

**Archaeological Evaluation on land off
Hassall Street
Hanley
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
NGR SJ 88750 47285**

Planning Application No: SOT/50752

Site Code: HSH 10

Produced for

The Sanctuary Group

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Non-technical summary

Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation on land off Hassall Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (NGR SJ 88750 47285) in advance of the residential development of the site. The evaluation involved the excavation of a single trench in the location of a kiln identified on Hargreaves' 1832 map of the area.

The evaluation was undertaken between the 24th and 27th August 2010, but revealed no evidence of the kiln. The structure appeared to have been replaced by a large marl or clay-winning pit, one edge of which was exposed during the project. A large wooden post supported by at least two wooden struts was found at the base of the pit and probably related to its use. The pit had been partially filled with pottery waste from the Hanley factory of Charles Meigh pottery and subsequently sealed by another pottery deposit containing wares of J.W. Pankhurst. This seems to have taken place in advance of, and possibly in preparation for the construction of terraced houses on Hassall Street, which began after 1857.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Following a planning application (SOT/50752) to build five elderly person bungalows on land off Hassall Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (NGR SJ 88750 47285) (Fig. 1), the Local Planning Authority, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, recommended a programme of archaeological work as a condition of planning permission (SOT/50387). Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology was subsequently appointed to undertake the work by Stoke-on-Trent City Council (Housing, Environmental and Neighbourhood Services) acting on behalf of the developer, the Sanctuary Group.

1.2 The development site extended across both sides of Hassall Street towards its northern end (Fig. 2). The site was bounded by Nelson Place to the east and Waterloo Street to the north. The land sloped down towards the south end of the site and at the time of the evaluation was an open green.

2.0 Scope and aims of the project

2.1 A project brief produced by the Planning Archaeologist (PA) for Stoke-on-Trent City Council (Boothroyd 2010) required an archaeological evaluation to be carried out prior to the new development taking place. The project aims, set out in the PA's brief and in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Goodwin 2010), were to determine the extent, character and state of preservation of any buried archaeological remains encountered, enabling an appropriate mitigation strategy to be developed. The more specific aim of the project was to recover evidence of a kiln indicated on an 1832 map of the area.

3.0 Archaeological and historical background

3.1 The targeted kiln is first evident on Hargreaves' map of 1832 (Fig. 3). It appears as a single circular feature to the rear of a range of buildings on the west side of Nelson Place. The kiln's association with the nearby buildings is unclear, but together they may have formed a small manufactory. Neither Hassall Street nor Waterloo Street had been built by this date.

3.2 By 1849 the tithe map of Hanley shows that the kiln had been demolished (Fig. 4). A row of fifteen terraced houses had been constructed on the west side of Nelson Place, the back yards of which occupied much of the area of the former kiln. The Nelson Place pottery, established by John Bamford in c.1850 (Godden 1972, 70), is shown to the rear

of the Nelson Place houses towards the south end of the row. Homer's map of 1857 shows that few changes had taken place up to this date, but further development had taken place by 1880 with the construction of Hassall Street, Waterloo Street and further terraces backing on to the Nelson Place properties (Fig. 5). Hassall Street appears to have been either developed by or at the very least named for John Hassall who is recorded as the owner of the land on the 1849 tithe map.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 The archaeological evaluation took place between the 24th and the 27th August 2010 and was carried out in accordance with the project brief, the WSI and with standards and guidance advocated in the *By-laws of the Institute for Archaeologists* (revised October 2008).

4.2 The project brief required 24m² to be excavated within one trench measuring 12m x 2m, located on the north-east side of the development area to the rear of properties facing onto Nelson Place (Fig. 2). The trench was initially opened using a 180° backhoe excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and excavated until the first archaeological horizon was encountered. Several of the contexts encountered thereafter, largely comprising pottery waste, were also excavated by machine. The final trench was 11.64m NW-SE x 2.50m NE-SW (due to stepping out) and a maximum of c.3.0m deep. All archaeological deposits and features were cleaned by hand and recorded by means of written records (site notes and pro forma context sheets), scale plans (1:20 and 1:50) and sections (1:10 and 1:20), and photography (35mm monochrome and high-resolution digital). A temporary benchmark (TBM) with a value of 100.00m was established on the corner of the health centre on Botteslow Street (Fig. 2). All site levels were related to this TBM. Finds were sampled where appropriate. The site archive is stored at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (site code: **HSH10**)

5.0 The evaluation

5.1 The removal of 0.25-0.35m of dark brown silty topsoil (100) and the underlying 0.30-0.70m of dark brown clay-silt (101) containing fragments of brick and pottery sherds, revealed three north-east – south-west aligned brick walls, (102), (103) and (104), extending across the trench (Figs. 6 & 8, Plate 1). The walls were each 0.24m wide and set at intervals of roughly 4.0m apart, and were probably the remains of the dividing

walls between the back yards of former terraced houses on Hassall Street (Fig. 5).

