

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF UNDERTAKEN
AT PLUMPTON COLLEGE WORKSHOPS, DITCHLING ROAD,
PLUMPTON, EAST SUSSEX.**

N. G. R. TQ 35770 13570

Project Number 08 / 11

April 2010

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ABSTRACT.

An archaeological watching brief was maintained on works associated with the demolition of an existing workshop and the construction on the same site of new workshops and teaching facilities at Plumpton College, Ditchling Road, Plumpton, East Sussex.

No in-situ deposits, cut features or structures of archaeological significance were discovered during the watching brief. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the now demolished workshop had clearly been cut / terraced into the natural geology of the site.

Three humanly – struck flints of Mesolithic and later prehistoric origin were nonetheless identified. This flintwork adds to the evidence for the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age exploitation of local ‘low – lying’ resources previously recorded in the area.

No evidence for any subsequent Romano–British, Anglo-Saxon or medieval settlement / occupation activity was revealed. Plumpton College is located between the site of a former medieval moated homestead (now Plumpton Place) and the 12th century church of St. Michael and All Angels. As such, the failure of the fieldwork to uncover a single artefact of medieval origin is striking.

The construction of the ‘original’ now demolished workshop was not subject to archaeological monitoring. However, the essentially ‘negative’ results of the project under discussion here (i.e. the dearth of artefacts and absence of any cut features exposed beyond the old workshop footprint) suggest it is unlikely that any extensive remains of genuine archaeological note were destroyed at this time (1970s?).

1.0. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. Lewes District Council has granted planning permission for the demolition of an existing workshop and the construction on the same site of new workshops and teaching facilities at Plumpton College, Ditchling Road, Plumpton, East Sussex (N. G. R. TQ 35770 13570) (figures 1, 2 and 10).

1.2. However, as Plumpton College lies within an area of known archaeological potential (see sections 3.0. and 6.1.) it was believed that the proposed redevelopment could impact upon features and / or deposits of archaeological significance. Greg Chuter the East Sussex County Council Assistant Archaeologist therefore requested that the following condition was attached to the planning permission (Lewes District Council Planning Application Number: LW/07/1321).

'No development shall take place within the area indicated (this would be the area of archaeological interest) until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and carried out in accordance with that approval.'

1.3. In response to the planning condition outlined above, C. G. Archaeology was commissioned by Mike Barber of MJB Architecture on behalf of Plumpton College to maintain an archaeological watching brief on the demolition of the workshop due for replacement and all other groundworks undertaken at the site (see Section 5.2. for details).

1.4. The methodology employed during the archaeological project (see Section 5.0. for details) was based upon a targeted Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Christopher Greatorex of C. G. Archaeology and agreed with

Greg Chuter the East Sussex County Council Assistant Archaeologist (Greatorex 2008).

- 1.5. The archaeological fieldwork was carried – out by Annalie Seaman of C. G. Archaeology between the 10th December 2008 and 19th May 2009. The collation of historic cartographic evidence (see Section 6.2.) was undertaken by David Dunkin on the 14th June 2008.

2.0. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.

2.1. Plumpton College is located at the foot of a north – facing escarpment of the South Downs. The workshop proposed for demolition was sited on a levelled area of landscaped / developed land located to the north of the main college building (figures 1, 2 and 10). A c.1.3m. - high bank located just c.6.5m. – 7.5m. to the west of the workshop rose - up towards a tract of grassed ground bordered by a footpath to the south and a fence-line to the north (see figures 1, 2 and 10). This area of otherwise relatively flat grassed land is clearly crossed by the remnants of a now redundant field / plot boundary (see sections 5.2.4., 6.2.3. and 7.3.) (Figure 10). No other obvious topographical features were observed.

2.2. The 1: 50,000 British Geological Survey (Sheet 318 / 333: Brighton and Worthing) indicates that the redevelopment site lies at a boundary of Lower Chalk and Head.

3.0. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

- 3.1. Plumpton College is located within a region rich in known archaeological remains / find-spots and historic buildings (see Section 6.1. for details). Indeed, the workshop earmarked for demolition lay just c.250m. north-west of the site of a former medieval moated homestead (now occupied by Plumpton Place) and only c.100m. north-east of St. Michael and All Angels parish church built in the 12th century.
- 3.2. Nevertheless, it should be noted that a recent archaeological investigation undertaken at the site of the new west wing extension to the main college building (located just c.35m. south of the current area of consideration) failed to identify a single deposit, cut feature or structure of archaeological significance. A small assemblage of humanly – struck flint dating to the Mesolithic and later prehistoric periods *was* recovered as a result of this earlier fieldwork carried – out at the college. However, no evidence for any subsequent Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon or significant *in-situ* medieval settlement / occupation activity was recorded (Greatorex 2009).
- 3.3. It should be noted that the estate at Plumpton College was purchased by the County Council in 1919. By 1926 the college had grown enough to justify the first major new build on the site. The college increased in size from this point onwards and in 1937 a major extension was added. Further significant expansion took place during the 1970s with the building of new workshops (including that under discussion here?) and hostels (information extracted from www.plumpton.ac.uk).

4.0. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.

4.1. The approved Written Scheme of Investigation for the project (see Section 1.4.) defined the primary objectives of the archaeological watching brief as follows.

- Ensure that all archaeological deposits, features and structures exposed during the removal of the existing workshop's floor base / foundations and as a result of all other intrusive groundworks carried – out at the site are excavated, sampled, recorded and interpreted to an acceptable standard.
- Ensure that all significant discoveries of artefactual and / or ecofactual evidence are recorded and analysed to an acceptable standard.

5.0. INVESTIGATIVE METHODOLOGY.

5.1. Background research.

5.1.1. An inspection was made of the East Sussex County Historical Environment Record (HER) (see Section 6.1.). This study was supplemented by an examination of historic cartographic sources held at the East Sussex Record Office, Lewes (see Section 6.2.). Relevant published papers were also consulted.

5.2. Fieldwork.

5.2.1. The following works were subject to a constant archaeological watching brief.

- The excavation of a new drainage trench.
- The stripping of topsoil from the temporary site compound.
- The removal of the demolished workshop's floor base / foundations.
- The 'cutting back' of a bank located to the west of the demolished workshop.

