non-metallic components stores in B4 which contribute to the grassy and green character of the area. The northern end of the embankment, to the south-east of the sewage treatment area has a thick screen of conifers.

The general character of B4 is one of small groups of buildings with green spaces and non-metallic components stores between them, and groups of trees dating to the ROF usage of the site. The central and northern sections of B4 have a higher percentage of embanked stores resulting in a greener character. B4 also has long views of the boiler house chimneys in B1.

### Values

The area retains its original layout and buildings without any significant alterations, and is an important surviving element of the ROF and early AWRE site.

Within undisturbed areas there is the potential for buried archaeological remains, in particular in any areas lying along the former brook and near to surviving mature trees and field boundaries. This potential is yet to be quantified.

B4 contains features characteristic of both the wider site and AWE Aldermaston. Conversely the area differs in character from the rest of the site in terms of its sense of abandonment and space.

Surviving documentation relating to B4 is likely to exist on site, but have not been viewed.

### Management

The area was originally used as part of the ROF and has since been used for developing components for warheads.

B4 demonstrates a low capacity for change, as the area represents an important surviving element of the ROF and early AWRE site.

Should development occur, it is recommended that the buildings and landscape within this Character Area have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared, particularly in relation to pillboxes and process buildings.

The archaeological potential of Area B4, which is the largest area of the site, and where buildings are quite widely spaced, is quite high. In particular, areas that surround stands of mature woodland or lie along the original course of the brook have the potential to contain Prehistoric archaeology. Archaeological investigations should be carried out prior to any development.

### B5: Stores

Located at the north-eastern end of the site, B5 is where non-metallic components are stored. The area was planned and built as part of the original ROF development and retains the layout and original mounded cluster of buildings.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Period:     | WWII<br>Cold War 1950s – 1980s  |
| Form:       | Planned cluster of storage buildings connected by road to the main administration and amenity area. |
| Buildings:  | Mounded concrete storage buildings and reservoir  |
| Survival:   | As built  |
| Condition:  | As built  |
| Complexity: | Continuous single use   |



*The Stores from the west*

### Values

The area retains its original layout and buildings without any significant alterations, representing an important surviving element of the ROF and early AWRE site.

Within undisturbed areas there is the potential for buried archaeological remains, in particular in the north-eastern corner of the site.

B5 contains features characteristic of both the wider site and AWRE Aldermaston.

Surviving documentation relating to Area B5 are likely to exist on site, but have not been viewed.

### Management

The area was originally used as part of the ROF storage facility and has been used for a similar function ever since.

B5 demonstrates a medium capacity for change, as the area represents an important surviving element of the ROF and early AWRE site.

Structures, buildings and layout associated with the original use of Burghfield as a Royal Ordnance Factory should be recorded if they are to be removed. It is recommended that the buildings and landscape within B5 have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared.

Archaeological investigations should be carried out prior to any development.

B5 is located at the north-eastern end of the site, and is adjacent to the administration and amenity area.

B5 is characterised by large ROF non-metallic component storage buildings with earth embankments topped by characteristic roof structures comprising protruding vertical cabinets with concrete flat roofs extending beyond them. Only the building entrances are visible through the earth banks. The embankments around the buildings, and trees along southern edge of the site give the impression of large undulating grassed area. Between the embankments are views of buildings to the south in B4 and B7.

The north-west of B5 is considerably greener in character than B2/B3/B4 and there are long views of the buildings of B2, the Gravel Gerties and the field of steel pylons in B3. To the north of the area are views of mature deciduous trees outside the facility boundary.

B5 has the external metal piping seen across the site and at AWRE Aldermaston, some of which is carried to buildings on angle section latticed towers.

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**B6: ROF Accommodation**

B6 is not located within the site perimeter fence, but the buildings are closely associated with the ROF site, built to accommodate workers from the 1940s onwards. The majority of the buildings within the area are empty, but some are still maintained as private residences.

- Period: WWII  
Cold War 1950s – 1980s  
Post Cold War
- Form: Linear development of single and double storey buildings along the western boundary of the site.
- Buildings: Concrete built, single and double storey private dwellings.
- Survival: As built
- Condition: As built
- Complexity: Continuous single use, some now not used



B6 is a narrow area lying between The Mearings and the fence on the western edge of the site. There are nine individual dwellings. The houses are all concrete, flat roofed, and some retain their original window and doors. Further down the lane, two similar double storey houses are also still occupied. Those buildings which are occupied are well maintained, with gardens and driveways providing access to the Mearings. The buildings are located behind embankments. The boundary of the area is provided by the site perimeter fence to the east, and the road to the west, giving the strip a private residential character, which contrasts with the military character of the AWE site.

In the south-western corner of B6 is a complex of buildings including the social club and associated sports pitches, reflecting the amenity value of the area for the Burghfield staff. The north end of the sports pitches are delineated by a garden of deciduous trees, which enclose the sports area in a similar way to those at Aldermaston.

The perimeter road is tarmac with smooth kerbstones, with areas of gravel and grass at street corners rather than paving. Other areas of tarmac border directly

onto grass with no pavement. On either side of the perimeter road are large areas of gravel.

The perimeter road is sunken relative to the surrounding embanked ground, above which are the higher building platforms, which are at angles to the tarmac access roads so that the entrances to the buildings face diagonally south-west and west-north-west. To the north and south of Gate 3 the road slopes down in both directions and there are views west towards a late 19th century Arts and Crafts house with Jacobian style chimneys. Facing east the rest of the site is screened by a line of tall trees just inside the boundary of B4.

B6 shares features in common with the rest of the site and AWE Aldermaston, including lagged external pipes with associated gantries and two timber circular disconnected telegraph poles, which are situated near the dog kennels.

### Values

B6 represents a good surviving element of the ROF site, the only residential area so close to the fence at either Aldermaston or Burghfield.

The area contains the site sports pitches and social club and as such has an important amenity value for the site staff.

Within undisturbed areas there is the potential for buried archaeological remains.

B6 contains features characteristic of both the wider site and AWE Aldermaston.

Surviving documentation relating to Area B6 is likely to exist on site, but has not been viewed.

### Management

The area has been in continuous single use since it was built, however, some of the residential buildings are no longer occupied.

B6 demonstrates a medium capacity for change, particularly as most of the area consists of empty space.

Structures, buildings and layout associated with the original use of Burghfield as a Royal Ordnance Factory should be recorded if they are to be removed. It is recommended that the buildings and landscape within B6 have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared.

Archaeological investigations should be carried out prior to any development.

Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy

**B7: Laboratories**

Description

Period: WWII

Cold War 1950s – 1980s

Post Cold War

Form: Planned clusters of offices and Laboratories

Buildings: Engineering workshops, single and double storey, timber store, some buildings retain 1940s features

Survival: As built

Condition: Some newly renovated

Complexity: Predominantly 1940s, some 1950s



10A13A



10A21

B7 contains varied forms of buildings, many of which date to WWII, including single storey painted brick offices and a pitched roof timber store. Metal clad engineering workshops were added to service the Assembly Area. Some temporary 1950s buildings are rendered, and are interspersed among the older buildings. However, the buildings and their layout share common characteristics that create the appearance of a large planned complex. For example 10A8 is a large corrugated steel shed that mirrors the other buildings, 10A9, 10A10, 10A12, 10A17 and 10A18 are of a similar style and all share similar fenestration, and 10A6 is a single storey 1980s/1990s building with pilasters, massing and form that respect those of the earlier buildings in B7. Building 10A18 is on a raised earth bank and echoes the landscape immediately north in Area B5.

Despite having no pavements, this area has a feel of community, which other areas at Burghfield lack. This is heightened by the setting of some of the buildings. To the front of the canteen building is welcoming brick and laminated sandstone paving with flower beds, laid recently.

There are numerous small timber guard huts in B7, and external metal pipework runs alongside the east perimeter road. The lighting in B7 consists of hexagonal tapering lamp posts. Other furniture includes a red phone box, similar to that in Area A17 at Aldermaston, and manhole covers characteristic of those across the site. B7 was walled (these have

recently been removed) and there are now clear views out of the site and into Assembly. Culverts run through the area, re-connecting with the brook outside the site. A raised embankment covered with trees runs from the Pingewood gate and may be associated with the early railway into the site.

To the east of building 10A17 is a break in the character of the area, as buildings 10A30 and 10A13A differ considerably from others in the area, despite being on the same area of embanked ground. The historic character of B7 resumes at the eastern corner of the area with buildings 10A13 and 10A14, which are joined creating a monolithic appearance and giving a stark backdrop to the lawn to their south-west. This lawn has been created by the open space afforded by the buildings on the north side of B7 aligning with Street No. 10, and by building 10A30 aligning to the perimeter road. The pleasant lawn area contains three large mature conifers and a line of steel posts relating to former features in the area. There are also long exterior views to the east of the site from this point and views to the north of open grassland.

Trident Way is a tree lined avenue along the length of the northern boundary of B7 leading from the Pingewood gate to the assembly area. It is raised above Street No. 10 with which it is parallel, and the grassed banks between the two roads and to the north of Trident Way form a double embankment, which together with the nearest of the Gravel Gerties and the mounded structures in B5 creates a wide landscape of grassed embankments in this corner of the site. The buildings and plan of B7 are largely oriented to align with Trident Way.

### **Values**

The area contains surviving buildings of the ROF, and irregular landscaping (to be confirmed) may reflect the location of the early railway line.

The area has always operated in association with the processes and servicing requirements of the Gravel Gerties.

B7 contains features characteristic of both the wider site and AWE Aldermaston.