Towards the north-western end of the trench wall (102) survived to three courses in height (0.32m), (103) crossed the middle of the trench and was four courses in height (0.46m) and wall (104) towards the south-eastern end of the trench was five courses in height (0.57m). The base of each wall was at a depth of 0.50-0.60m below present ground level, the lowest courses of walls (102) and (103) being stepped out.

5.2 The principle layer upon which the walls were constructed was (107), a mixed pottery waste, kiln furniture and ash deposit, varying between 0.55m-1.04m thick. Thin layers of fine sand (105) and silt (106), most evident in the north-east-facing section (Fig. 8, Plate 2), were also seen beneath walls (103) and (102) respectively, and above pottery waste (107). A 0.95m deep and 1.19m long north-east – south-west aligned cut [110] had been made into (107), on the north-western side of wall (102) and backfilled with (111), a dark grey-brown silt containing brick rubble.

5.3 Following recording, walls [102], [103] and [104] were removed and excavation of the trench continued along the north-eastern side. In the south-eastern half of the trench a 0.72m thick layer of light orange-brown clay (108) with occasional fragments of brick rubble, was revealed beneath (107). This in turn lay above a layer of natural light orange-yellow clay (109), which was at least 0.47m thick to the limit of excavation. Both (108) and (109) had been cut away towards the north-western end of the trench by feature [112]. Only the sloping south-eastern edge of [112] was evident within the trench, but in section the feature was at least 1.20m deep (Fig. 8, Plate 3). Feature [112] contained a series of fills, the uppermost of which was a layer of light brown compact clay (113), a maximum of 0.28m thick. This sealed a 0.18-0.40m thick layer of pottery waste and saggars (114), beneath which lay a mixed mid-brown silt and brick rubble (115) deposit, a maximum of 0.60m thick. A layer of dark grey clay (120), no more than 0.20m thick, was seen at the base of [112].

5.4 The base of [112] had been cut towards the north-western end of the trench to accommodate a wooden structure (119). This comprised a principal wooden post, at least 0.64m high, which was for much of its length rectangular in section (a maximum of 0.26m wide), but had been worked to a cylindrical ‘peg’, some 0.10m in diameter, at its apex (Figs. 7 & 9, Plates 4 - 6). Two curved wooden posts, each rectangular in cross

section and a maximum of 0.15m wide, had been positioned against the south-eastern side of the principal post to provide support. A third piece of timber was found adjacent to (119) and it was thought that this had originally provided a third support.

Unfortunately all three struts were too badly decayed to determine how they were originally wedged, pegged or otherwise fixed to the principal post. Structure (119) sat within a straight-sided, flat-bottomed, NW-SW-aligned linear cut [121], the full extent of which was not revealed, but was at least 0.98m long, 0.86m wide and 0.30m deep.

Feature [121] had been cut through the base of [112] into the natural clay (109). The principal post of [119] had been driven through the base of [121], but at least one of the supports rested on the bottom of the cut. A yellow-grey sticky clay with small fragments of wood (118) had been used to backfill [121] around [119].

5.5 A sub-circular patch of similar grey clay (116), measuring 0.50m NW-SE and 0.46m NE-SW and 0.04m thick, was seen towards the south-eastern end of cut [112] (Fig. 7, Plates 4 & 5). The irregular nature and shallow depth of this feature made it hard to determine whether it was a cut or was only a discrete area of clay discoloration perhaps due to water-logging, as was seen in this part of the trench during excavation. An irregularly-shaped patch of brown silt containing fragments of wood (117) was seen within (116). Feature (117) measured 0.37m x 0.23m and upon excavation was found to be 0.05m thick. The fragments of wood found within (117) may indicate the former position of a second wooden post, probably driven into the ground in a similar manner to (119).

6.0 Ceramic finds

6.1 A total of 211 vessel sherds and items of kiln furniture were recovered from seven contexts at Hassall Street. The majority of the material appears to comprise waste products from local potworks. The ceramics are described by context below.

6.2 Context 101

6.2.1 A small collection of mid-19th-century sherds. Two under-glaze transfer printed earthenwares, one a cup with 'Rhine' pattern in blue, the other a plate with 'Asiatic Pheasants' in blue, are present, alongside an earthenware plate with under-glaze painted banding. One red-bodied earthenware hollow ware with under-glaze slip banding also

features. A bone china saucer with over-glaze painted design and three ironstone sherds, one of which is biscuit-fired (a plate) complete the group.

