

IRCHESTER
KNUSTON & LITTLE
IRCHESTER
NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN

ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT

ACD

Ecology

Arboriculture

Landscape Architecture

Prepared by

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IRCHESTER, KNUSTON & LITTLE IRCHESTER NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

This document provides a range of landscape, ecology and archaeology information regarding a variety of potential sites in the environs of Irchester. This will aid the allocation of potential sites in the Irchester area.

The assessment of archaeological interest/potential and other heritage issues has been provided following consultation with a number of pertinent sources, including both the English Heritage (EH) archive, which was visited, and its online National Heritage List for England (NHLE). Aerial photographs held by EH and also a range of secondary sources were consulted.

Particularly useful is the relevant gazetteer contained within the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England *Northamptonshire Inventory* edition (1979). The NHLE records all designated heritage assets within the parish including the scheduled Roman town to the north of the A45 and listed buildings within the village.

Another key source has been the information provided by the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record (HER) which holds data relating to findspots, previously identified sites and past investigations. Historic maps were also viewed through the Old Maps website.

The sites numbered in this document are referenced as per the “Rural Housing Allocation Methodology and Site Selection” prepared by Wellingborough Council in 2010. The two remaining sites are lettered A and B, and are not referenced in the Wellingborough Council document.

SITE A: LAND OFF LONDON ROAD, LITTLE IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE - Land in agricultural use, low landscape sensitivity, open to wider views from the north and west, but from roads and commercial areas, some housing backing on to the site. Strip of tall ruderal vegetation on the boundary, otherwise low ecological value. Boundary trees only, ash to the south, hawthorn scrub to the east.

ECOLOGY – The site borders Irchester Country Park directly on the eastern boundary. Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI is approximately 700m north east but separated by a road network. Main area of the site is agricultural so of low ecological value, but tall ruderal and longer peripheral areas could have reptile potential. Mature boundary trees/hedgerows could provide foraging routes for commuting bats particularly to the south and along the Country Park border.

ARCHAEOLOGY – The line of a post-medieval road between London and Oakham may have passed through the site. It also lies on the edge of Little Irchester hamlet which is thought to have medieval origins. However, given past cultivation, the plot has low potential and heritage is not assessed as a likely constraint. Some evaluation fieldwork might be required ahead of an application.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITE B: KNUSTON HOME FARM



LANDSCAPE – There is an area of rough pasture, to the east on high ground. The remainder of the site is light industrial with a large amount of hardstanding. There are no trees of any significance, and the northern hedge is of poor quality.

ECOLOGY –Main area of the site is light industrial. There is a small area of rough grassland to the east, which is well grazed so is likely to be of low ecological value.

ARCHAEOLOGY –The land use has caused much ground disturbance so the plot has low potential, and heritage is not assessed as a likely constraint.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than the poor boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITE IR1: PARSONS HALL INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE - Brownfield site in commercial use, low landscape sensitivity, no tree constraints, some bat potential, but very limited. Located to the east of the Nene Way, a national trail.

ECOLOGY – Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI Site is 1.1km north-west, separated by road networks. Site mostly hard landscape. Some buildings could have limited bat potential. Potential reptile habitat in south eastern area.

ARCHAEOLOGY – This area holds no previously recorded sites and although the area has low archaeological potential, any buildings may require retention or recording ahead of demolition.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITE IR4: SOUTH OF GIPSY LANE, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE - Major landholding to the west of the village, in agricultural use, low landscape sensitivity, but elevated and therefore open to long views from the south and west, with no discernible site boundary.