Surviving documentation relating to Area B7 is likely to exist on site, but has not been viewed.

### **Management**

B7 has been in continuous single use since it was built.

B7 demonstrates a medium capacity for change, particularly as many of the buildings date to WWII and have a distinct character as a group.

Structures, buildings and layout associated with the original use of Burghfield as a Royal Ordnance Factory should be recorded if they are to be removed. It is recommended that the buildings and landscape within B7 have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared.

## Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy

**AWE Blacknest Character Areas****Overview of AWE Blacknest**

AWE Blacknest is situated in an early 20th century country house on the Berkshire / Hampshire border. Set within c7 acres of planned formal garden, Blacknest is a much different site from the industrial Aldermaston and Burghfield sites. In common with the other AWE sites, Blacknest has its own academic community, many of whom have worked at Blacknest since the early days of its development as a forensic seismological centre. The site has a broad character of service and function to the west, and the gardens to the north, south and east give the site a more informal leisure feel.

**AWE Blacknest Character Areas**

- Bn1: Landscaped Garden: forming the eastern boundary of the site, this area is formed by the landscaped garden associated with Blacknest House.
- Bn2: Walled Garden: forming the northern part of the site, this area forms the original walled garden and orchard associated with Blacknest House.
- Bn3: Blacknest House: Blacknest House and surrounding landscaping.
- Bn4: Car park, stables and outbuildings: located to the south of Blacknest House, this area comprises the car park, stables and farm outbuildings.

*Blacknest house today**Blacknest extension*

**Bn1: Landscaped Garden**

Bn1 forms the eastern boundary of the AWE Blacknest site, and it comprises the planned garden associated with Blacknest House. At the northern end of the area is the Lodge House.

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Period:     | WWII<br>Cold War 1950s – 1980s<br>Post Cold War  |
| Form:       | Large landscaped garden, comprising a large open lawn, clusters of mature deciduous trees and rhododendron bushes. |
| Buildings:  | Lodge House  |
| Survival:   | As built/planned   |
| Condition:  | As built/planned, maintained for use   |
| Complexity: | Continuous single use  |

from the 1980s, and several signs have been erected to direct site visitors to parking bays. Plantations comprising dense thickets of rhododendron and trees either side of the meandering drive create a sense of enclosure in both directions, so the main House is suddenly revealed, as is the Lodge House at the northern end.

To the west of the dense thickets along the driveway is a small field with long views of the large thatched buildings to the north. In this intimate field the careful management of the dense thickets shows that the informal gardens in Bn1 are better managed than those in the north-west field (Bn2), presumably for leisure time use.



*Blacknest garden*

Bn1 is the formal front garden of Blacknest House, comprising a large open gently undulating lawn surrounded by mature deciduous trees and plantations of rhododendron bushes and perennial plants. The southern and eastern boundaries of Blacknest consist of incomplete screens of mature trees separating the site from the roads running past the complex.

There has been no development within the garden and it retains its original layout. The relationship of the area to the House and other parts of the Blacknest site has not been compromised, so it remains very much the formal landscaped garden of an early 20th century country house. In the southern part of the lawn a line of ancient large mature trees may represent a field boundary predating 1815. Views from the garden to the north and south of the main house are intended to maximise views of its facades.

The Lodge House at the northern entrance is single storey built in Flemish bond orange brick with chamfered base and overhanging eaves. A screen of conifers and picket fence separate the lodge as a distinctive entrance, but it is of little historic interest.

The driveway has been resurfaced, and the original kerbstones have been replaced. There are several lamp-posts next to the driveway which appear to date

**Values**

Bn1 has not been significantly altered and it retains its character as an early 20th century country house formal garden.

The main lawn and the smaller field north of the house provide an important amenity function for the AWE staff.

Due to the undisturbed nature of the area, the potential exists for the survival of buried archaeological remains associated with Prehistoric, Medieval and Post-medieval activity, as indicated by the line of trees possibly representing ancient field boundary.

Surviving documentation relating to Area Bn1 is likely to exist on site, but has not been viewed.

## Management

Bn1 has been in continuous single use since it was built, initially as a residence and since the 1950s as part of the AWE facilities.

The area demonstrates a low capacity for change due to the unaltered nature of the early 20th century country house and garden.

Any proposed development at Blacknest should respect the rural country house setting of the complex and seek to reuse existing buildings.

Should development be unavoidable it is recommended that the buildings and landscape within Bn1 have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared. Archaeological investigations should be carried out prior to any development.

**Bn2: Walled Garden**

The walled garden is located at the northern end of the Blacknest complex, and contains an open grassed area with sundial, small brick outbuildings, the remnants of a fruit orchard, and an adjoining field to the north.

Period: WWII

Cold War 1950s – 1980s

Post Cold War

Form: Walled garden, retaining original early 20th century outbuildings and garden features.

Buildings: Small brick-built outbuildings and brick wall

Survival: As built

Condition: Externally maintained

Complexity: Continuous single use

Located to the north of Blacknest House, Bn2 includes the original early 20th century walled garden. It retains many of its original features including a sundial, several small brick-built outhouses and fruit trees which once formed part of an orchard. The gently undulating lawn also presumably conceals evidence of former beds. The area may have functioned as a kitchen garden as it is adjacent to the service range of the House.

Modern additions to the garden include a concrete panel fence, several large telegraph poles and a small brick-built shed-like structure which is used to house sensitive seismic recording instruments. These do not significantly alter the overall character of the area, which retains the feel of an early 20th century walled garden.

The wall is a tile capped, early 20th century English-bonded wall, which has not been significantly altered. It has the characteristic pattern of orange brick punctuated with flared heads seen across the site, and the corner piers have stone decorative balled finials. Some parts of the wall have been recapped but this has been done using similar materials and methods.

Immediately north of the walled garden is another field. It is bounded to the west by 20th century

concrete and wire mesh fencing, which detracts from the character of the space. This garden is at a lower level to the land around the House, and there is a line of trees on its northern edge that may screen this space in the summer. The boundary between this garden and the smaller garden to its east (in Bn1) consists of raised bank with bush and tree planting which may delineate a former field boundary. The north, east and western boundaries also include trees, which give the area an enclosed feel. From this corner of the site the original main building appears slightly overawed by its northern extension.

**Values**

The lack of development, and the sympathetic design of new additions to the Blacknest complex means that the Walled Garden retains its original appearance and relationship with the rest of the site.

This lack of development also means that there is the potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains associated with activity from the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval periods within the area.

The wall has the pattern of brickwork that is characteristic of the early 20th century buildings on the site.

Surviving documentation relating to Area Bn2 is likely to exist on site, but has not been viewed.

**Management**

Bn2 has been in continuous single use since it was built, probably initially as a kitchen garden and orchard, and since the 1950s as part of the AWE facilities.

The area demonstrates a low capacity for change due to the unaltered nature of the early 20th century country house and garden.

Any proposed development at Blacknest should respect the rural country house setting of the complex and seek to reuse existing buildings.

Should development be unavoidable it is recommended that the buildings and landscape within Bn2 have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared. Archaeological investigations should be carried out prior to any development.

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**Bn3: Blacknest House**

Bn3 comprises Blacknest House, the majority of which was built in 1915. The extension to the north west was built during the 1950s, and although it slightly over-awes the main House, its construction is broadly sympathetic.

Period: WWII

Cold War 1950s – 1980s

Post Cold War

Form: Blacknest House

Buildings: Country house, modern extensions

Survival: As built

Condition: Maintained for use

Complexity: Continuous single use

The majority of Blacknest House was built in 1915, with extensions added in the 1950s when AWE took over the site to accommodate the new workforce. The main body of the house retains its original features, including hipped, half hipped and gabled roofs, a mock Tudor frontage and bay windows. The original front door is still in place, although the original wooden window frames have been replaced with PVC frames throughout the building.

The original driveway has been altered to accommodate a visitor car park, and several modern lamp-posts have been placed outside the main building. The pathways are all tarmac. Views from the north of the site show that the 1950s northern extension building slightly overwhelms the original main building.

The House and grounds are on high ground relative to the land to the west, affording long views of distant hills, particularly from the upper floor. The House is designed to sit centrally and dominate the landscape, and along with the early outbuildings to its south-west was built with views of the garden (Bn1). Views from the garden towards the buildings emphasise the importance of the facades. The house is in the shelter of a larger classical country house to the north, although in the early 20th century Blacknest house would have been more fashionable.

**Values**

The house is a characterful reminder of the early days of experimentation and research by AWRE.

Blacknest House and the landscape that it dominates retains the character of an early 20th century country house.

**Management**

Blacknest House has been in continuous use since it was built, initially as a country residence, and since the 1950s as part of the AWE facilities.

Bn3 demonstrates a low capacity for change due to the unaltered nature of the early 20th century country house and garden.

Any proposed development at Blacknest should respect the rural country house setting of the complex and seek to reuse existing buildings.

Current and past staff at Blacknest hold a wealth of information about the past use, not only of their site, but of the other AWE sites too. The opportunity to collect this information in the form of oral and written histories would ensure this valuable and vulnerable resource is protected.

The provision of interpretation within Blacknest, following the development of the house from the early 19th century through to the present day would complement the existing interpretation material already in use on site and those displays or interpretation centres set up at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

Should development be unavoidable it is recommended that the buildings and associated landscape within Bn3 have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared.



*Blacknest walled garden*

**Bn4: Car park, stables and outbuildings**

Located at the rear of Blacknest House, Bn4 comprises an open car parking area enclosed by an early 20th century stable block and associated outbuildings. The area is currently used as the main car park for AWE Blacknest staff.