6.3 Context 106

6.3.1 One under-glaze transfer-printed earthenware plate sherd with 'Willow' pattern in blue and an earthenware/ironstone coffee pot cover with under-glaze print in black. A mid-19th-century date for both sherds seems likely.

6.4 Context 107

6.4.1 A collection of earthenwares (62 sherds), ironstones (44 sherds), stonewares (three sherds) and bone china (one sherd), either glazed or biscuit fired. Kiln furniture (26 fragments) and saggars (three fragments) also form a small component of the group. Several sherds bear the printed mark of J.W. Pankhurst, who operated from Charles Street and Old Hall Street, Hanley between 1850 and 1882. The firm traded as J.W. Pankhurst & Co. from 1852 onwards (Godden 1991, 481): the absence of '& Co.' from the (107) printed pieces indicates that they probably date to the period 1850-1852.

6.4.2 Transfer-printed earthenwares are well-represented in the group, appearing as cups, saucers, plates, bowls and tureens. Designs include 'Willow', 'Rhine', 'Aperine', a 'Sea Leaf'-style print and a nursery plate (Plate 7) printed with the Benjamin Franklin maxim, 'FOR AGE AND WANT SAVE WHILE YOU CAN NO MORNING SUN LASTS ALL THE DAY' (Riley 1991, 274). Prints are typically rendered in blue, although black, green and purple examples also appear.

6.4.3 A few under-glaze painted earthenwares occur, including a whiteware plate with painted shell-edging. A single cup sherd has been under-glaze sponge decorated in blue and applied slip banding features on carinated bowl sherds. A single, biscuit-fired, buff-bodied earthenware sherd stems from a moulded figure.

6.4.4 The ironstones are largely undecorated 'white-granite' wares, destined for the American export market. The forms include cups, saucers, a teapot, plates, a cup plate, mugs, basins and large bowls in at least three Pankhurst body-shapes, 'Scrolled Bubble', 'Full Ribbed' and 'Framed Leaf' (Plate 8). Only two diagnostic ironstone sherds are decorated – a dish or platter with a 'Willow' print in blue and a dish with a 'flow-blue' floral design.

6.4.5 A handful of biscuit-fired buff-bodied earthenware fragments may represent an item of sanitary ware. One glazed, undecorated bone china egg cup sherd is also present in the group.

6.4.6 The kiln furniture is dominated by hand-made and die-pressed stilts, with fewer numbers of saddles or pins and one bone china placing ring. Crude extruded clay strips and pieces of wad clay are also common. Two large fragments of a buff-bodied biscuit and glost saggar also feature. A fragment of an 18th-century salt-glazed saggar is residual.

6.5 Context 114

6.5.1 A group dominated by biscuit-fired and glazed earthenwares (25 sherds) and ironstones (23 sherds). Two sherds (one earthenware, the other ironstone) have impressed marks of Charles Meigh of the Old Hall Works, Hanley (1835-1849) (Godden 1991, 428). Earthenwares with under-glaze transfer-prints are common, although most are biscuit fired. Only one print, 'Broseley', is identifiable and occurs in blue on a carinated cup. At least two fragments have prints which are embellished with under-glaze painted details. Forms amongst the printed earthenwares include cups, plates, a tureen stand and a basin.

6.5.2 Under-glaze painted earthenwares are represented by a single blue, shell-edged plate sherd. Slip-decorated earthenwares appear as at least two banded bowls, one of carinated form, the other hemispherical. A few glazed and undecorated earthenwares are present, but most of the vessels that lack any form of applied decoration are biscuit fired. These include a fragment of a jelly mould of gothic style.

6.5.3 The ironstone sherds are either decorated with under-glaze printed designs or plain. The printed pieces include an octagonal tea or coffee pot, fluted cups, a jug, a plate and a platter. All of the prints are blue, most of which are 'flown' and are either Oriental landscapes or floral designs. The plain ironstones are again 'white granite' wares, many of which are identical in form and body style (notably 'Scrolled Bubble') to those from (107), suggesting that they may be intrusive within the context.

6.5.4 In addition to the earthenwares and ironstones, one large buff-bodied stoneware toilet fragment (again very similar to the examples from (107) also features within (114).

6.5.5 A few items of kiln furniture and saggar fragments are also present. The former group includes two large hand-made stilts, a star-sectioned saggar pin and two lengths of extruded clay. Two sherds of an earthenware plate/shallow dish, the underside of which has a thick bluish glaze and multiple spur marks, may represent a setter – a vessel placed face down at the base of a stack to lift it off the saggar base and ensure stability during glost firing (Goodwin & Barker 2009, 57). This differs from other examples found in the Potteries in that it has a pin or small saddle fused to the interior, seemingly indicative of its use either face up (with a item placed inside), or face down, but in contact with another vessel below. The saggars (three pieces) are of a buff fabric and one wall fragment has a thickened section with triangular perforations for a vertical arrangement of pins (one of which remains *in situ*) (Plate 9).