ECOLOGY – Located just to the south of Irchester Country Park but separated by a road network. Irchester Old Lodge Pit SSSI just within eastern boundary. 1.2km east of Wollaston Meadows SSSI, separated by road. Mainly agricultural. Water bodies on, and close to, the site. Boundary trees and hedgerows could be of value for commuting bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – This area was part of a large ironstone extraction concern and has been subject to quarrying and subsequent reinstatement. This will have removed any earlier remains and altered the landscape. It has no archaeological or heritage value.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITES IR5 - LAND SOUTH OF WOODLANDS ROAD, IRCHESTER

IR15 - LAND WEST OF FARNDISH ROAD, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE – Major land parcel to the south of Irchester, in agricultural use, with good access, low landscape sensitivity, but open to wider views and with no physical site boundaries other than hedgerows. Existing housing rear gardens to the north, low ecological value other than species rich hedgerow, and no major trees. Located either side of a Public Right of Way (PRoW).

ECOLOGY – This site is 2km south of Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI Site and 2km east of Upper Nene Gravel Pits SSSI, and 550m east of Irchester Old Lodge Pit SSSI and 1.9km east of Wollaston Meadows. All Separated by roads. Species-rich boundary hedgerows could be used by foraging bats. Mainly agricultural.

ARCHAEOLOGY – This area has high archaeological potential for sub-surface remains of prehistoric or Roman date. A number of cropmarks have been plotted within the fields and more recent monitoring during pipeline trenching recorded finds of prehistoric and Roman date. Any proposal would need to be supported by archaeological evaluation fieldwork and, if permitted, by further archaeological investigation to accord with current policy.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and a few boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITE IR6: LAND NORTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE - Included two images to include frontage wall, which is a feature of the site. Pastoral land, visually enclosed, but with medium sensitivity and open to wider views from the north-east. Part meadow, part rough grass, with reptile potential, it has more physical variation than any other site and more features. Bounded on three sides with existing development. A view of the spire of St. Katharine's Church is available.

ECOLOGY – 1.5km south east of Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI Site, separated by road. Part of site is agricultural field with low value. Meadow habitat could be a constraint (calcareous grassland is a local BAP habitat) and also potential reptile habitat. Boundary hedgerows and trees could be features for commuting bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – The Northamptonshire HER records likely above ground remains in the south eastern quarter of this site, and these should be preserved in situ. There may have been some damage from past quarrying or agriculture in the rest of the site and its development may be possible, but these areas still have medium to high

potential for other sub-surface remains and further evaluative fieldwork would be required to support an application.

A site visit confirmed that there are good views of the Grade II * listed church and that development of the higher parts of the site would be detrimental to the setting of the church and the historic core of the village, as demonstrated by new development to the east.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than the boundary hedgerows and western boundary ash trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITE IR7: LAND OFF FARDISH ROAD, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE - In agricultural use, with good access, low landscape sensitivity, but open to wider views and with no physical site boundaries other than hedgerows. Existing housing rear gardens to the north, low ecological value, other than species rich hedgerow, and no major trees.

ECOLOGY – 2km south of Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI Site, 1.3km east of Irchester Old Lodge Pit SSSI. Separated by road networks. Agricultural land with low ecological value. Only boundary features could be of value for foraging bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – A probable trackway and pits have been noted on aerial photographs of this area. It also lies immediately east of an area (IR5/15) which has certain prehistoric and Roman sub-surface remains and is therefore assessed to have high potential itself. Any application would require supporting fieldwork results.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITE IR9: LAND NORTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE – In agricultural use and fully cultivated, hence low ecological value other than species poor hedgerows. Low landscape sensitivity, but open to wider views from the countryside and commercial areas of Wellingborough beyond. No trees, road to the south, railway to the north-east. Unconstrained. The steeple of St. Katharine’s Church can be seen as a vertical element in the view.

ECOLOGY – Located 1.1km east of Irchester Country Park, 1.9km away from Irchester Old Lodge Pit and 3km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by road networks. Parcel of agricultural land of low ecological value. Only boundary features possible for foraging bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – No recorded sites or finds within or close to this plot and it can be considered to have low potential and that archaeology is a minimal constraint to its development. Some investigation may be required to support an application or as a condition though.