Period: Post-medieval  
WWII

Cold War 1950s – 1980s

Post Cold War

Form: Open car parking area surrounded by early 20th century stable block and outbuildings

Buildings: Stables, outbuildings

Survival: As built

Condition: As built

Complexity: Continuous single use

Bn4 forms the main car parking area for Blacknest staff, and comprises a large car park and stable block with associated outbuildings, which form the boundary of the area. The overall character of the area is closely connected to the early 20th century country house, although recent additions to the buildings, and the erection of directional signs have detracted slightly from this and resulted in a more institutional feel.

At the southern end of the area is the car park entrance, with a small brick-built guardhouse which originally controlled access to the site during the early AWRE days.

The 2-storey stable buildings which form part of the boundary preserve the country house feel of Bn4, although the large volume of cars parked around the area detract from this slightly. The ancillary buildings at the south of the ensemble are single storey flat roofed red brick buildings characteristic of AWE Aldermaston and Burghfield, but with different detailing incorporating the ridged roofs of the main complex, and a diamond pattern of protruding headers within the brickwork, which attempts to echo the flared headers of the low shed opposite and refers to the Arts and Crafts/Gothic influences of the main complex buildings. The outbuildings off site to

the west of Bn4 contribute to the character of the complex.

Bn4 has not been significantly altered since its original development in the 1950s, although several new signposts have been erected to control flows to and from the car park. Modern additions to the surrounding buildings include PVC windows and doors, which are not totally sympathetic with the original features, but do not detract greatly from the overall character of the area.

Landscaping within the area is minimal and there is more reliance on views from the area to the adjacent walled garden, and to the open fields and wooded area to the south and west. The view along the drive from the south entrance is channelled past the outbuildings to the long sloping roof and timber studded gable of the House’s southern element with its prominent canted oriel window.



*Blacknest Stables*

**Values**

While Bn4 is not as well preserved as Blacknest House, it still retains the appearance of the courtyard and stables of an early 20th century country house, a feeling accentuated by the stylistic similarities to buildings off site to the west.

Bn4 has an important function in providing the main car parking area on site, which ensures cars are parked behind the buildings, and therefore do not detract from the main front facade of the House and its associated garden.

## Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy

The majority of the area consists of hard standing, but within those areas not disturbed by intrusive groundworks there is the potential for buried archaeological remains associated with activity from the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval periods.

### Management

Bn4 has been in continuous use since it was built, initially as stables and outbuildings, and since the 1950s as part of the AWE facilities.

Bn4 demonstrates a medium capacity for change, as while the character of the area is closely connected to the early 20th century house, there have been a number of recent additions. However, any proposed development should respect the rural country house setting of the complex and seek to reuse existing buildings.

Should development be unavoidable it is recommended that the buildings and associated landscape within Bn4 have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared.

Archaeological investigations should be carried out prior to any development.



## 6. MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

### Management Issues

The values of the AWE sites are embodied in their fabric, and in their written and remembered history. Risks to those values therefore derive from:

- Redevelopment plans proposing the demolition or redevelopment of current areas of value.
- Natural deterioration in condition over time within abandoned areas, and where buildings are not brought back into use.
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of the significance of certain areas and structures, leading to lack of appropriate management provision.
- Loss of unwritten information – the memories and experiences of those who retire from the staff
- Inappropriate repair and maintenance

In this light, a strategy is needed for protecting the heritage value of the AWE sites. Management and development of the site can be informed by those values which contribute to the unique heritage character of AWE, so that a full understanding of the value of the heritage can be weighed against other factors in the decision making process.

### Management Principles

In general terms, the following are the key principles that should underpin the management of AWE's heritage. These principles are based on the understanding of the site set out above, and commitment to conservation legislation and best practise upheld by the Ministry of Defence and English Heritage (referred to in chapter 1).

These principles might, in future, form the basis of a 'Management Agreement' for the site, between AWE, the MOD and the Local Authority / English Heritage. Such an agreement would underpin decision making, and enable change within its broad parameters.

#### 1. Acknowledging the value of the site fabric and layout

The heritage of AWE Aldermaston, Burghfield and Blacknest is not only embodied in the documented history, but in the fabric, plan and layout of the sites themselves. This includes the pattern of functional

areas, landscaping, roads and open spaces. These features are vital to the understanding of the development of these sites, and of the processes and events which have taken place within them.

Any proposals for alterations to the sites could take into consideration the possibility of maintaining key buildings, thoroughfares and landscaping, or referencing current layout in new development.

An assessment of the value of each character area, based on a thorough understanding of the site fabric, layout and history allows a professional judgement of the 'capacity for change' within each area. This in turn allows for an appropriate management strategy to be devised. The capacity for change is measured on the following scale:

- High – change will not affect heritage significance
- Medium - change may affect heritage significance, or will affect it to a small degree
- Low – change will affect heritage significance to a large degree



AWE - 24863-77 (D3) South Road, Aldermaston

#### 2. Recording historic structures and areas

As well as buildings identified as being of particular significance, there should be an awareness that even apparently small and non-descript buildings and features, not identified for their particular function or form, have a vital contribution to make to an appreciation of the overall planned site and of its history. If buildings are not to be preserved,

all significant structures, and some less important buildings that contribute to this understanding of the layout of the site at different periods, need to be recorded. Recording will include the interiors of buildings in some areas, depending on their significance. For the most significant buildings, recording (based on EH guidance for recording at Harwell 2004) must include:

- A short account of the building/area, written by a knowledgeable individual, who can explain why it was built and its scientific significance in a manner understandable to a lay person
- Copies of a selection of plan(s) of the building showing room functions, at different periods if significant
- Copies of relevant contemporary diagrams that illustrate its operation
- A selection of photographs, including historical images if available, showing the exterior form of the building, its situation, working environment and any period design details.
- Lists of archive material relating to the building and intended place of disposition or disposal should be made, and any archives, artefacts, models, manuals, etc that may be suitable for retention identified.
- A bibliography of significant articles in scientific journals describing the building, equipment or processes carried out within it.

### 3. Enhancing historic character

The preferred option is always to preserve and adapt buildings rather than to demolish them. The restoration of original building features (for example windows or roofing) might be considered in the context of any redevelopment for reuse. The reinstatement of features on older buildings would enhance the legibility of the heritage of the site.

### 4. Understanding more about the resource

In terms of buried archaeology, the potential within certain areas of the sites is high, in particular close to Grims Bank and the Roman road at Aldermaston. Archaeological investigations should be carried out in the context of proposed development, where potential is considered to exist. For standing structures including buildings, further research, to identify the survival of unusual features or alterations would enhance

knowledge of the origin and historic development of the sites. Unique features of buildings, not known other than to a select few, may represent the deployment of particular technologies or the function and operation of specific equipment. Oral history projects could provide additional detailed information about particular buildings and areas.

### 5. Preserving and enhancing documentation

The survival of the documented history of the sites will be vital for future generations to understand the significance of the AWE sites and buildings. All measures should be taken to keep and archive documentation relating to buildings, processes and events, in such a way that it could eventually be made accessible to the public. This should include documentation produced when buildings are altered or demolished, as well as facilities management documentation that documents the history of a building's use. In particular, when key staff members retire, their experience of working in key buildings should be written down or otherwise recorded.

### 6. Sharing information

Interpretation and educational opportunities should be considered, to promote the history and significance of the sites to those who work there. Where possible, information relating to the history of the site should be made accessible to the public. Pamphlets, information sheets and handbooks could be developed in order to make the heritage of the sites more accessible.

### Management Opportunities

Particular buildings and areas contribute to a greater extent to the unique character and significance of the site. The above conservation principles apply to different parts of the site in varying degrees, depending on the character and value of a particular area. In addition to application of the principles above to the AWE sites overall, particular opportunities presented at each of the three AWE sites are listed below. A summary Action Plan setting out next steps in pursuing these opportunities is provided at the end of this chapter.

## Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy

## AWE Aldermaston

## Protecting the site fabric

If feasible, the following buildings, and the layout of the character areas in which they are located should be retained, in view of their high historical, technological and social value, and the contribution they make towards the appreciation of the development of the AWE site.

**B9V1, B9V2, B9V3, B9V10, B9V11, B9V12** are good surviving elements of 1950s AWE non-metallic components stores located in Area **A19**. **A1, A3** and **A6** in area **CT1** are the buildings in which Britain's first nuclear test device was developed. In area **A4** buildings **C3.1** and **F12.5** are the only surviving WWII hangar buildings on site. In addition, the existing layout of the AWE site respects the lines of the airfield runway, particularly in areas **A6, A7** and **A14**, and this should continue to be respected as far as possible. **F6.1**, in area **A2** has provided directors and senior administrative accommodation and meeting rooms since the early 1950s.



AWE - 24863-56 F61, Main building, Area A2

## Recording

Prior to any development, it is recommended that the buildings and their settings within the following Character Areas have a historic and photographic record prepared. Dependent on the significance of the area, this should be carried out to either a basic or detailed level.

The following character areas should have a detailed record prepared:

**Area CT1 Technical North, CT2 Technical South, Areas EX1 and EX2 Northern and Southern**

**Non-Metallic Components Areas, Area EX4 Non-Metallic Components Laboratories, A2 Administration and Amenity, Area 12 Cold War R and D, and A19 Grim's Bank & Non-Metallic Components Stores.**

These character areas should be recorded to a basic level:

**EX5 Burning Ground, EX6 Utilities, EX7 Southeast Corner, A3 Training, A4 WWII Airfield, Area 10 Research and Development, A14 Emergency Services, A15 Griffin Road, and A18 Decoy Pond.**



AWE - 24863-76 (F75.18), in Area A4

## Increasing understanding

Should development take place, archaeological investigation should take place in some character areas in order to record potential buried archaeological remains. In some areas archaeological watching briefs during initial construction works should be maintained, and in areas of greater potential archaeological evaluation should be carried out.