6.6 Context 115

6.6.1 One mid-19th-century earthenware plate with under-glaze transfer print in black.

6.7 Context 117

6.7.1 One small piece of wad clay.

6.8 Context 118

6.8.1 One mid-19th-century stoneware jar/bottle sherd with impressed lettering – ‘...PEC[K]... [Wine] & Spirit Merc[hant].....NGSLAND....’

6.9 Comments

6.9.1 The material from contexts (107) and (114) is interesting, as it represents the wares of two manufacturers involved in supplying the North American export market: a trade that was of great importance to the north Staffordshire pottery industry. The ‘white granite’ and printed ‘flow-blue’ ironstones that appear in the two groups are characteristic of the ceramics produced to American stylistic tastes in the mid 19th century. Manufacturers such as Pankhurst supplied wares to the States via a number of avenues. In the 1850s Pankhurst distributed goods through the American outlet of another north Staffordshire manufacturer, George Meakin (Ewins 1997, 95) and employed the services of Goddard, Burgess and Dale, merchants of Longton, New York and Baltimore (Ewins 1997, 108). By 1869, the New York importers D.B. Stedman & Co. were also dealing material produced by Pankhurst (Ewins 1997, 94).

7.0 Discussion

7.1 Feature [112] probably resulted from the extraction of raw materials, most likely clay or marl used in the manufacture of bricks or saggars. The substantial wooden post (119) at the base of cut [112] may well represent some form of pulley, lift or shoring associated with the use of the feature. The pit was eventually abandoned and filled in with brick rubble (115) and pottery waste (114): the sherds from this latter context were produced at Charles Meigh's Old Hall Works and date to the period c.1835-49, providing some clue of the point at which the pit fell into disuse. Another, more substantial, deposit of pottery waste (107) was subsequently laid above (114), probably during the early 1850s.

7.2 As deposits of factory wasters are extremely common finds in the Potteries, and can be substantial in nature (Banks 1997, 46), the presence of context (107) may simply be the result of waste disposal by Pankhurst's Old Hall and Charles Street works. Alternatively, the material could also have been imported onto the site as levelling material for the construction of properties facing onto Hassall Street. Cartographic evidence indicates that these were built between 1857 and 1880 (Fig. 5), sometime after the houses on Nelson Place, which were constructed during the period 1832 – 1849 (Figs. 3 & 4). Context (107) appeared to represent the principal construction horizon for walls (102), (103) and (104), which represented the backyard walls of at least two of the Hassall Street terraces (Fig. 5). It was not ascertained if (107) extended beneath the yards of the properties facing onto Nelson Place, although as their construction pre-dated the pottery in (107), it was not expected to continue much further to the north west.

7.2.1 It is highly likely that manufacturers saw the disposal of waste pottery as a business opportunity and attempted to sell it for building or construction purposes. Accounts from the Don Pottery in Leeds indicate that in 1805, the factory sold 136 loads of waste sherds for use in road building to the township of Swinton at a price of 1/- per load. A further 260 loads, again at 1/- per load, were sold by the works in April 1811 (Griffin 2001, 34). It is probable that similar transactions took place in Stoke-on-Trent.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Archaeological evaluation on land off Hassall Street found no evidence of the kiln identified on Hargreaves' 1832 map (Fig. 3). Assuming that the map was sufficiently accurate to locate the kiln, all trace of the kiln had been destroyed by the marl pit

represented by feature [112], which was in turn backfilled in advance of the residential development of the area in the mid 19th century. The precise function of the kiln shown in 1832, therefore, remains open to question. It may have been a brick kiln, although no record of a brick works in the Nelson Place area appears in contemporary trade directories (Pigot & Co. 1828-29; White 1834). The marl pit which eventually replaced the kiln may itself have related to brick production and could represent a continuity of the activity indicated in 1832. Equally, however, the pit could be evidential of an entirely different enterprise than that represented by the 1832 kiln. The layout of the works of which the kiln appears to form a part on Hargreaves' map is not reminiscent of a pottery factory. For example, unless involved in only part of the manufacturing process, such as decorating, a potworks would typically require at least two kilns, rather than the single example shown within the works on the 1832 map. It is possible that the premises was a decorating works, but as it is located away from the main focus of pottery production in the town centre to the north, its position would appear not to be economically advantageous. The only potworks that lies close to the factory on the 1832 map (a short distance to the south west) is the Eastwood Works, a fairly sizeable factory that would probably have held the means to decorate and finish its wares in house. One further possibility is that the factory was a colour works: such a manufactory is recorded on Nelson Place in 1832, under the ownership of a William Marsh (White 1834, 563). This enterprise would have required at least one kiln to calcine metallic oxides for the preparation of pure colours (Hainbach 1924, 100).