The site is on higher ground overlooking the Grade II* church and historic core of the settlement, albeit that surrounding development minimises any additional adverse effect on the church’s wider setting.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than a few boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITES IR11 AND IR13: SOUTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE – These adjacent sites are part agricultural, part woodland with farm enclosure, separated from the railway to the east by a parcel of open farmland, bounded by footpath and open field to the east, IR14 to the south and existing housing to the west. The only site with tree constraints, is a good quality copse of beech and ash with landscape value and bat potential.

ECOLOGY – Located 1.2km east of Irchester Country Park, 2km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by road networks. Woodland mosaic with connectivity to other areas. May provide potential for bats, badgers, dormice, reptiles.

ARCHAEOLOGY - No recorded sites or finds within or close to this plot which is well enclosed, and it can be considered to have low potential and that archaeology and heritage are a minimal constraint to its development.

ARBORICULTURE – The copse would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITES IR3 & IR12: LAND BETWEEN BAKERS CRESCENT & CHESTER ROAD, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE – In agricultural use, large swathe of land to the north of the settlement, abutting the Country Park to the west and IR16 to the east. Visually enclosed by woodland in the Country Park and the settlement to the south, it has limited views from the east and is on high ground, although has low sensitivity. No tree constraints other than on the boundaries and low ecological value. A view of St. Katharine's Church is available. The parcel sites are adjacent to Irchester Country Park.

ECOLOGY – IR12 borders Irchester Country Park on the western boundary and is 1km south of Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by a road. Agricultural land with low ecological value, although boundary features could be used by commuting bats particularly bordering the Country Park and peripheral habitat could have reptile potential.

ARCHAEOLOGY – Cropmarks indicative of prehistoric or Roman features have been noted in the southern part of this area and finds suggest that there may have been activity of these and the Anglo-Saxon periods. Even where cropmarks have not been observed, high potential is assessed. However, there is also evidence for extraction which may have removed deposits. Any application would need to be supported by the results of archaeological fieldwork.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and boundary trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITES IR11 AND IR13: LAND SOUTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE - (land west of footpath) – Unused land, general tall ruderal vegetation, scrub and rough grass, with potential habitat value, although disturbed by dirt-tracking and informal play. Bounded by footpath and open field to the east, IR14 to the south and existing housing to the west. Visually well enclosed by vegetation on the footpath, but generally a degraded landscape with low sensitivity. Located adjacent to existing residential development.

ECOLOGY - 1.2km east of Irchester Country Park, 2km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by road networks. Mosaic habitat with potential for reptiles, badgers and bat foraging.

ARCHAEOLOGY - No recorded sites or finds of note in area which was formerly the town allotments and it can be considered to have low potential and that archaeology and heritage are a minimal constraint to its development.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and small trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITE IR14: LAND SOUTH OF STATION ROAD, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE – Currently grassland, with no obvious grazing, the site is bounded by housing to the west, other consideration sites IR11/13 to the north and east and the railway beyond that to the east. The southern boundary is to open agricultural land with potential wider views, but the boundary is enclosed by a natural hedgerow, albeit thin and species-poor. The site has low landscape sensitivity and falls to the north, which gives it some visual enclosure. The site has low ecological value, other than on its boundaries, which will be used by bats for foraging and there are no in-site tree constraints. There is some evidence of a ridge-and-furrow field pattern. Located adjacent to existing residential development.

ECOLOGY - 1.2km east of Irchester Country Park. 2.1km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI. Separated by road networks. Agricultural land with low ecological value other than potential bat foraging along boundary vegetation.

ARCHAEOLOGY - No recorded sites or finds within or close to this plot other than faint ridge and furrow. Although not an absolute constraint to development, these medieval remains are rare in the parish given later extraction and arable cultivation. The site can be considered to have low potential for further remains, but that loss of an historic landscape feature would result from its development.