5.2.2. The works listed above were carried – out under constant archaeological supervision by Westridge Construction Ltd. using appropriately – sized mechanical diggers fitted with toothless ditching buckets.

5.2.3. Each archaeological context identified during the watching brief was investigated manually by C. G. Archaeology in order to assess its archaeological character / palaeoenvironmental potential and then documented on an individual pro-forma. Each exposed deposit was examined

by eye and with a metal detector. The small assemblage of humanly – struck flint recovered from the fieldwork is described in Section 7.3. and retained within the Project Archive (see Section 9.0.).

- 5.2.4. The location of the monitored works and the visible remnants of a now redundant field / plot boundary (see sections 2.1., 6.2.3. and 7.3.) were plotted on overall 1: 100 and 1: 500 scale site plans. A full photographic record of the project was also maintained as appropriate.

6.0. RESULTS OF BACKGROUND RESEARCH.

6.1. The Historical Environment Record.

6.1.1. The inspection of the East Sussex County Historical Environment Record (HER) produced 25 entries of archaeological / historical / architectural significance within a c.1km. radius of the workshop earmarked for demolition. These are tabulated in numerical order and described briefly below. Full details of the search are held within the Project Archive (see Section 9.0).

Table 1: The HER search.

HER NO.	GRID REF.	DATE.	SUMMARY DESCRIPTION.
MES1862	TQ 36 13	Bronze Age	Looped palstave found at Lentridge Farm.
MES1864	TQ 3603 1278	?	Greek cross cut in the turf above Plumpton Place. Thought to commemorate Simon de Montfort's victory at the 1264 Battle of Lewes. However, the date of the cross is uncertain.
MES1867	TQ 354 128	Bronze Age	Three bowl barrows and a mound located on Plumpton Plain.
MES1868	TQ 3553 1271	Bronze Age	Bowl barrow located on Plumpton Plain.
MES1870	TQ 3579 1266	Bronze Age	Two bowl barrows and a platform barrow located on Plumpton Plain.

MES1871	TQ 3603 1344	Medieval – Modern	Plumpton Place. House constructed by John Mascall in 1568 on the site of a medieval moated homestead. The north wing is the earliest build. The west front has two gabled wings and a projecting porch. Its original timber frame was covered with a brick and flint facade in the early 17 th century. The house was divided into workers cottages during the 18 th and 19 th centuries. Plumpton Place was fully restored by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1928. The moat survives to a depth of 3m. on the north and west sides of the house. A Grade II* Listed Building.
MES1873	TQ 3595 1267	Neolithic – Bronze Age	Possible long barrow, a bowl barrow and a platform barrow located on Plumpton Plain.
MES1881	TQ 36 13	Post- medieval?	Upper Mill: A Listed Building (windmill). No details provided.
MES1882	TQ 3604 1345	Modern	Plumpton Place gardens created in 1928 by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Extensive restoration and replanting was carried – out in 1986 / 1987.
MES1887	TQ 36 13	Mesolithic	Flint tranchet axe found at Plumpton Hill.
MES2029	TQ 3519 1280	Bronze Age	The site of a ploughed – out bowl barrow located on Streat Hill.

MES4599	TQ 3829 2747	Post-medieval?	Trackway running from Titsey to Westmeston. See Ordnance Survey Linear Archive File (LIN 135) for details.
MES7130	TQ 3625 1397	Post-medieval	Drews Farmhouse, Plumpton Lane. A Grade II Listed Building. 17 th century.
MES7131	TQ 3642 1348	Modern	The former schoolroom, Plumpton Lane. A Grade II Listed Building. Built in 1857.
MES7134	TQ 3652 1340	Post-medieval – Modern	Hackmans, Plumpton Lane. A Grade II Listed Building. 17 th century with 19 th century alterations.
MES7135	TQ 363 132	Modern	The Half Moon Inn, Plumpton Lane. A Grade II Listed Building. 19 th century.
MES7142	TQ 3591 1348	Post-medieval	Mill Barn: Now adjacent to, but originally part of Plumpton Place (MES1871). A large L – shaped building. The north wing is timber – framed, the east wing is faced with tarred weatherboarding. A Grade II Listed Building. 17 th century.
MES7144	TQ 3568 1350	Medieval – Modern	Plumpton Parish Church. The nave dates to the early 12 th century. The west tower is 13 th century with 14 th century additions. The chancel was rebuilt rather later in the 13 th century, but the east wall is modern. The porch probably dates from the 17 th century, while the vestry is of

			19 th century origin. A Grade II Listed Building.
MES7146	TQ 3597 1343	Modern	The Gatehouse at Plumpton Place (MES1871). Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1928. A Grade II Listed Building.
MES7148	TQ 3631 1318	Post-medieval	The Cottage, Ditchling Road. A Grade II Listed Building. 17 th century.
MES7149	TQ 3639 1346	Post-medieval	The Eugh, Plumpton Lane. A Grade II Listed Building. 17 th century or earlier, with 18 th century alterations.
MES7150	TQ 3645 1324	Post-medieval – Modern	The Laines, Plumpton Lane (originally the rectory). A Grade II Listed Building. 18 th century with 19 th century alterations.
MES7151	TQ 3615 1363	Post-medieval? – Modern	The Mill House. Faces the northern lake at Plumpton Place (MES1871). Originally an 18 th century or earlier mill building, but adapted by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1928 as a subsidiary residence. A Grade II Listed Building.
MES7421	TQ 3637 1414	Post-medieval	Documentary evidence for the site of a building.
MES7422	TQ 3627 1420	Post-medieval	Documentary evidence for the site of a building.

6.1.2. None of the Historical Environment Record entries listed above were impacted upon directly by the redevelopment scheme considered within this document.