Archaeological watching briefs should be maintained during initial construction works in the following areas:

**EX1 Southern Area Storage, EX2 Northern Area Storage, EX7 Southeast Corner, A2 Administration & Amenity, A4 WWII Airfield, A5 Derelict Airfield, A6 Tadley Gate, A14 Emergency Services, A15 Griffin Road, A16 Site Tips & Ponds, and A18 Decoy Pond.**

Archaeological investigations should be carried out in the following area prior to any development:

**A19 Grim's Bank & Non-Metallic Components Stores.**

**Sharing information**

The provision of interpretational material, including historic photographs and other information at the following areas, would provide AWE staff and visitors with a better appreciation of the WWII and Cold War heritage of the site. In **area A19 at Grim's Bank**, three interpretation boards are currently planned to be in place in early 2007. These signs are to include reconstruction drawings and historical information on the bank and will enhance the appreciation and understanding of the area. In **A2 Administration and Amenity**, the Heritage Centre in **D29.1** is a valuable educational resource, and better use could be made of it by improving the awareness of it to AWE staff and opening access to greater numbers of visitors. The provision of interpretational material within the lobby of **F6.1** to complement the existing large site plan, pictures and plaques would also be beneficial. For **A4 WWII Airfield**, greater awareness of the fact that features of the airfield survive on site could be promoted, by the provision of interpretational material on site, perhaps along South Road. Area **A12 Cold War Research and CT1 Technical North** displays excellent survival of the layout and plan of the 1950s AWE site, which enhances the value of the area for future interpretation.

**AWE Burghfield**

**Protecting the site fabric**

The Gravel Gerties (Area B3) represent an important example of the sharing of technologies and design between the UK and the USA during the early days of the Cold War. Whilst they are under strict security, the opportunity should be taken to ensure that historic features of the structures are retained as an integral part of the site.

**Recording**

Prior to any development, it is recommended that the buildings and their settings within all character areas at Burghfield have a detailed historic and photographic record prepared if they are to be removed, in particular the pillboxes and process buildings.

**Increasing understanding**

The archaeological potential of Area **B4**, which is the largest area of the site, and where buildings are quite widely spaced, is quite high. In particular, areas that surround stands of mature woodland or lie along the original course of the brook, have the potential to contain prehistoric archaeology.

Should development take place, archaeological investigation should take place in some character areas in order to record potential buried archaeological remains. In some areas archaeological watching briefs during initial construction works should be maintained, and in areas of greater potential archaeological evaluation should be carried out.

Archaeological watching briefs should be maintained during initial construction works in area **B1**.

Archaeological investigations should be carried out prior to any development in the following areas:

**B4 Process, B5 Stores, and B6 ROF Accommodation.**

In addition, further investigation of structures in areas **B7** and **B3** might identify additional buildings of historic significance.

**Sharing information**

The provision of an interpretation centre or area at Burghfield (perhaps a display area or offshoot of the historical collection at Aldermaston) would provide a valuable contribution towards the understanding and appreciation of the site and its development for the community who work there. It could potentially be made publicly accessible, if set up outside the main perimeter fence, near to reception.

**AWE Blacknest**

**AWE Blacknest is a more intimate site than both Aldermaston and Burghfield, and therefore the character areas at AWE Blacknest are more highly integrated than those at the other sites. Development impacts to one area are highly likely to affect the heritage significance of the other areas and the wider site. The management strategies for Blacknest are therefore broadly applicable to all of its constituent character areas, in particular those relating to the fabric of the site, increasing understanding, and the potential for enhancement through interpretation.**

## Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy

### Protecting the site fabric

Any proposed development at Blacknest should respect the rural country house setting of the complex and seek to reuse existing buildings.

### Increasing understanding

It was noted during preparation of the strategy that current and past staff at Blacknest hold a wealth of information about the past use, not only of their site, but of the other AWE sites too. The opportunity to collect this information from them in the form of oral and written histories would ensure this valuable and vulnerable resource is protected.

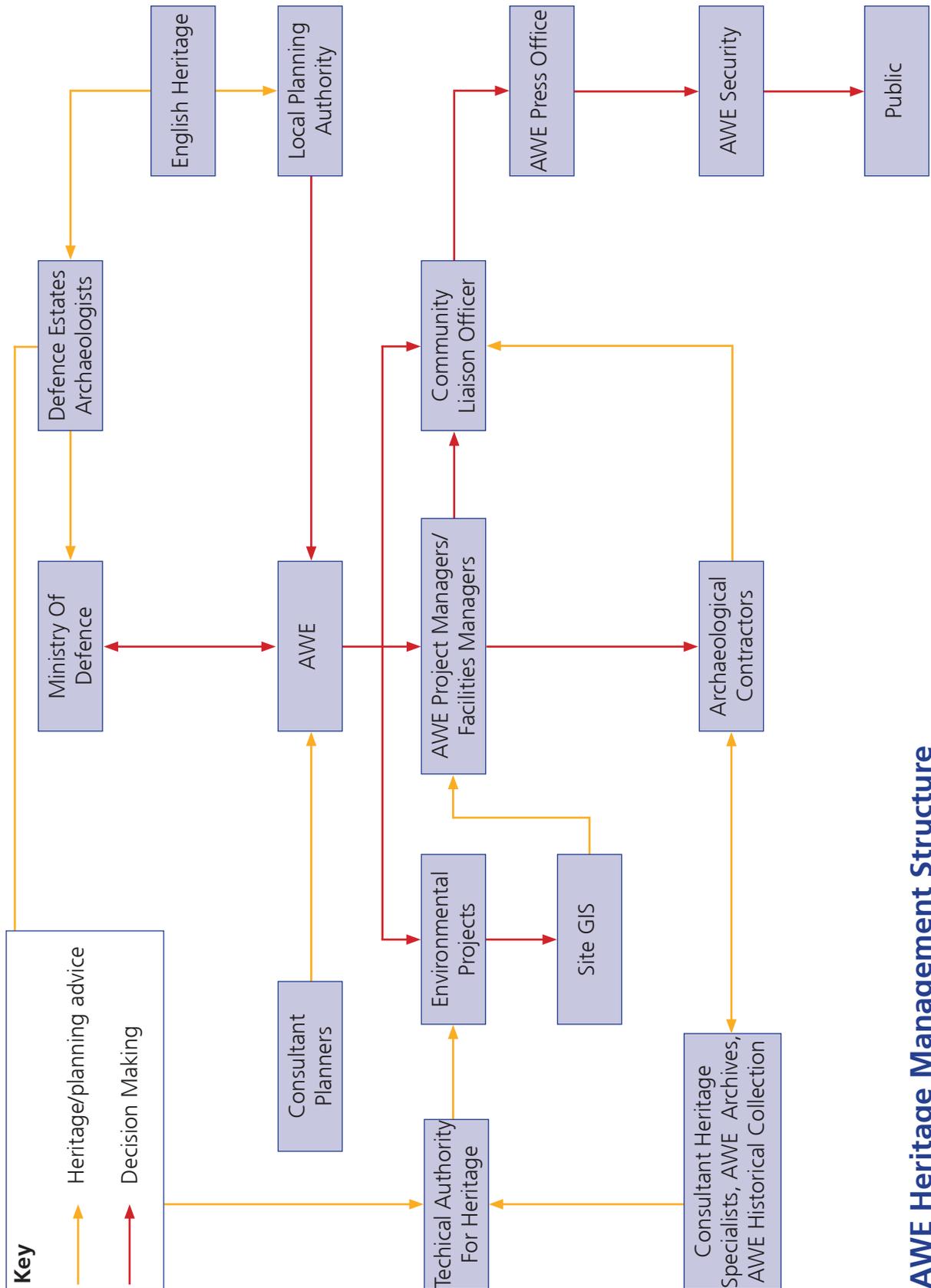
The archaeological potential of Blacknest is quite high. In particular areas B1 and B2, which comprise garden areas undisturbed by development. These areas have the potential for buried remains relating to the Country House, and earlier. Therefore, in the event that development occurs, archaeological investigation should take place in these character areas in order to record potential buried archaeological remains.

### Sharing information

The provision of interpretation within Blacknest, following the development of the house from the early 19th century through to the present day would complement the existing interpretation material already in use on site and those displays or interpretation centres set up at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

### Management Strategy

The Action Plan below summarises the actions required to drive forward the Heritage Strategy. Following consultation with AWE directors, ownership and timescales for these activities can be developed. The Action Plan should be reviewed every year and updated at least every five years. Ultimately, the Strategy could form the basis of a Management Agreement, between AWE, the MOD and Statutory and Planning Authorities.