8.2 The forthcoming development of the site may offer a valuable opportunity to recover further examples of pottery produced by both Meigh and Pankhurst, two manufacturers involved in the important American export trade. The work may also furnish evidence to help to better understand the nature of land use in the area during the first half of the 19th century

9.0 Acknowledgements

9.1 This report was written and illustrated by Zoë Sutherland of Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology. Finds were identified and reported upon by Jonathan Goodwin of Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology. Fieldwork was undertaken by Elisabetta Biondi, Heather Ann Cope and Zoë Sutherland. Thanks are due to Noel Boothroyd (Planning Archaeologist, Stoke-on-Trent City Council), Tracy Chittin (Principal Renewal Manager,

Neighbourhood Renewal Team) and to the Sanctuary Group for their help and cooperation.

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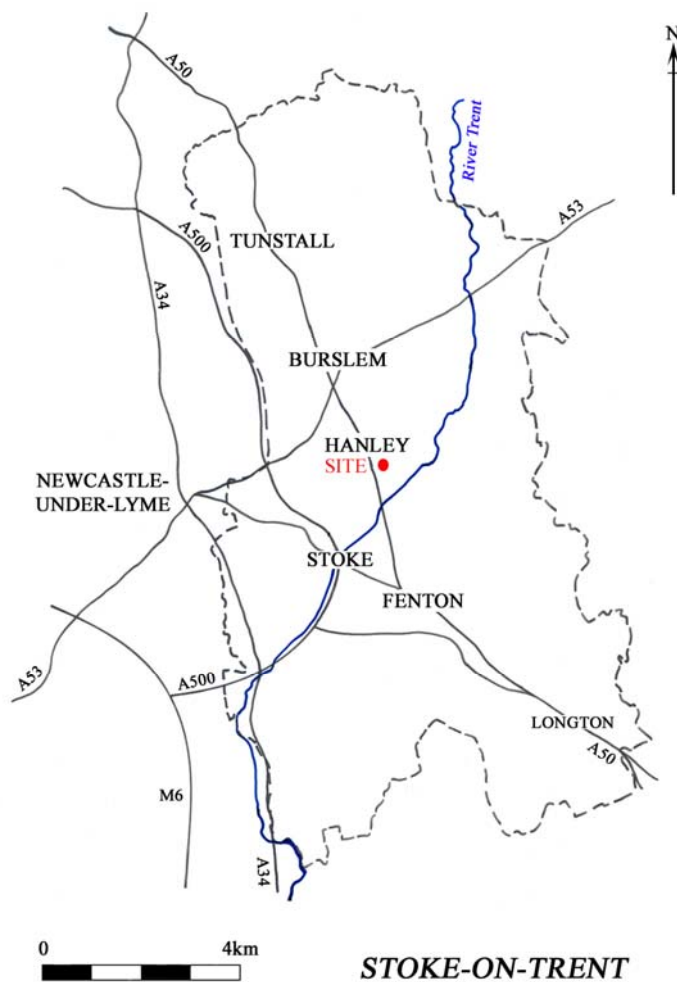
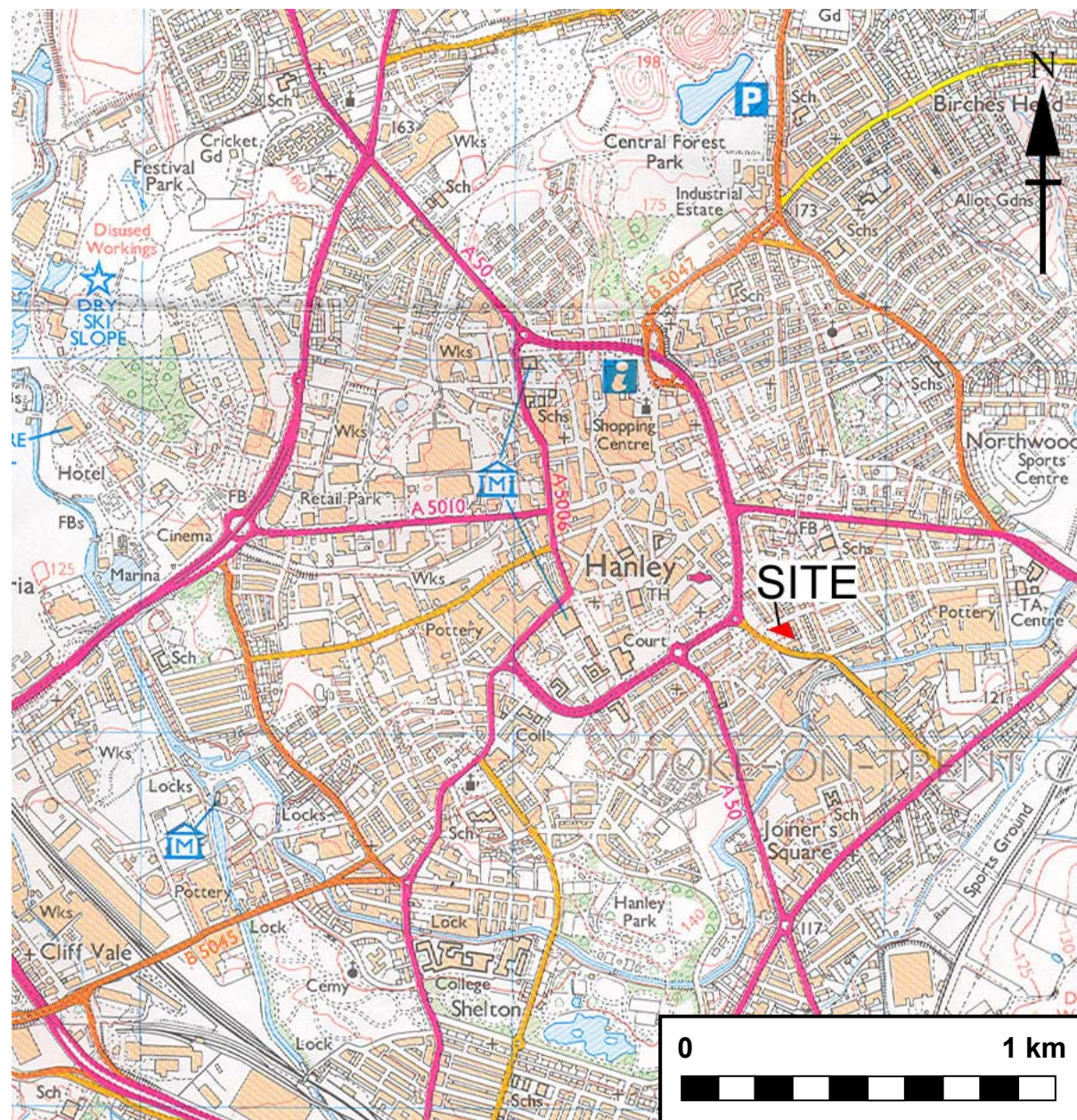