6.2. The cartographic evidence.

6.2.1. The following historic maps were examined at the East Sussex Record Office, Lewes.

- Estate map by Figg c.1735 (E.S.R.O. ref: 5060/2) (Figure 3)
- Estate map c.1750 (E.S.R.O. ref: 5179/3) (Figure 4)
- Tithe map and Apportionment for the parish of Plumpton 1839 (E.S.R.O. ref: TD/E 95) (Figure 5)
- 6" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 53NE) 1st edition 1874 (Figure 6)
- 6" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 53NE) 1899
- 25" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 53/7) 2nd edition 1899? (Figure 7)
- 25" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 53/7) 1910 (Figure 8)
- 6" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 53NE) 1912 (Figure 9)

6.2.2. Each of the plans listed above locates the area of investigation within an enclosed field of rather limited archaeological interest. The c.1750 estate map (Figure 4) appears to show the presence of a possible and otherwise unrecorded structure (character and function unclear) adjacent the eastern perimeter of this field. However, none of the examined plans document any discernible features of archaeological / historical importance across the precise area of current interest. At the time of the 1839 tithe map (Figure 5) the field in question was known as 'The Lags'. The plot (number 431) was owned by the Earl of Chichester but leased out to a Benjamin Wood for arable cultivation. Full details of the tithe apportionment form an integral part of the Project Archive (see Section 9.0.).

6.2.3. The redundant field / plot boundary that crosses the area of flat land located to the west of the now demolished workshop (see sections 2.1., 5.2.4. and 7.3.) (Figure 10) is not shown on any of the studied historic maps (or indeed documented by the East Sussex County Historical Environment Record: see Section 6.1.). It is however marked on a modern 'estate plan' today handed out by the college authorities to new students and visitors. This boundary

would therefore appear to be a 20th century feature of no archaeological interest associated with a former (though recent) layout of the college grounds / campus.

6.2.4. Despite the close proximity of Plumpton Place and St. Michael and All Angels Church (see sections 3.1. and 6.1.1.) it can thus be concluded that between the years c.1735 (Figure 3) and 1912 (Figure 9) the site under present consideration was not utilised for any activities likely to have left *in-situ* archaeological remains.

6.2.5. It should be noted that a brief summary of the establishment and post 1919 expansion of Plumpton College is presented within Section 3.3.

7.0. RESULTS OF FIELDWORK.

7.1. A c.0.60m. – wide drainage trench was first excavated along the route shown on Figure 10. The character and stratigraphic sequence of the layers exposed within this cutting are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Sequence of layers observed within drainage trench.

CONTEXT NUMBER.	DESCRIPTION.	THICKNESS.
<p>1.</p>	<p>Topsoil. A loose, mid grey – brown slightly silty clay loam. Containing c.1% flint nodules (c.5mm. – 50mm.). Above Context 2 (undulating context boundary).</p>	<p>c.0.20m. – 0.40m.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Subsoil. A fairly loose, mid orange – brown silty clay. No observed inclusions. Below Context 1 (undulating context boundary). Above Context 3.</p>	<p>c.0.10m. – 0.35m.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Natural geology. A chalky loam / chalk rubble Head deposit. Below 2.</p>	<p>?</p>

7.2. No other deposits of archaeological significance, cut features, structures, artefacts or ecofacts were discovered during the excavation of the drainage trench.

7.3. A c.0.15m. – thick spit of topsoil (**1**) was next stripped from the c.46m. – long and c.39m. – wide area of the temporary site compound highlighted on Figure 10. The topsoil (**1**) removed from the c.2m. - wide and c.0.10m. to 0.20m. - ‘high’ 20th century field / plot boundary also shown on Figure 10 (see sections 2.1., 5.2.4. and 6.2.3.) was indistinguishable from that found

across the rest of the compound. No other layers (the base of the topsoil **(1)** being left *in-situ*) cut features or structures were revealed by this exercise. However, a light grey and blue – grey mottled flint blade core fragment typical of the Mesolithic period and two black humanly – struck flint flakes of probable later prehistoric origin were recovered from Context 1. It is recommended that no further analysis of these flints is undertaken, although they have been retained as an integral part of the Project Archive (see Section 9.0.).

- 7.4. The subsequent removal of the demolished workshop's floor base / foundations exposed an expanse of 'clean' natural Head **(3)** devoid of any associated archaeologically significant cut features, structures, artefacts or ecofacts (Figure 10). This absence of archaeological remains across the c.24m. – long and c.22m. - wide footprint of the old workshop is perhaps unsurprising given that the building had clearly been cut / terraced into the basal geology of the site.
- 7.5. The final phase of monitored works comprised the 'cutting back' of the c.1.3m. - high bank located to the west of the demolished workshop (see Section 2.1.) by a distance of c.4.5m. – 5.5m. (figures 2 and 10). This exercise confirmed the stratigraphic sequence documented by Table 2 and ultimately exposed a clean surface of natural Head **(3)** across the area highlighted on Figure 10. No other deposits, cut features, structures, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological significance were discovered.

8.0. SUMMARY.

- 8.1. No *in-situ* deposits, cut features or structures of archaeological significance were discovered during the fieldwork undertaken at Plumpton College workshops. The project also failed to identify a single context of palaeoenvironmental significance. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the now demolished building had clearly been cut / terraced into the natural geology of the site. The rather limited scale / impact of the groundworks undertaken beyond the footprint of the old workshop should also be noted.
- 8.2. Three humanly – struck flints of Mesolithic and later prehistoric origin were recovered from the area of the temporary site compound (see Section 7.3). One hundred and twenty five similarly – dated humanly – struck flints were also discovered during a recent archaeological investigation undertaken at the site of the new west wing extension to the main college building (Greatorex 2009) (see Section 3.2.). Both of these assemblages add to the evidence for the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age exploitation of local ‘low – lying’ resources previously recorded at Streat (TQ 352 146) (Clark 1932; Wymer and Bonsall 1977; Butler 2007) Stanton’s Farm (TQ 367 148) (Ainsworth 1988 pers. comm.) and Novington Manor (TQ 370 135) (Butler 1989; Butler and Funnell 1992).
- 8.3. No evidence for any subsequent Romano–British, Anglo-Saxon or medieval settlement / occupation activity was revealed as a result of the fieldwork under discussion here. Plumpton College is located between the site of a former medieval moated homestead and the 12th century church of St. Michael and All Angels (see Section 3.1.). As such the failure of the watching brief to uncover a single artefact of medieval origin is striking. Indeed only two sherds of possible medieval pottery were found during the (larger scale) work carried - out at the college west wing extension site (Greatorex 2009) (see Section 3.2.). In the late 1980s a programme of archaeological fieldwalking undertaken at Novington Manor gleaned over

1,300 fragments of possible Saxo-Norman - 16th century pottery from four fields found just c.750m. to the east of Plumpton Place (TQ 370 135) (Butler 1989; Butler and Funnell 1992). Perhaps it is here that the primary focus of local medieval settlement lies.