**AWE Heritage Management Structure**

## Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy

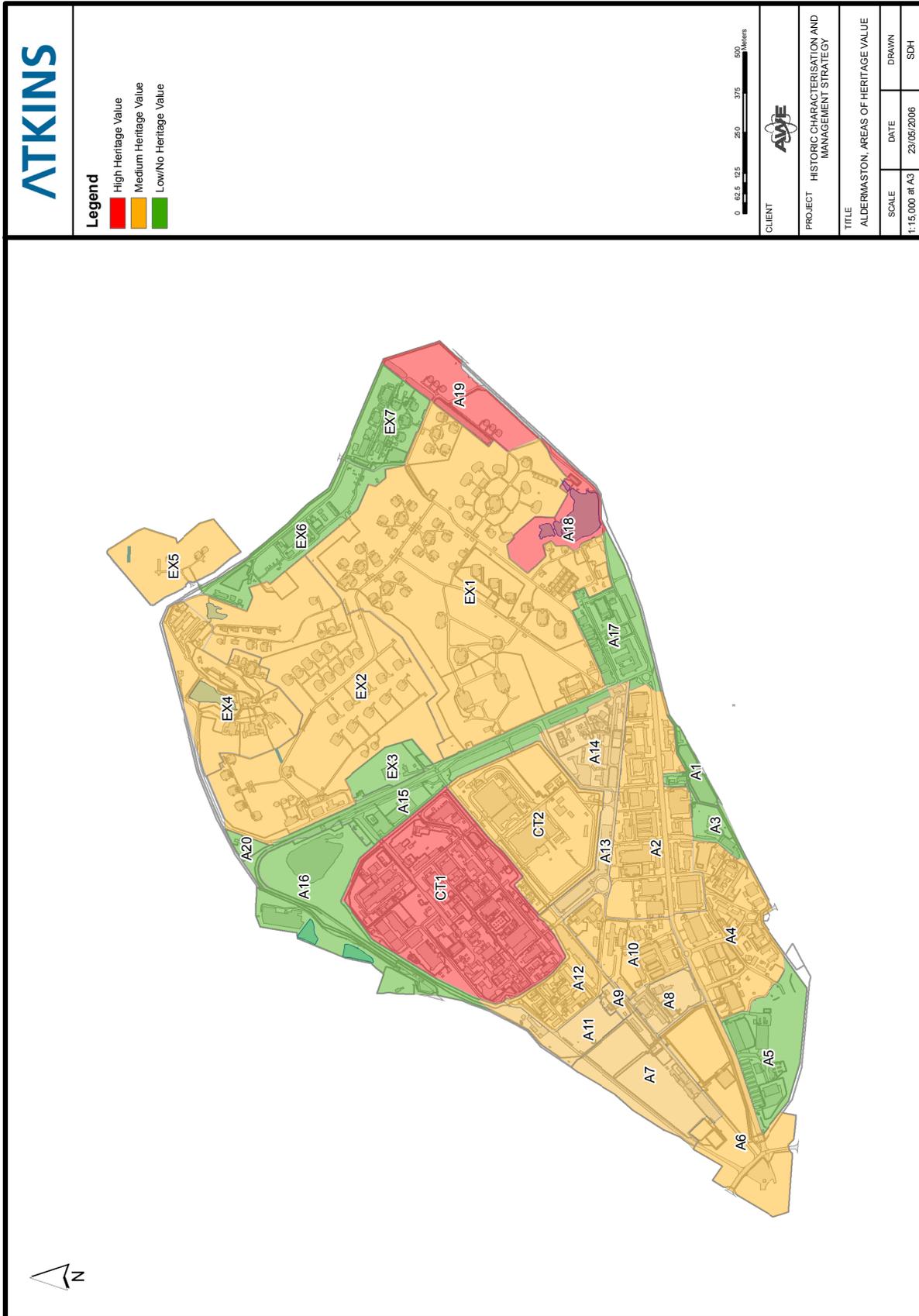
## Management Strategy Action Plan

| Management principle  | Management proposals  | Owner/authority level   | Trigger  |
|---|---|---|--|
| Principle 1<br>– Acknowledging the value of site layout and buildings | Obtain buy in to strategy from DE, Local Authority and English Heritage   | AWE   | Consultation on Site Masterplan.                       |
|   | Ensure Masterplan takes account of Heritage Strategy  | AWE/Consultant Planners   | RPS/ Atkins Liason with Stakeholders                   |
|   | Develop a heritage awareness campaign<br>– Wayne Cocroft to give a lecture?   | AWE/Community Liaison   | Approval by EH   |
|   | Launch the Heritage Strategy and make sure PMs/FMs/Planners are aware of how to use the strategy in planning  | AWE/Environmental Projects  | Consultation on Site Masterplan.                       |
| Principle 2 – Recording historic buildings and structures             | Ensure that forthcoming projects consider the need for building in accordance with the strategy recording well in advance of demolition. In particular WWII related Area B4 at Burghfield, and A4/A10 at Aldermaston                                    | AWE/Project Managers  | Site development team to advise                        |
| Principle 3<br>– enhancing historic character                         | Procure historic buildings specialists to advise if historic buildings are to be renovated for continued use  | AWE/Consultant Planners/<br>Facilities Managers/<br>Consultant Heritage specialists | Site development team to advise                        |
|   | In areas where there are archaeological and historic sites, consider planned heritage 'areas', particularly designed for amenity.   | AWE/Consultant Planners/<br>Consultant Heritage specialists                         | Detailed Masterplanning                                |
| Principle 4<br>Understanding more about the resource                  | Oral history projects (carried out on site if possible) should be initiated in relation to key buildings identified in the strategy, in particular focussing on those employees or ex-employees with over 40 years of service at AWE.                   | AWE/Project Managers/<br>Community Liaison  | Community Liason team programme of events and projects |
|   | Archaeological investigations to be commissioned (in areas of high potential identified in the strategy) in relation to development proposals, and further specialist investigation of key buildings organised if alteration or demolition is proposed. | AWE/Project Managers  | Site development team to advise                        |

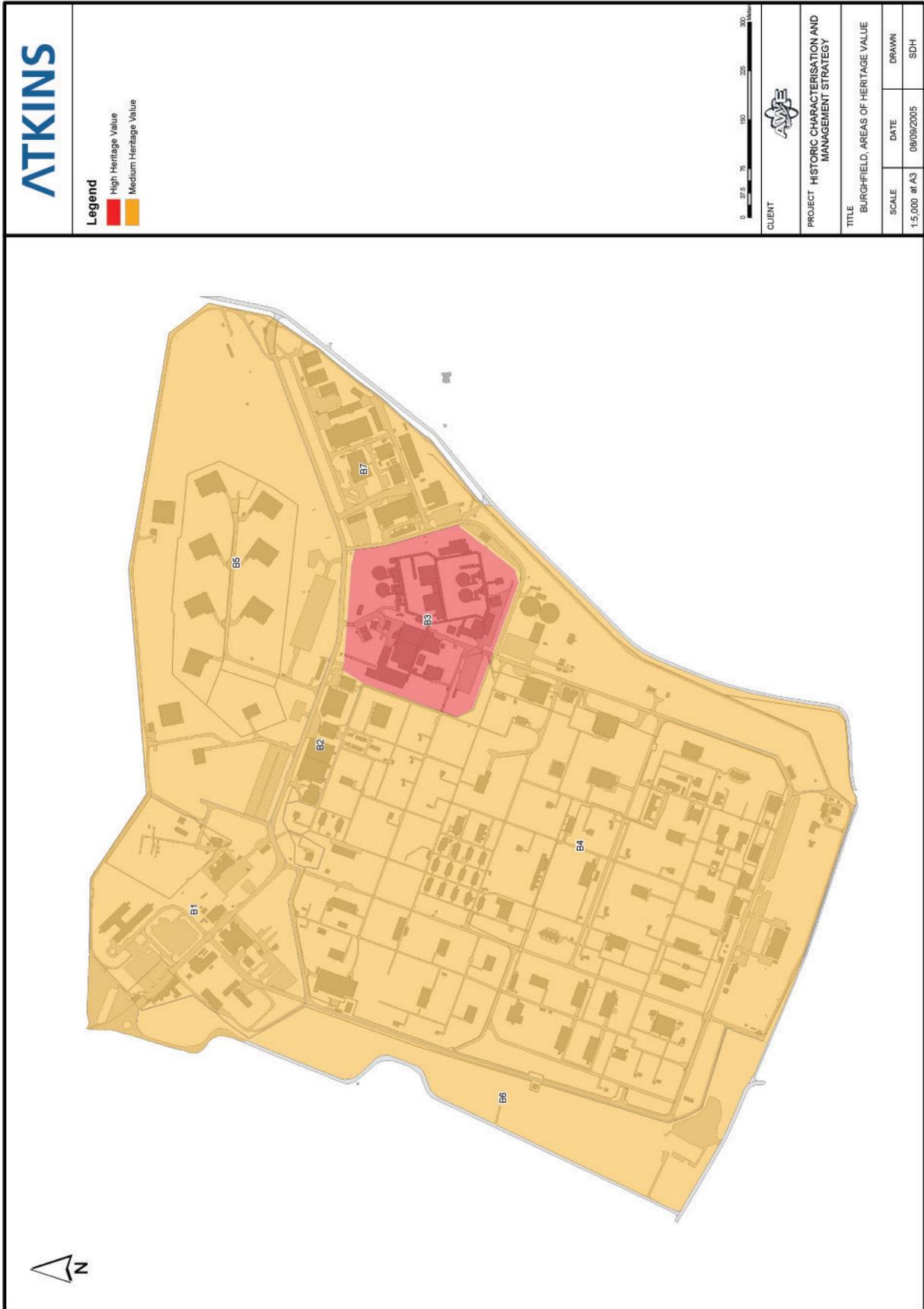
| Management principle                                 | Management proposals  | Owner/authority level  | Trigger   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Principle 5 - Preserving and enhancing documentation | <p>Continue to archive documentation from facilities as they are removed/altered. Increase usability of archives through referencing of photographs, documents and plans so that they are searchable by non-specialists.</p> <p>Procedures to be set in place for staff/facilities managers to document changes to the fabric and contents of key buildings on a regular basis. Environmental Assessment must always include assessment of heritage value.</p> <p>Procedures to be put in place to ensure that experiences and knowledge of retiring staff is captured on retirement or leaving, through video footage or written career summaries.</p>   | <p>AWE/Historical Collections/ Site Archive</p> <p>AWE/Environmental Projects</p> <p>AWE Historical Collection</p> | <p>Internal PR directed at PMs by archives</p> <p>Environmental Projects to advise</p> <p>Community Liason Initiative</p>                             |
| Principle 6 – Sharing information                    | <p>A full bibliography of accessible (non-classified) material, including site plans, photographs, written documentation, diaries, journals, published biographies and film footage should be compiled as a base for future externally produced interpretative and research projects. A Publication Strategy should be developed, with a view to making historical, archaeological and other material publicly available.</p> <p>A heritage education strategy should be developed, based on identified archaeological and built heritage resources, on the Historical Collection and the Archives. The education strategy should consider opportunities for outreach, visiting and community involvement in historical, archaeological and documentary projects.</p> <p>Interpretation should be developed for the site in key areas identified in the Strategy. The possibility of producing heritage pamphlets, information sheets and handbooks should be explored.</p> | <p>AWE/Archives</p> <p>AWE/Community Liaison</p> <p>AWE/Environmental Projects/Community liaison</p>               | <p>To be agreed</p> <p>Community Liason team and Enviromental projects to advise</p> <p>Community Liason team and Enviromental projects to advise</p> |

