Information on the history of the site has been obtained from published and historic cartographic sources, held predominantly at the Norfolk Studies Library and Norfolk Record Office. The site is located within the parish of Horstead. Part of the site was within the parish of Stanninghall, which was depopulated in the sixteenth century, leaving only the ruins of a church and a farm that bears the name. It is now within the parish of Horstead.

Both are mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086, which provides a brief description of the condition of the area in the eleventh century. Horstead had been owned by Bishop Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, prior to the Conquest, but was then taken for the crown. As well as cultivated land, the parish is described as containing meadow and woodland supporting livestock. There are three mills recorded as being present at this time. A similar situation is noted for Stanninghall, which also contained cultivated as well as grazing land. Livestock kept in the area consisted for the most part of sheep, pigs and goats.

The Manor of Horstead was later granted by William Rufus to Caen Abbey, who held it until war with France in the fourteenth century. At this time the Manor was seized by the Crown and granted to John Clere for the duration of the war. In 1415 the grant to Caen Abbey was dissolved and the Manor became the absolute property of the Crown. It was granted to private persons, in each case reverting to the crown on their deaths until Edward IV granted it permanently to King's College, Cambridge in 1462.

In 1586 a written survey of the parish was prepared on behalf of King's College. This included detailed information on agricultural land within the parish, which at the time had 1600 acres in use. Much of the application area was in an open fields called Stanninghall Field between Frettenham Lane and Stanninghall Road. Despite the continued presence of this and other open fields, enclosure within the parish was well progressed by this time. It would appear that in the sixteenth century, though there was an amount of waste land and pasture, nearly all of the land within application area was under cultivation.

There is no record of parliamentary enclosure for Horstead and it can be assumed that this was achieved through private agreement. The King's College survey of Horstead in the sixteenth century shows that the process of enclosure was well progressed by this time.

A plan of the parish of Horstead (NRO PD 597/78) prepared in 1788 shows land within the application area to be fully enclosed, mostly owned by King's College and Lord Suffield. The only detail of potential cultural heritage interest shown on this plan is a barn belonging to Lord Suffield alongside Norwich Road at NGR TG 263181. A note added on the plan states that this barn was removed in 1790.

A map of estates in Frettenham and Horstead in 1834 (NRO NRS 4088) shows much of the land within the application area, particularly on the western and southern sides, with Common Farm in the west and Stanninghall Farm in the east. Frettenham Church and Rectory is shown surrounded by Glebe land, though none of it was within the site. In general the layout of the agricultural land, including field boundaries and woodland was the same then as it is now.

A Tithe map for Horstead was prepared in 1847 and shows the pattern of field boundaries to be very much the same as it is now. The tithe map apportionment record the field names in use at that time. All that could be identified referred to the size or other physical characteristics of the fields.

The 1st Edition OS map of the area appears to show the area in agricultural use, with no features of potential cultural heritage interest shown.