- 8.4. The construction of the 'original' now demolished workshop was not subject to archaeological monitoring. However, the essentially 'negative' results of the project under discussion here (i.e. the dearth of artefacts and absence of any cut features exposed beyond the old workshop footprint) suggest it is unlikely that any extensive remains of genuine archaeological note were destroyed at this time (1970s?: see Section 3.3.). Even so, the future discovery of *in-situ* archaeologically significant contexts within the grounds of Plumpton College should certainly not be discounted.
- 8.5. It should be noted that the investigative methodology employed by C. G. Archaeology is judged to have satisfied the Project Objectives set out in Section 4.0. of this report.

9.0. PROJECT ARCHIVE.

- 9.1. It is intended that the paper and digital written, drawn and photographic records arising from this project will be collated in accordance with *'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage'* (UKICI 1990) and deposited with the retained flint assemblage at Barbican House Museum, Lewes.

10.0. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

- 10.1. C. G. Archaeology would like to thank Greg Chuter the East Sussex County Council Assistant Archaeologist, Mike Barber of MJB Architecture, Westridge Construction Limited and the Plumpton College authorities for their assistance during the project. Figures 2 and 10 are based upon plans drawn – up and supplied to C. G. Archaeology by MJB Architecture.

11.0. REFERENCES.

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HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET.

Site Code.	PCW 08					
Site identification and address.	Plumpton College workshops, Ditchling Road, Plumpton					
County, district and / or borough.	East Sussex					
O.S. grid ref.	TQ 35770 13570					
Geology.	Head					
Project number.	08 / 11					
Fieldwork type.	Eval.	Excav.	W.Brief.	Survey.	Other.	
			X			
Site type.	Rural.	Urban.	Other. Grounds of college			
Date of fieldwork.	10 th December 2008 – 19 th May 2009					
Client.	Plumpton College					
Project manager.	Christopher Greatorex					
Project supervisor	Annalie Wood					
Period summary.	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	B. Age.	I. Age.	R – B.
		X	X	X		
	A. S.	Med.	P. Med	Other.		
Project Summary.	<p>An archaeological watching brief was maintained on works associated with the demolition of an existing workshop and the construction on the same site of new workshops and teaching facilities at Plumpton College. No <i>in-situ</i> deposits, cut features or structures of archaeological significance were discovered during the watching brief. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the now demolished workshop had clearly been cut / terraced into the natural geology of the site. Three humanly – struck flints of Mesolithic and later prehistoric origin were nonetheless identified. This flintwork adds to the evidence for the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age exploitation of local ‘low – lying’ resources previously recorded in the area. No evidence for any subsequent Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon or medieval settlement / occupation activity was revealed. Plumpton College is located between the site of a former medieval moated homestead (Plumpton Place) and the 12th century church of St. Michael and All Angels. As such, the failure of the fieldwork to uncover a single artefact of medieval pottery is striking. The construction of the ‘original’ now demolished workshop was not subject to archaeological monitoring. However, the essentially ‘negative’ results of the project under discussion here (i.e. the dearth of artefacts and absence of any cut features exposed beyond the old workshop footprint) suggest it is unlikely that any extensive remains of genuine archaeological note were destroyed at this time (1970s?).</p>					