FIG. 1
Site location.



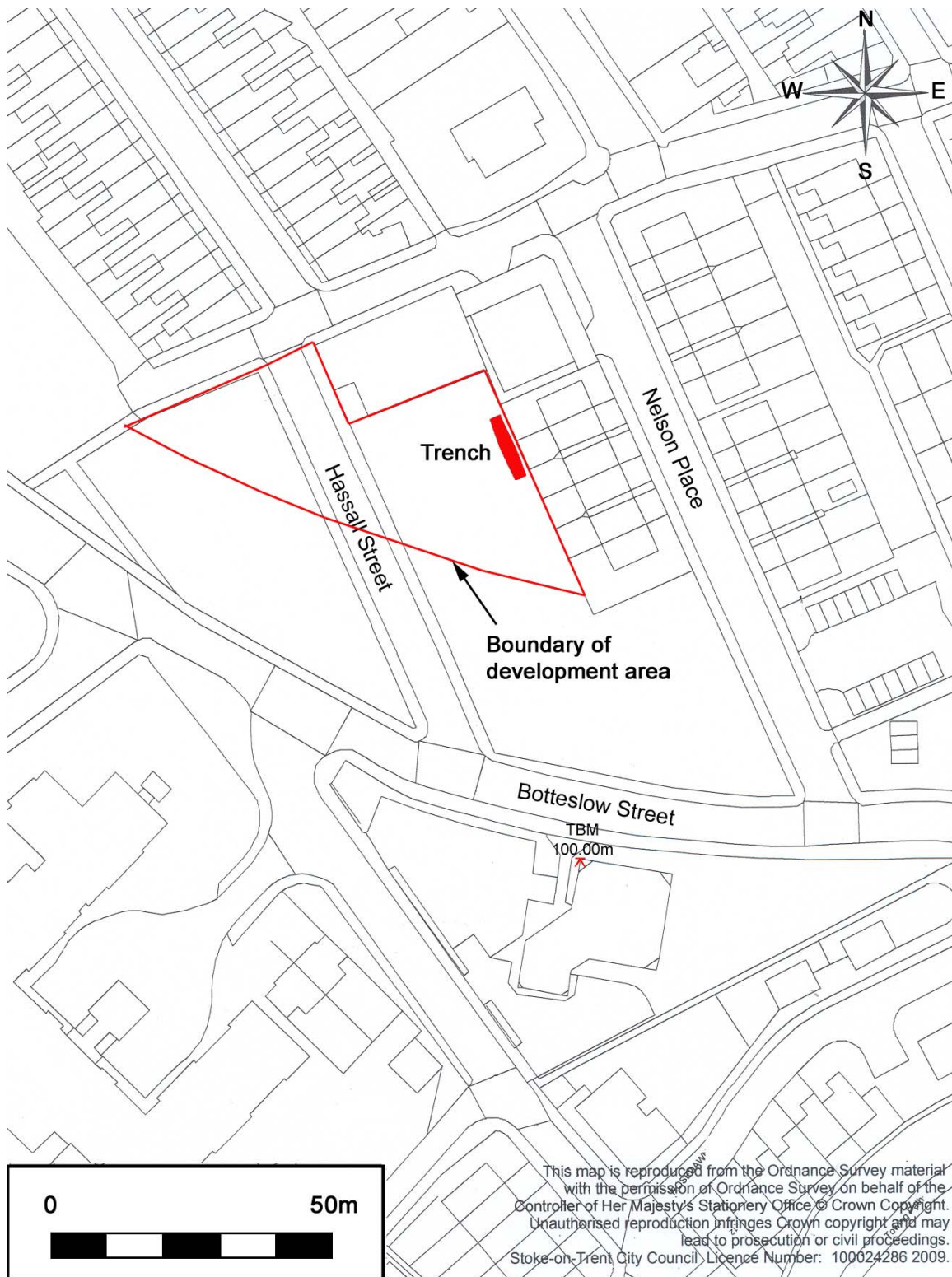


FIG. 2

Trench location plan.



FIG. 3

Hargreaves' map of 1832, showing the trench