ARBORICULTURE – There are no tree constraints within this site other than boundary hedgerows and small trees, which would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

SITE IR16: LAND OFF HIGH STREET, IRCHESTER



LANDSCAPE – Open land, currently in agricultural use, enclosed by the existing settlement to the south, the road, sporadic trees and some development to the east, but with no visual or physical enclosure to the north and west. It has low landscape sensitivity, but is important to the setting of the settlement and has a natural land-fall that is lower than the adjacent IR3/12 land parcels. View of St. Katharine's Church spire.

ECOLOGY – 600m east of Irchester Country Park, 1km away from Upper Nene Gravel Pits designated RAMSAR, SPA and SSSI, separated by road. Agricultural land with low ecological value apart from some limited boundary vegetation which could have potential for foraging bats.

ARCHAEOLOGY – This area has been subject to archaeological evaluation involving both geophysical survey and trial trenching. This has identified some prehistoric and later features, although these sub-surface remains could be dealt with through further investigation ahead of construction.

ARBORICULTURE – No tree constraints other than the individual boundary trees which are of little merit. These would require protection and construction easement in accordance with BS 5837:2012. There are no tree preservation orders on any trees on, or adjacent to the site.

CONCLUSION

Subject to desk-top studies, the sites are generally unconstrained by ecology or trees, although IR11 and IR13 could be considered to be marginally constrained by both ecology and trees. Although of low landscape sensitivity, the sites generally have little visual or physical enclosure and are therefore open to wider landscape views.

IR1, 9 and 16 have been considered as potential housing sites and there is a case for settlement expansion on the eastern side of the existing settlement, despite some longer views from open countryside. There are other degrading built elements in the landscape to the east which would reduce the sensitivity of the receptors in the landscape. IR1 is a brownfield site and is a natural site for development consideration.

Land to the west of the settlement is on raised ground and open to views from the wider landscape, with no visual enclosure at all. What is currently a softened and informal edge to settlement would be rationalised and potentially made more intrusive.

Land to the north of settlement, despite some enclosure by landform and vegetation in the Country Park, is exposed to wider views from the north and east, although this is generally from a degraded landscape and further settlement in Wellingborough. The setting of the Country Park should also be considered, as development to its boundary could be considered to reduce its appeal.