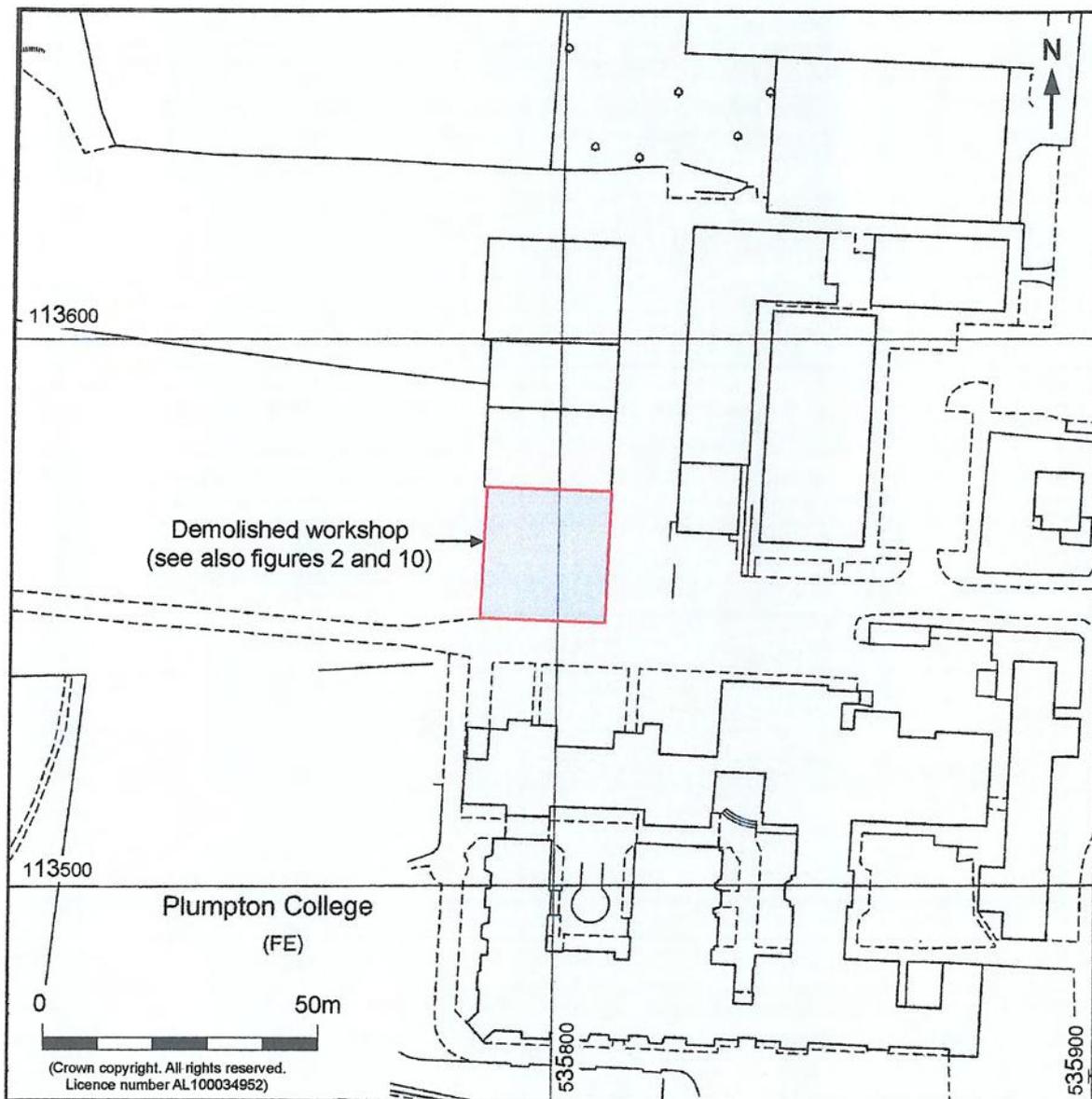


Fig. 1: Site location plan (a)

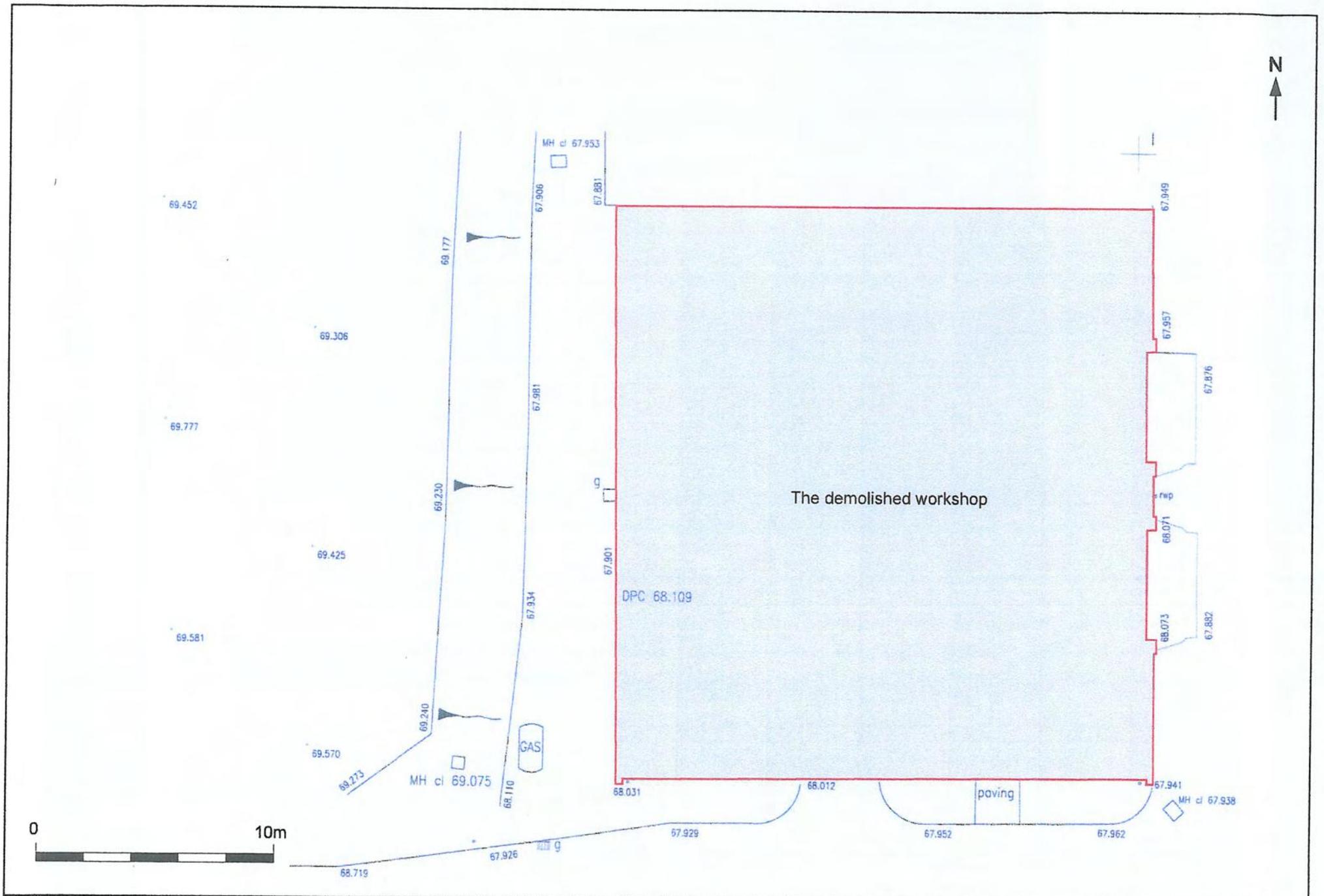


Fig. 2: Site location plan (b) showing demolished workshop, adjacent bank and levels prior to watching brief

