OXFORDSHIRE
STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE

DCO Submission

Environmental Statement

Chapter 10: Heritage (built and archaeology)
Appendix 10.9: Assessment of Setting and Significance (Troy Maze)

Document 6.10K

On behalf of
Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited

Prepared by RPS Group
October 2026

PINS REF:	TR050008
Document Reference	6.10K
APFP Regulation	5(2)(m)
Author	RPS Group
Date	October 2026
Revision	-

Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited

Assessment of Setting and Significance

Turf Maze, Troy Farm, Near Ardley, Oxfordshire

794-PLN-HER-01506

V1

15 October 2026

TETRA TECH

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The setting and significance of the Scheduled Monument known as Turf Maze at Troy Farm (NHLE 1468043) has been assessed in relation to the proposed OxSRFI development near Ardley, Oxfordshire.

1.2 This assessment has been undertaken in line with guidance provided by Historic England, specifically:

- Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 2 (2015).
- The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (2015, updated 2017)

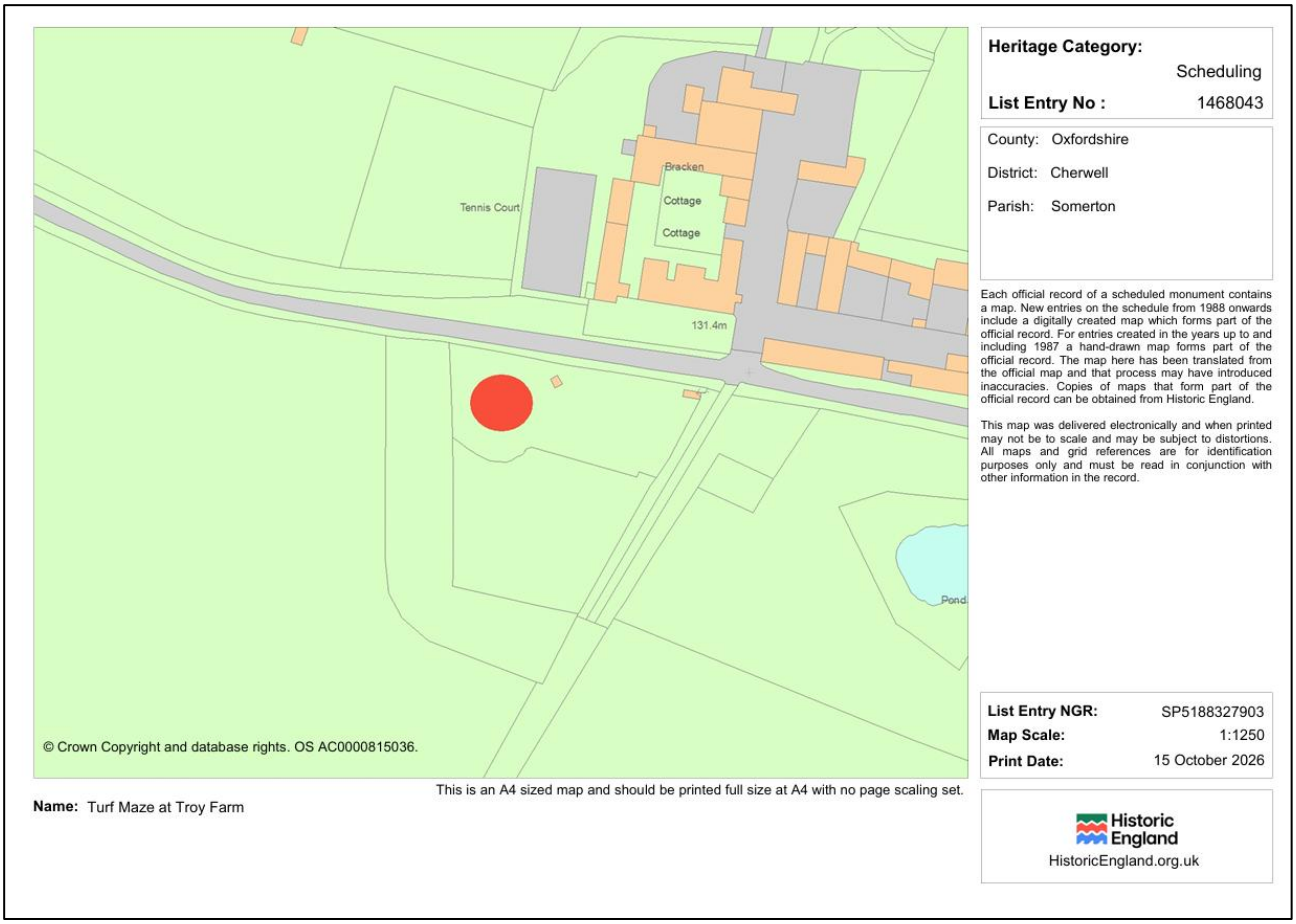


Plate 1 – Red Circle denotes location of Scheduled Turf Maze (Historic England List Entry)



Plate 2 – Google Earth imagery showing the enclosed nature of the Scheduled Monument over the years

2.0 Assessment of Significance and Setting

2.1 Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected.

2.1.1 The Scheduled Monument known as Turf Maze at Troy Farm (NHLE 1468043) is located approximately 118m from the closest part of the application site, and approximately 567m west of the northern limits of the proposed Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Infrastructure Main Site. It is important to note that the Illustrative Masterplan shows the areas of the site closest to the Scheduled Monument are proposed for tree planting and open grassland as existing.

2.1.2 Historic England's List Entry provides useful information on the asset.

2.1.3 The asset comprises a maze measuring 18.3m east-west and 15.8m north-south. The gravel pathway forming the maze is entered from the south and makes a winding route of concentric lines between shallow turf banks measuring approximately 10cm – 15cm high. The date of the maze is unknown but is likely to have been constructed at some point between the 15th to 17th centuries.

2.1.4 Mazes have been used for a variety of purposes in British history, most commonly as garden features. It is considered that there were over 100 turf-cut mazes in England, of which the location of 60 are known, but few survive in their original locations.

2.1.5 The pattern of the maze at Troy Farm is elaborate as it comprises 15 circuits as opposed to the 11 circuits which are more commonly seen. The maze is located in close proximity to the site of a 15th century manor house, "Somertons" which was demolished in the mid-17th century.