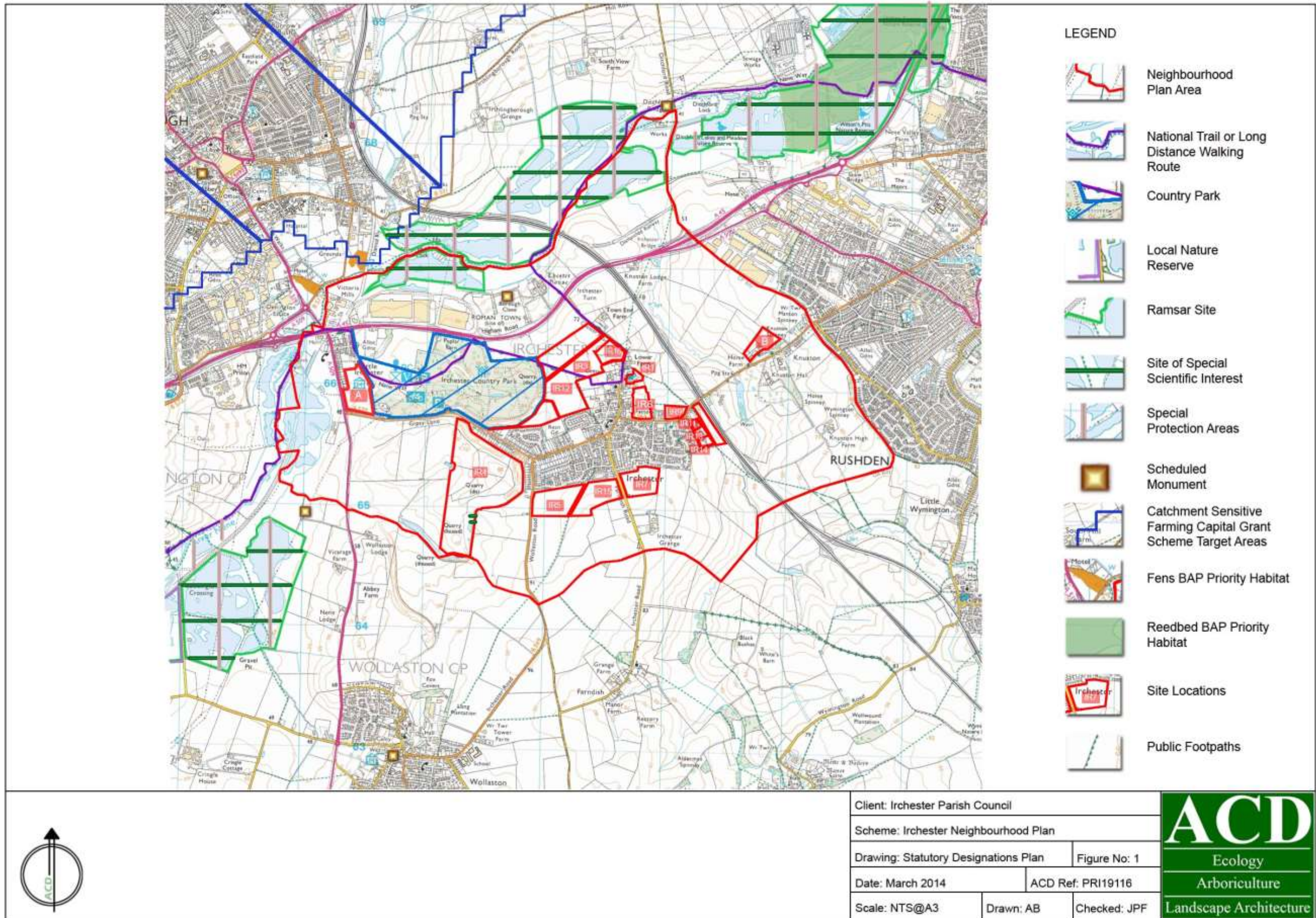
Land to the south, although with little or no visual or physical enclosure, has low landscape sensitivity and limited visibility to sensitive receptors, to which the linear edge of settlement is very apparent already. Sensitive edge of development landscape treatment would be required to mitigate for this effectively. However, this area is known to contain a complex of sub-surface archaeological remains. Although these do not preclude development, other areas might be preferable.