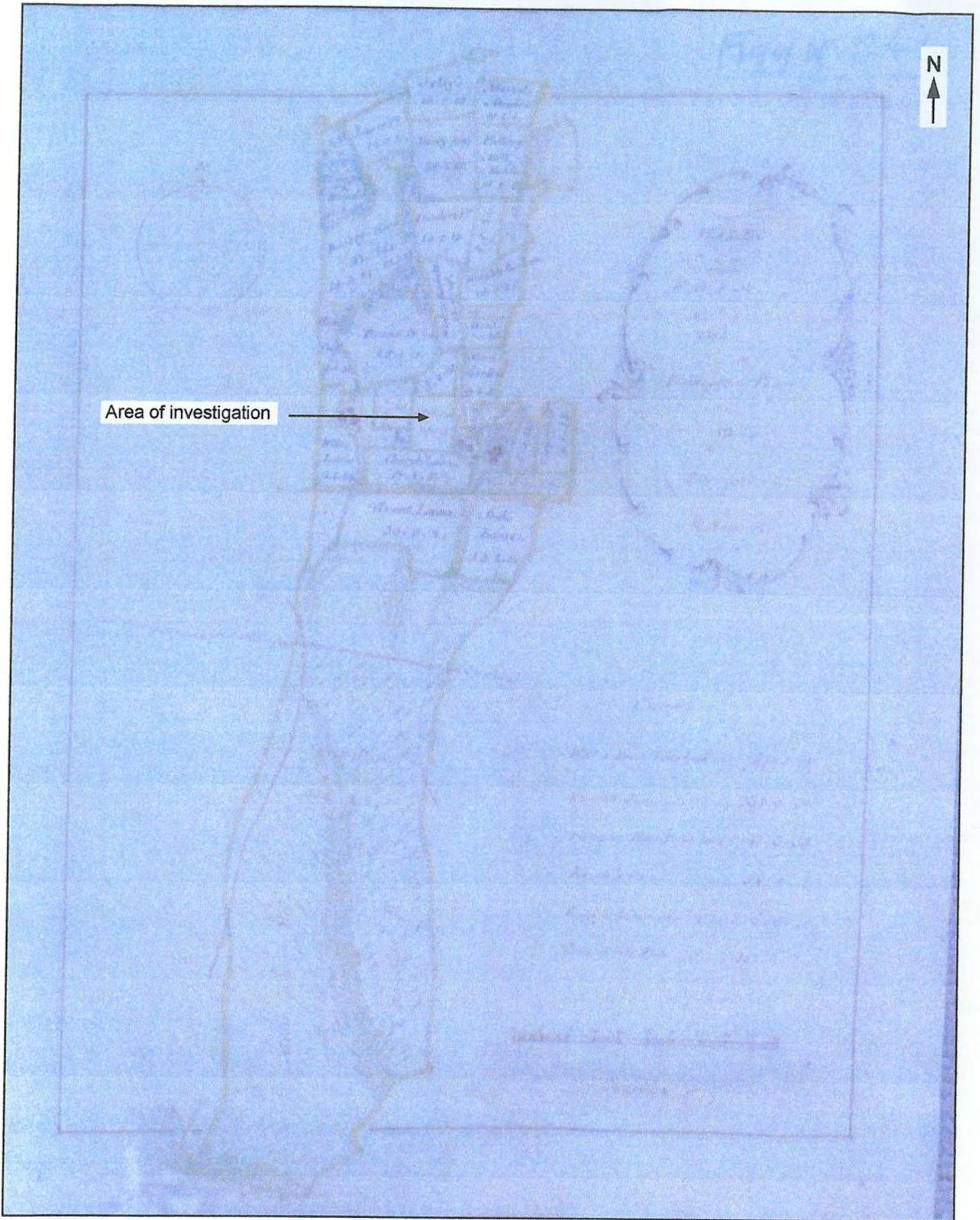


Fig. 3: Estate map by Figg c. 1735 (E.S.R.O. ref: 5060/2)

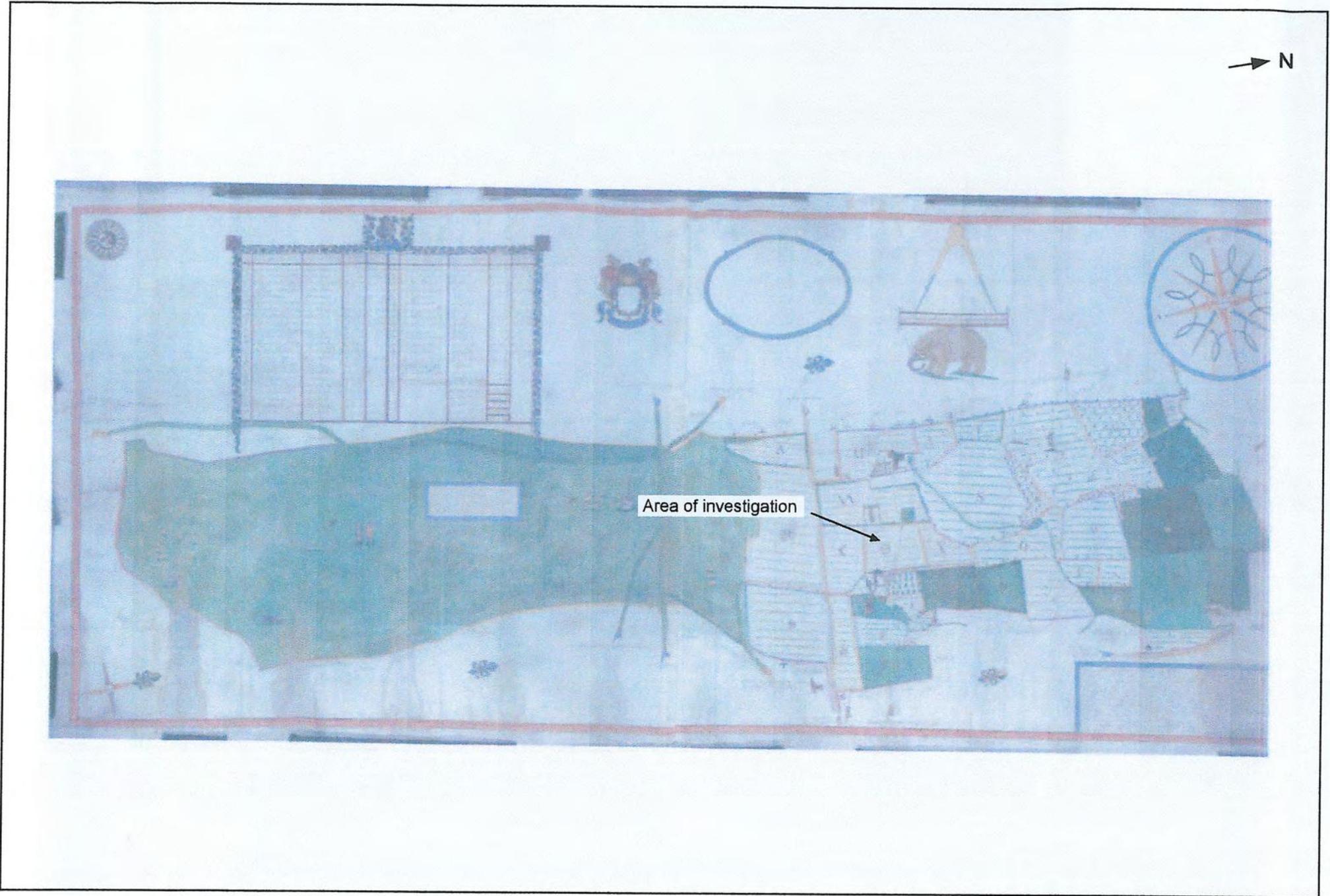


Fig. 4: Estate map c.1750 (E.S.R.O. ref: 5179/3)