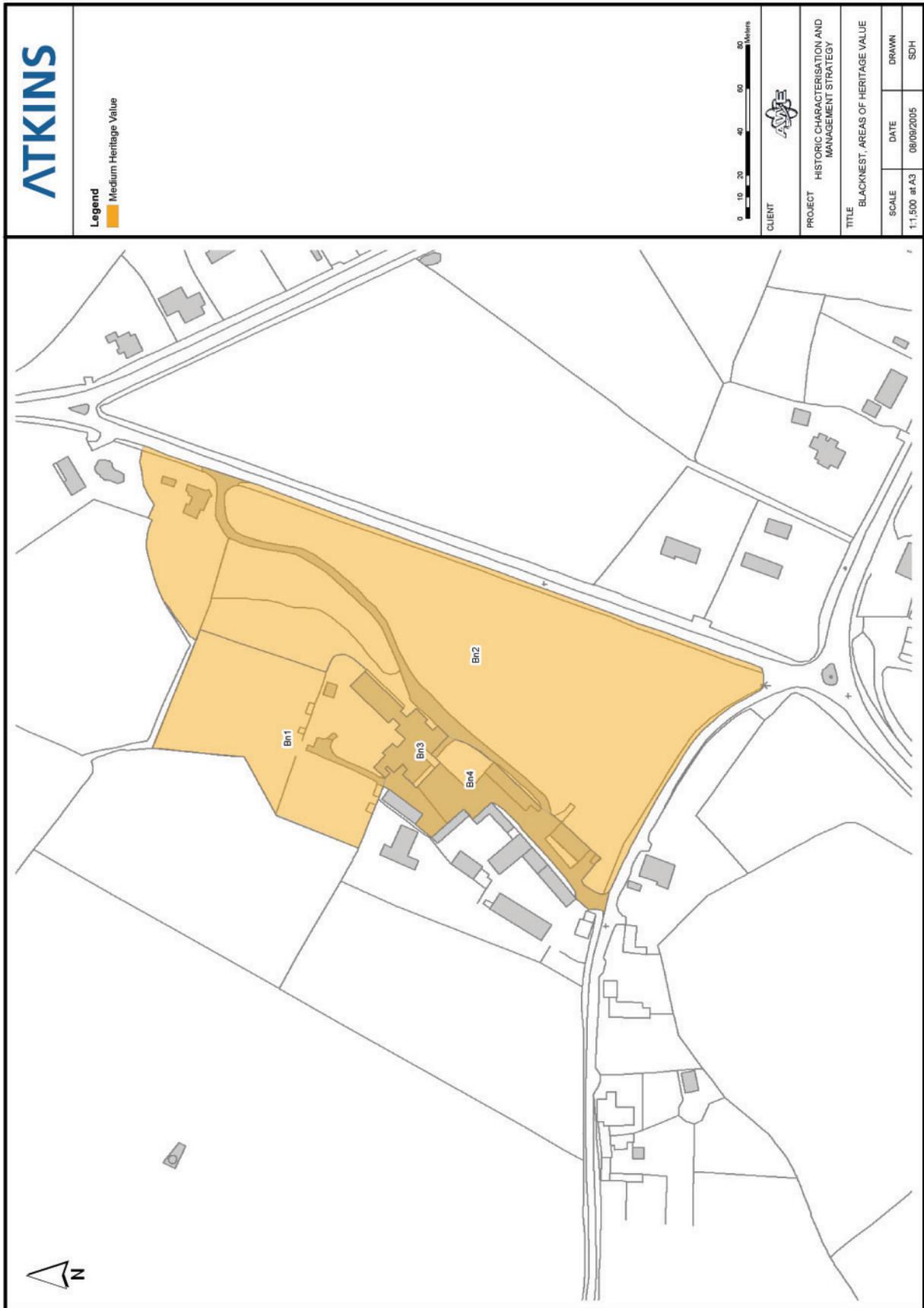
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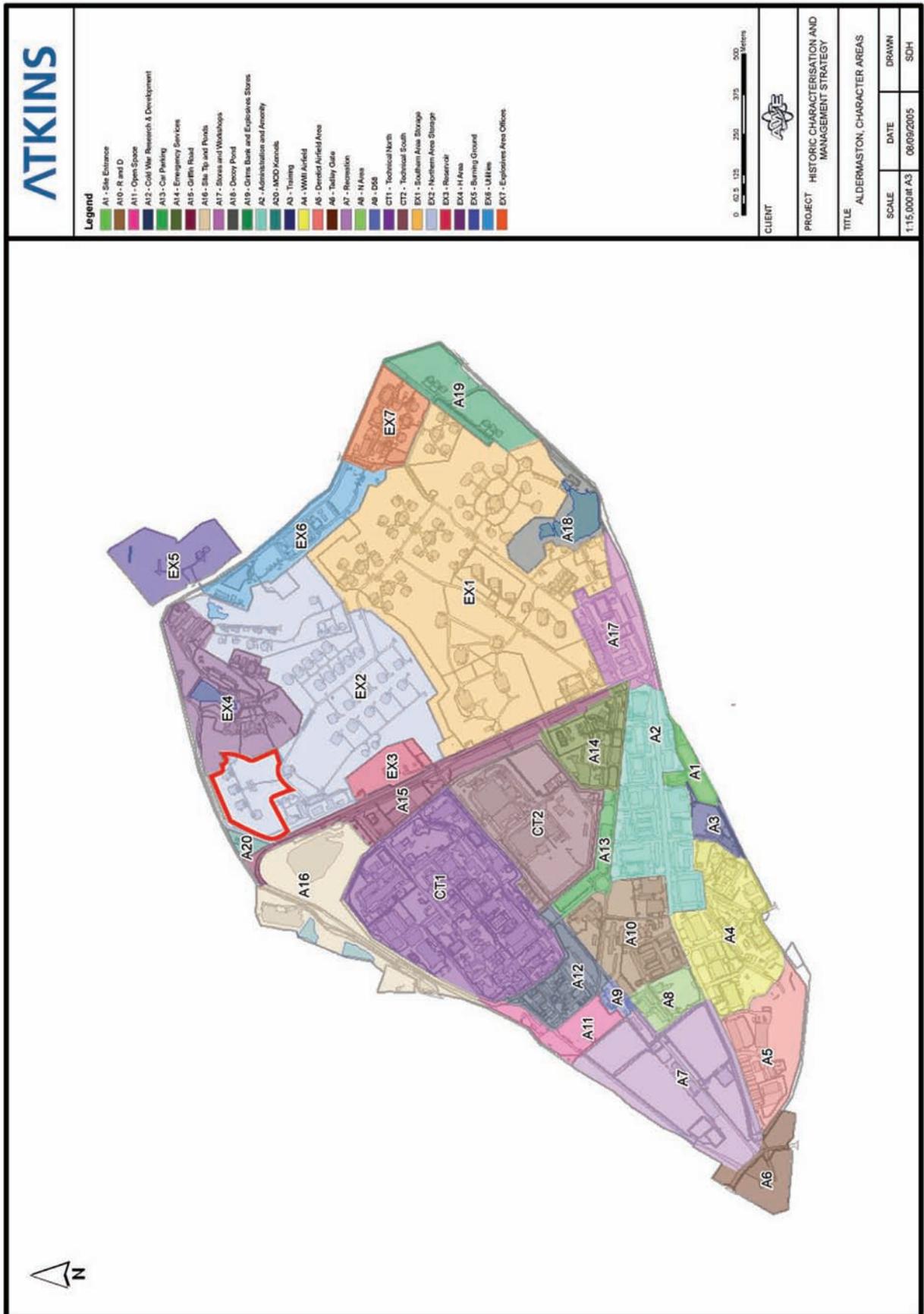