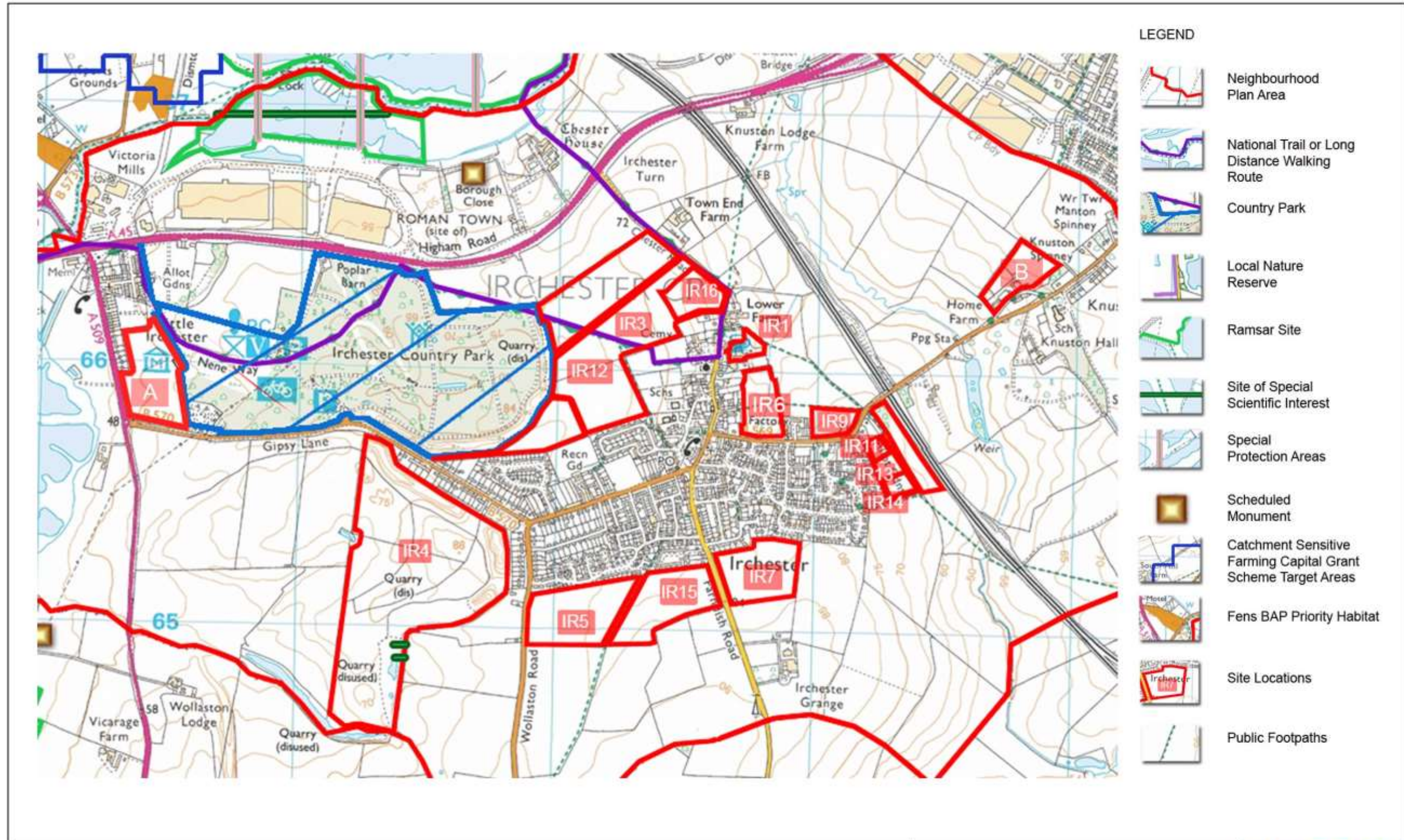
In purely landscape terms, our recommendation would be for excluding options to the west and north of Irchester and a concentration on the sites available to the east and south of the existing settlement, particularly IR1,6,9,11,13 and 14 to the east and IR5,7 and 15 to the south.

However, as well as archaeological constraints to the south, site IR6 has both archaeological and heritage constraints and should be left undeveloped. IR14 contains ridge and furrow earthworks and its retention as open land is also preferable. The site previously considered on IR16, despite some merit in landform, has very poorly defined boundaries and could be considered to be an unnatural extension into agricultural land.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

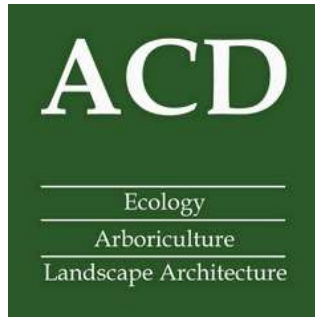
RAMSAR	RAMSAR Site is a wetland of international importance. The Ramsar Convention was signed in the city of Ramsar, Iran.
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
HER	Historic Environment Record
EH	English Heritage
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan





Client: Irchester Parish Council		
Scheme: Irchester Neighbourhood Plan		
Drawing: Statutory Designations Inset	Figure No: 2	
Date: March 2014	ACD Ref: PRI19116	
Scale: NTS@A3	Drawn: AB	Checked: JPF

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