Fig. 5: Tithe map for the parish of Plumpton 1839 (E.S.R.O. ref: TD/E 95)

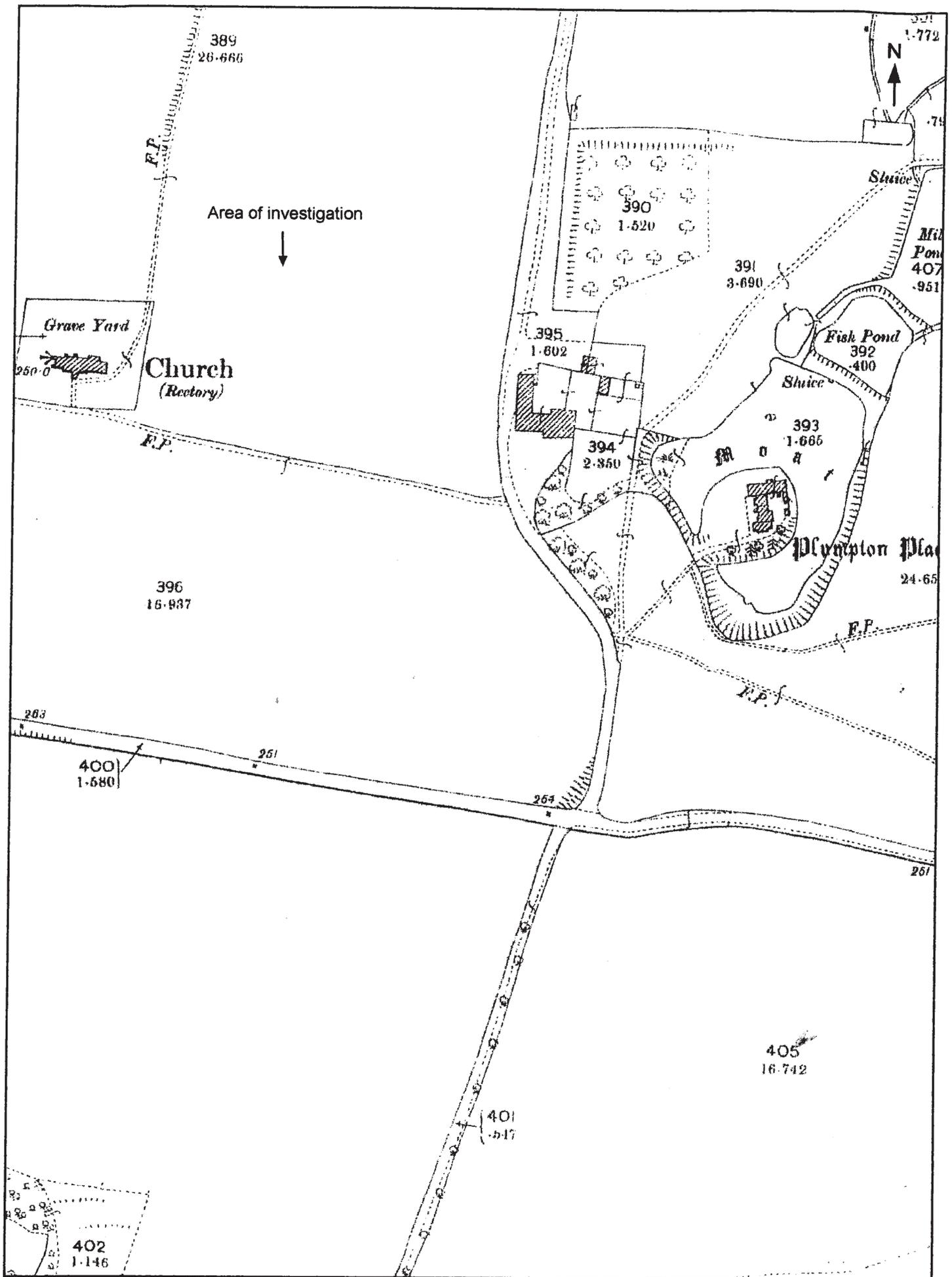


Fig. 7: 25" O.S. map (sheet 53/7) 2nd edition 1899?