and the development area in red.

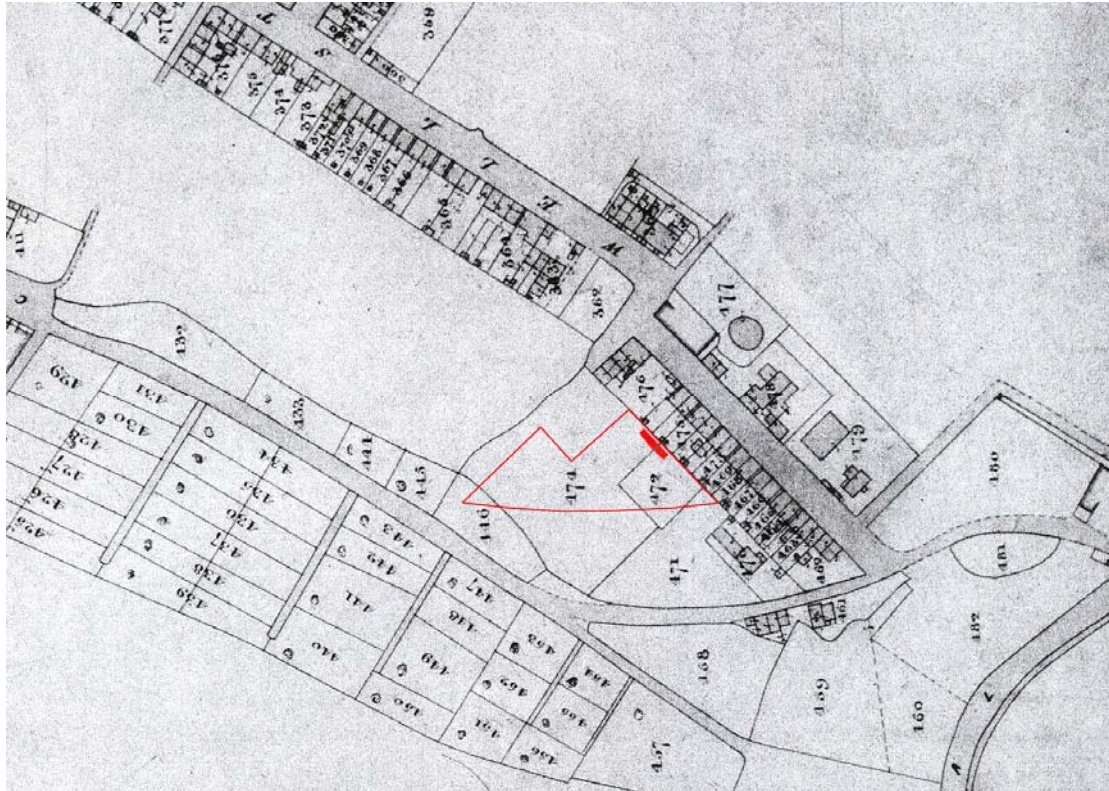


FIG. 4

1849 tithe map, showing the trench and the development area in red.