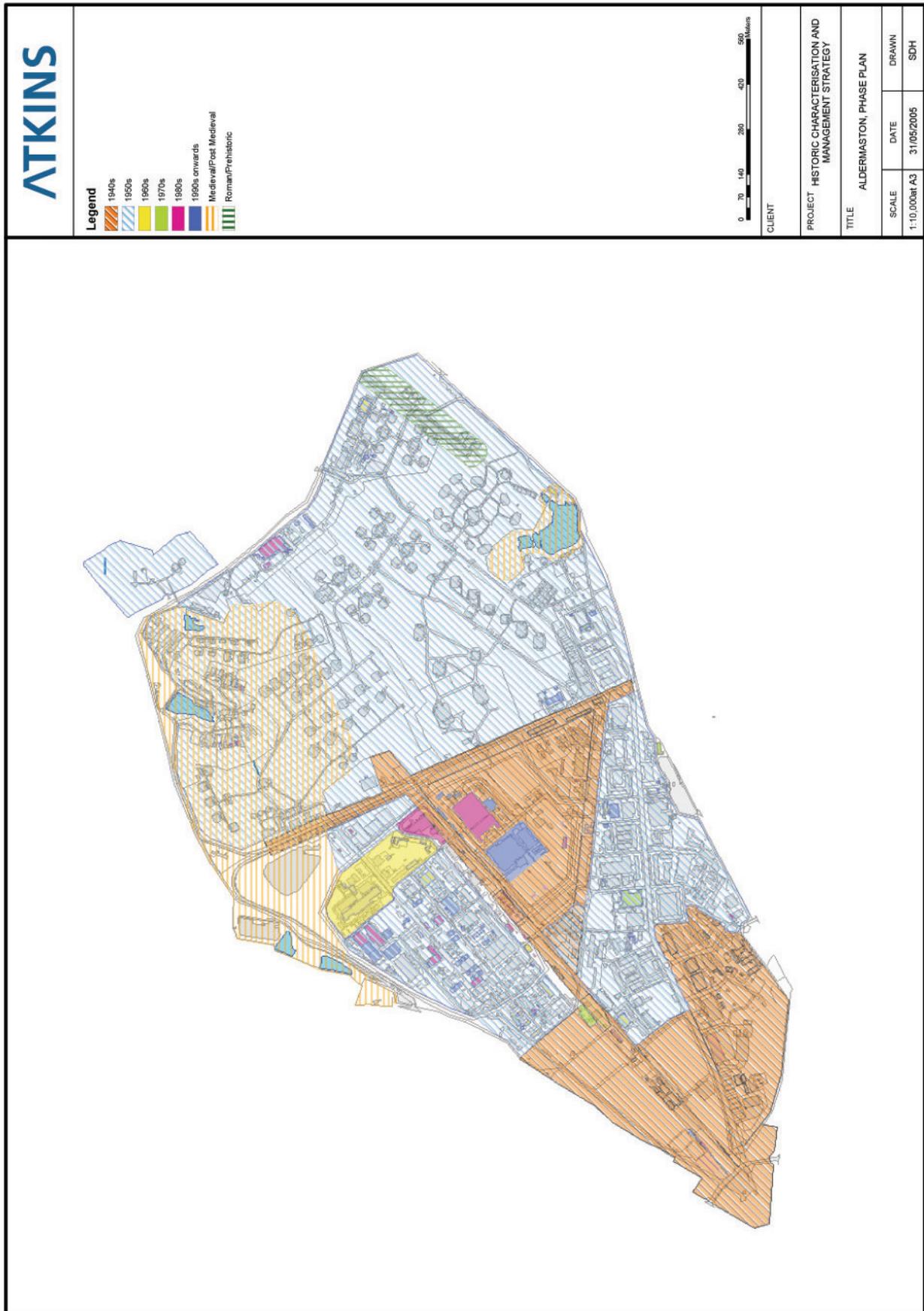
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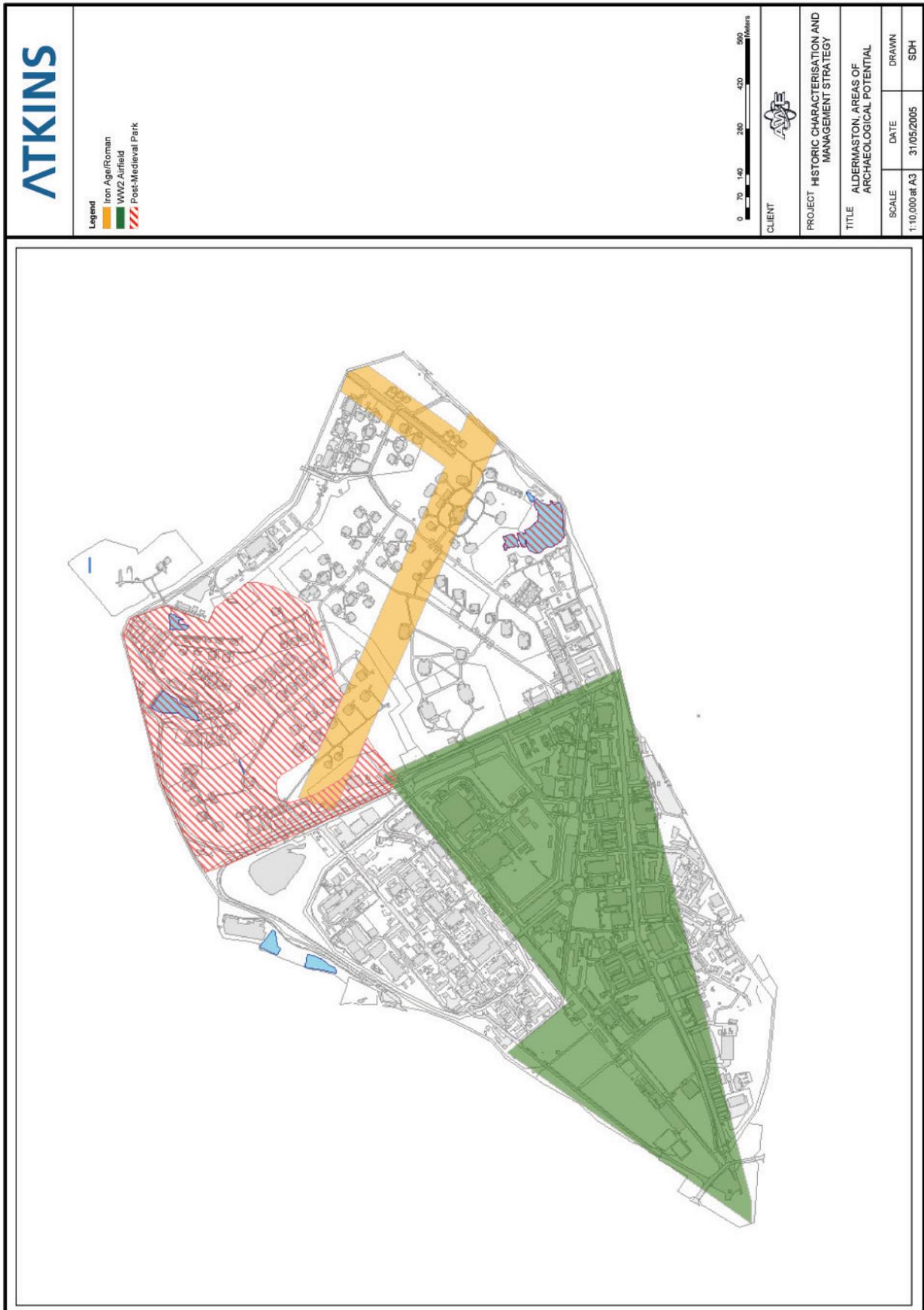