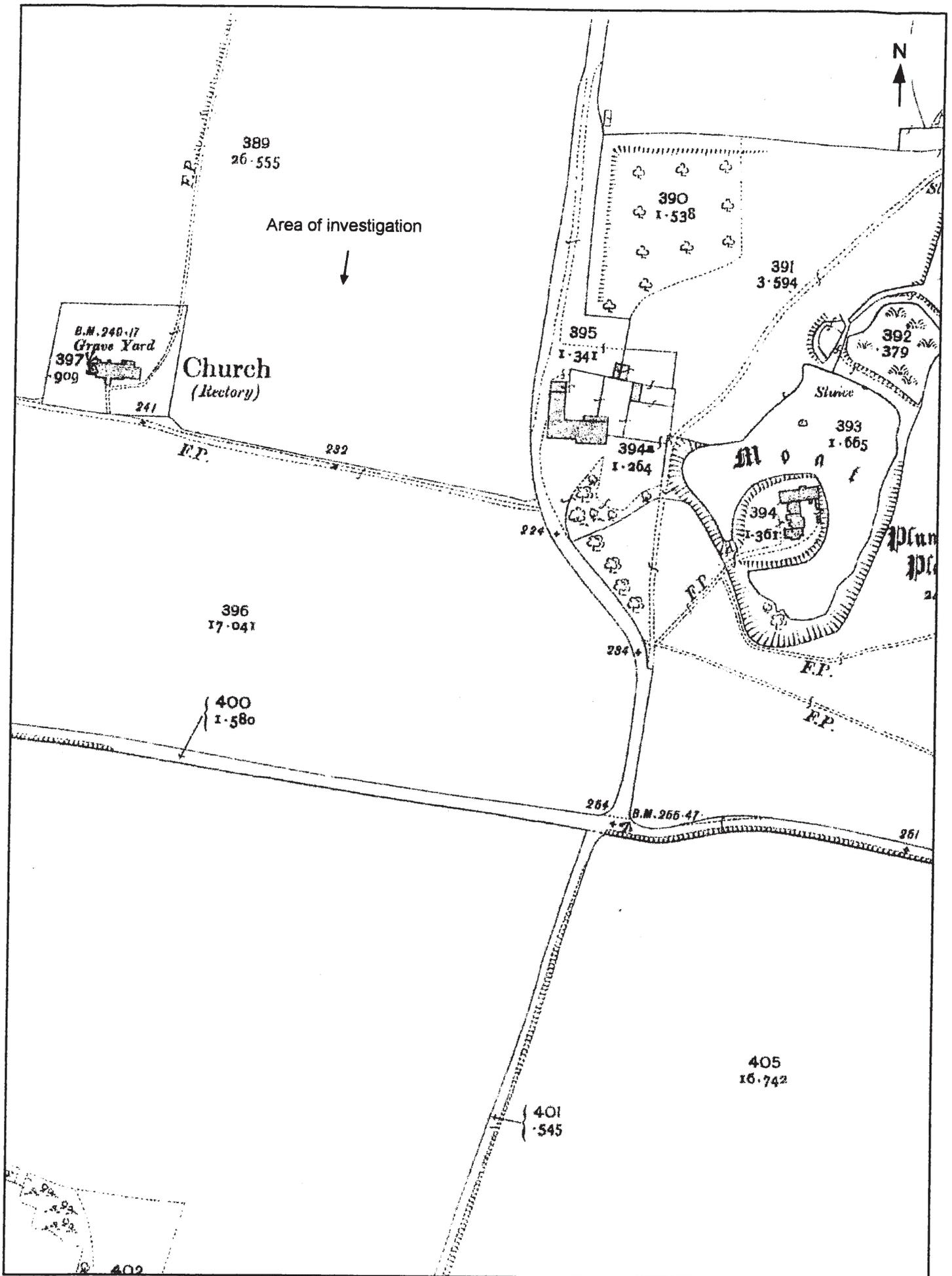


Fig. 8: 25" O.S. map (sheet 53/7) 1910



Fig. 9: 6" O.S. map (sheet 53/NE) 1912

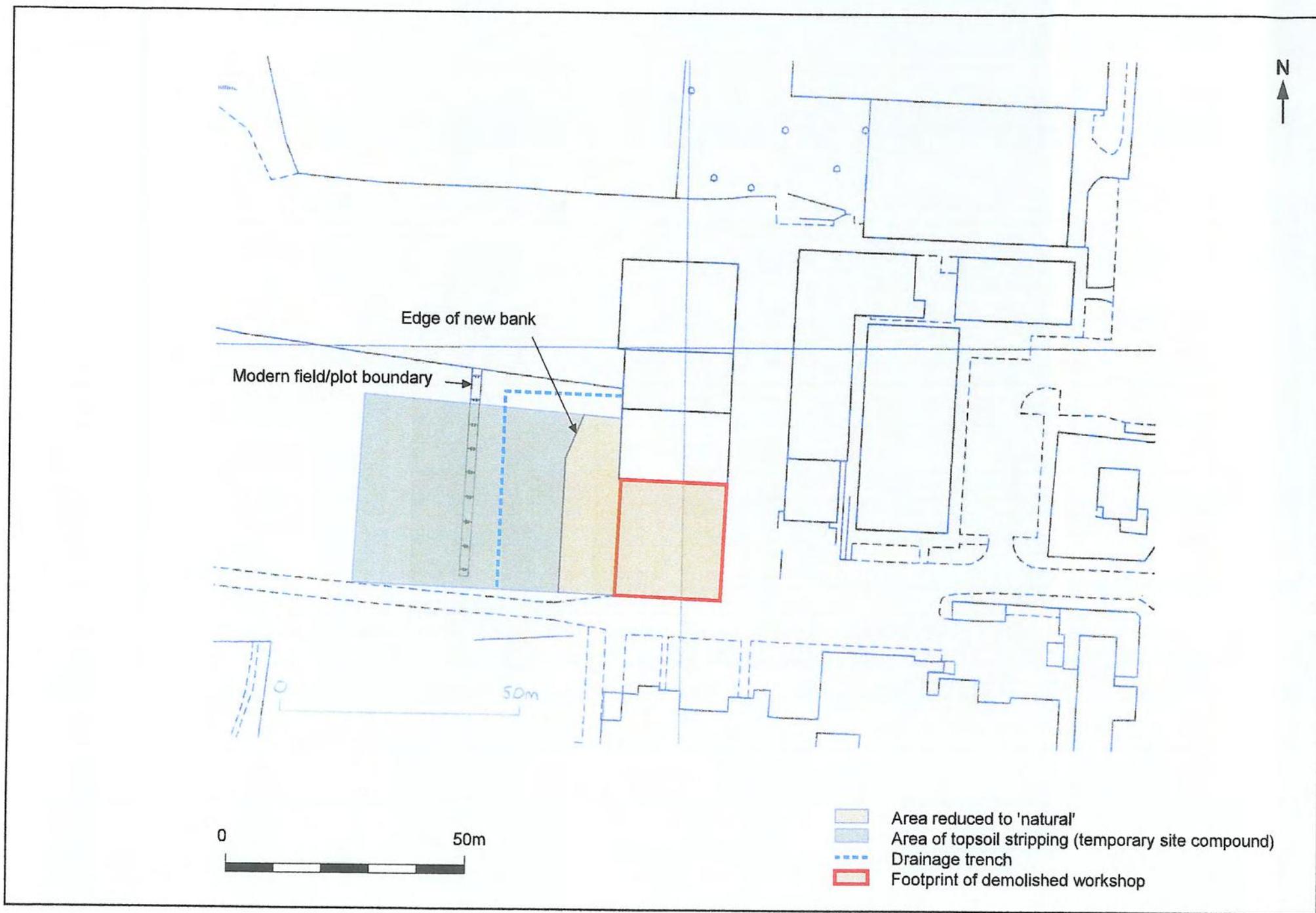


Fig. 10: Groundworks location plan