2.1.6 Historic England's list entry identifies the following reasons for the scheduling of the maze:

- Survival – the layout, grass banks and sunken pathways all survive well;
- Fragility – the maze is fragile, needing careful and frequent maintenance to ensure its preservation;
- Rarity – the maze is one of the very few surviving examples of a formerly common type of monument;
- Potential – the existence of a circular pond to the east, combined with the probable date of the maze, suggests potential archaeological interest in the form of a wider-ranging garden layout of a 16th or 17th century date.

2.2 Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset or allow significance to be appreciated.

2.2.1 The information above from Historic England makes it clear that the maze derives most of its significance from its physical remains and its relationship to Troy Farm and the manor house known as “Somertons”. Some significance is also derived from the monument’s setting.

2.2.2 The setting of the maze comprises the parcel of grassed land within which it is sited, immediately to the south of Ardley Road. The maze is completely surrounded by dense tree planting which screens the Scheduled Monument from the local landscape. Furthermore, there are no known historic or contextual relationships between the monument and the site. Therefore, the application site is not considered to form part of the setting of the Scheduled Monument, nor is it considered to contribute to its significance.

2.3 Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it.

2.3.1 The proposed development of the application site will have no physical impact on the surviving remains of the maze, nor will it affect any of the other qualities which led to the asset’s scheduling. The application site is not considered to lie within the setting of, nor contribute to the significance of, the scheduled turf maze at Troy Farm. Therefore, the proposed development will not result in any harm to this designated heritage asset.

2.4 Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

2.4.1 The proposed development will not result in any harm to the turf maze at Troy Farm.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The setting and significance of the Scheduled Monument known as Turf Maze at Troy Farm (NHLE 1468043) has been assessed in relation to the proposed OxSRFI development near Ardley, Oxfordshire.

3.2 The proposed development of the application site will have no physical impact on the surviving remains of the maze, nor will it affect any of the other qualities which led to the asset's scheduling. The application site is not considered to lie within the setting of, nor contribute to the significance of, the scheduled turf maze at Troy Farm. Therefore, the proposed development will not result in any harm to this designated heritage asset.