Historic Characterisation and Management Strategy



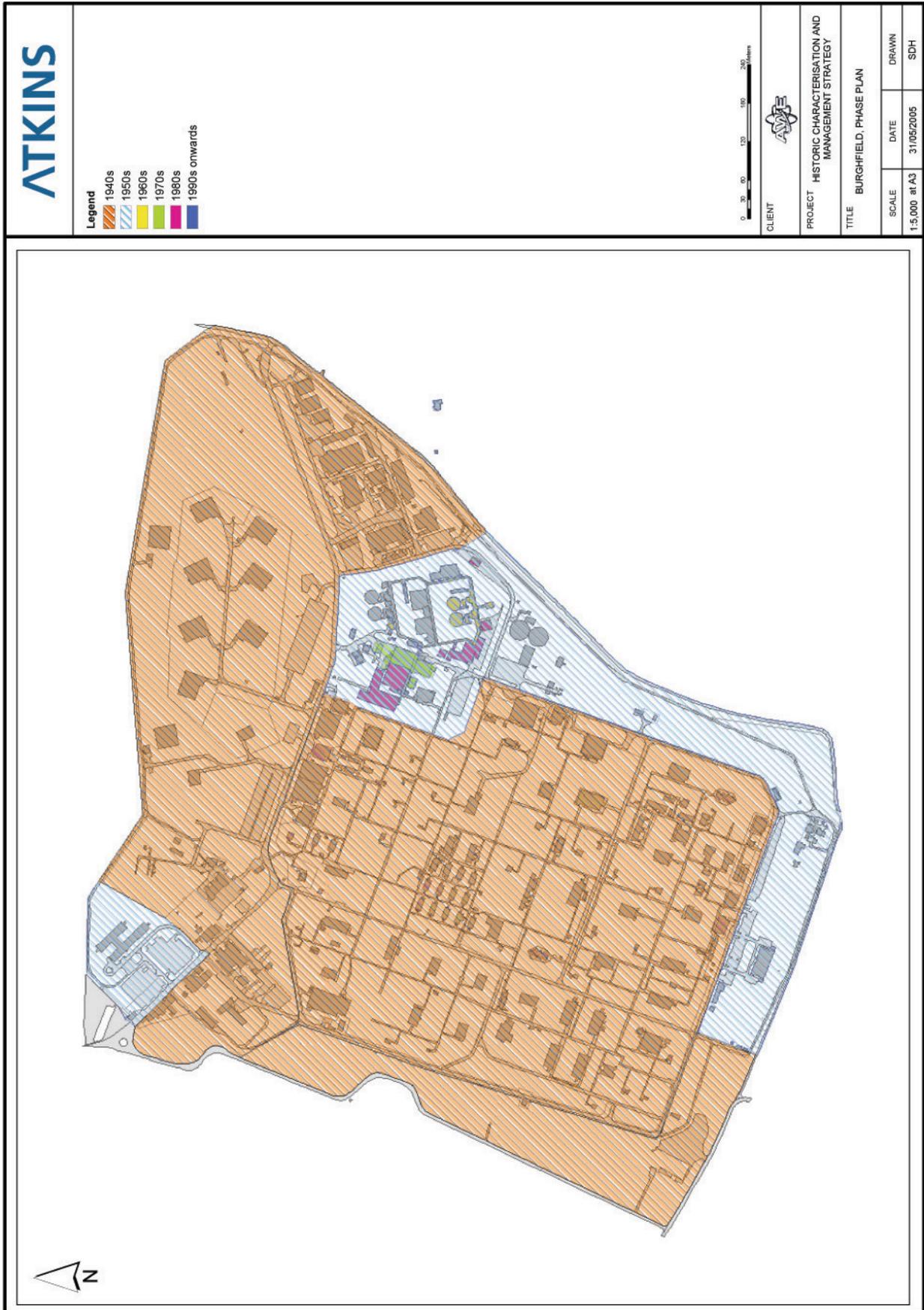


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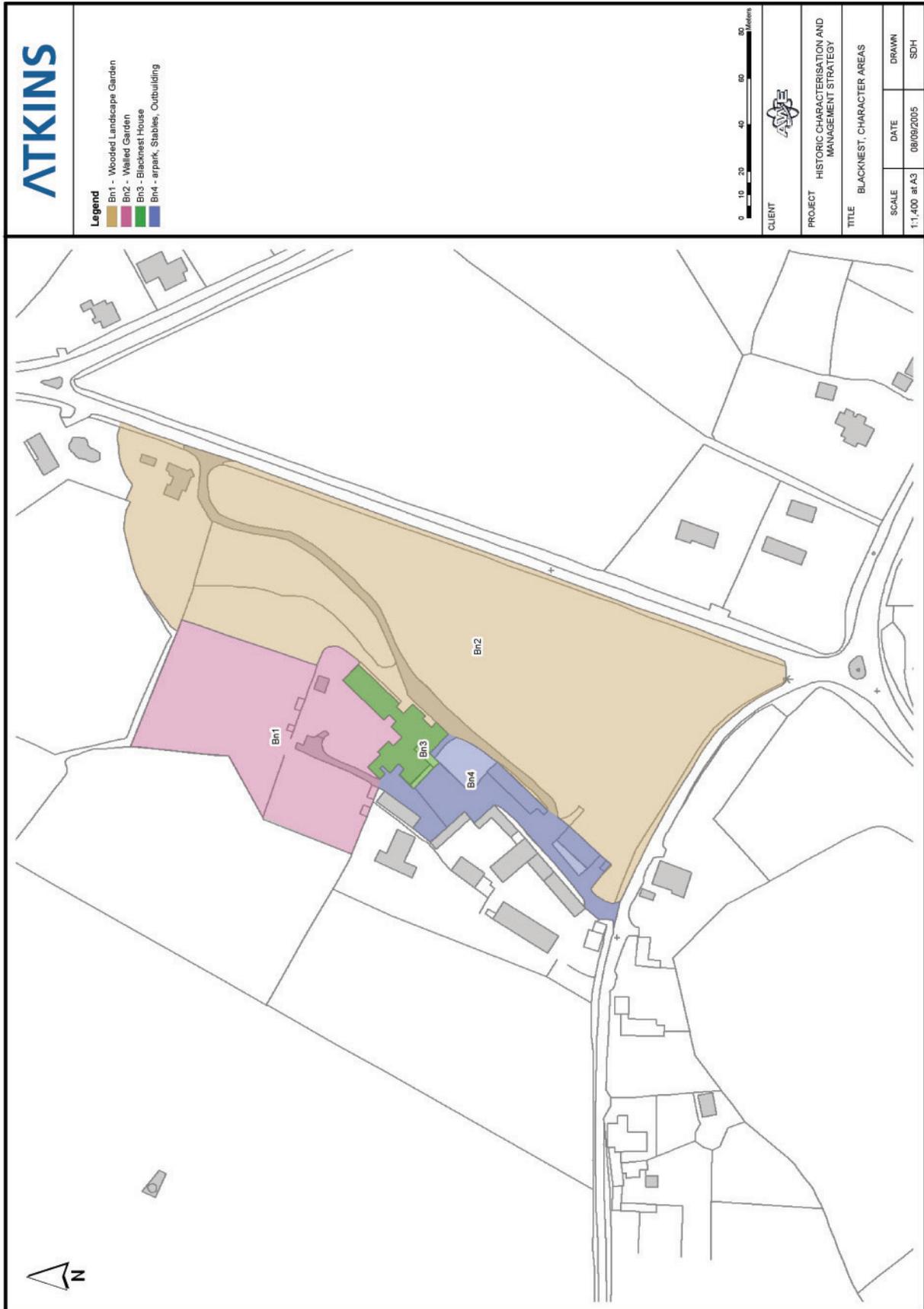


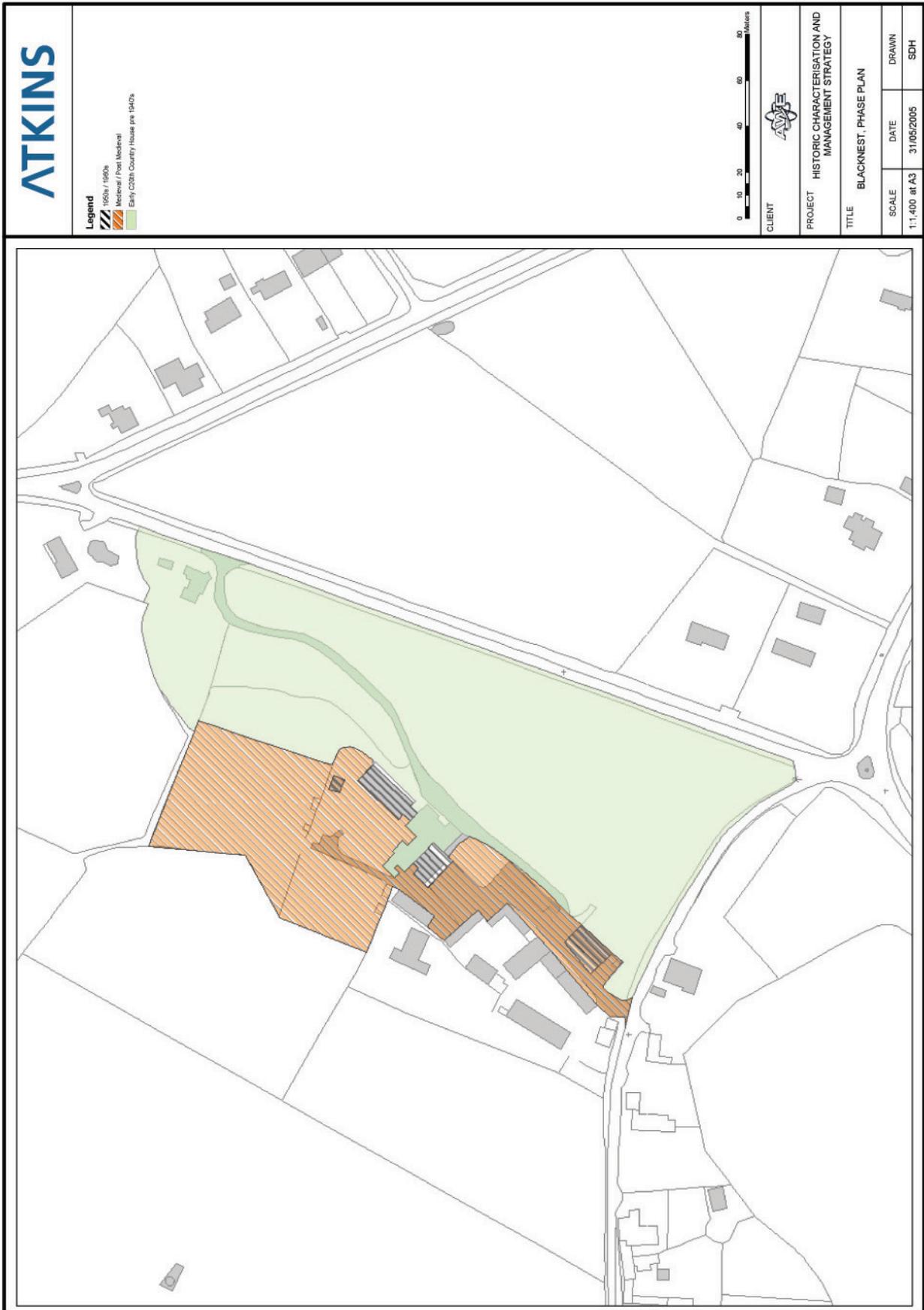
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