FIG. 5

1880 OS map, showing the trench and the development area in red.

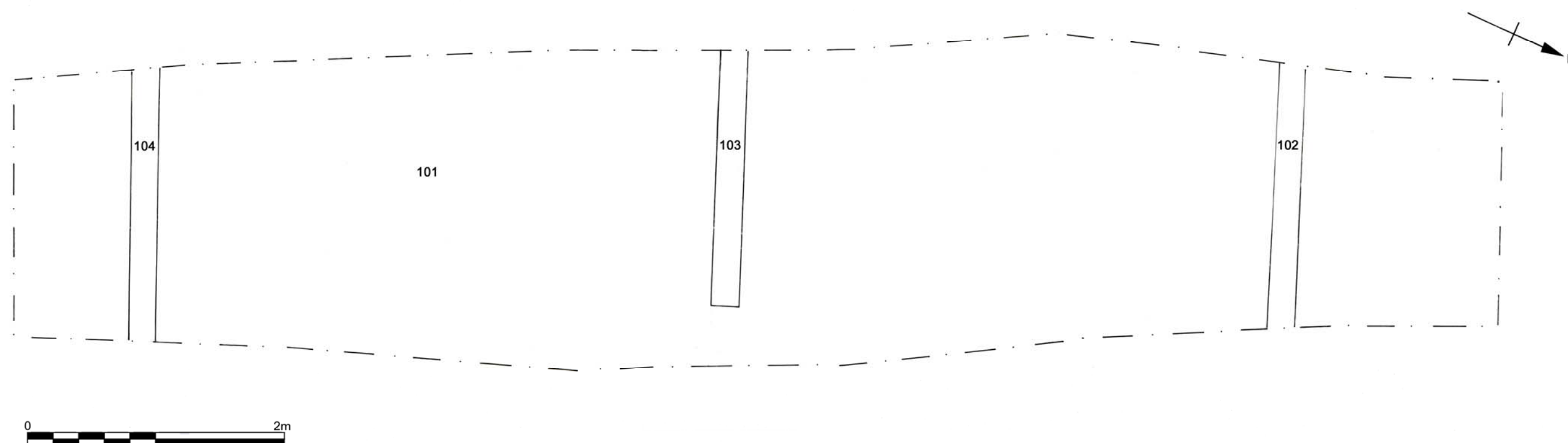


FIG. 6
Trench plan showing walls
(102), (103) and (104).

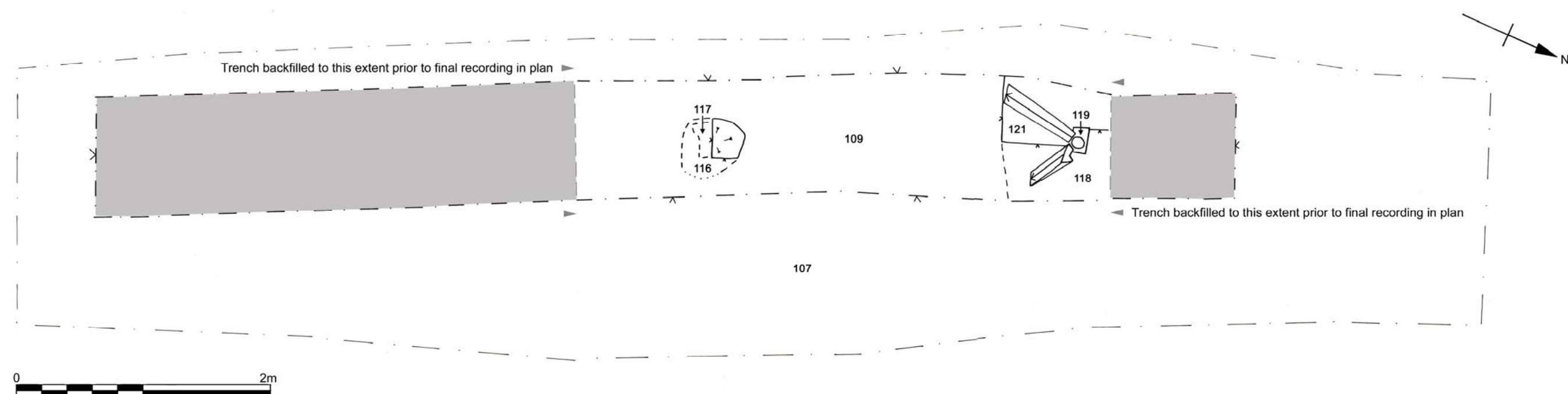


FIG. 7
Trench plan after the removal of (102),
(103) and (104), showing
(119).

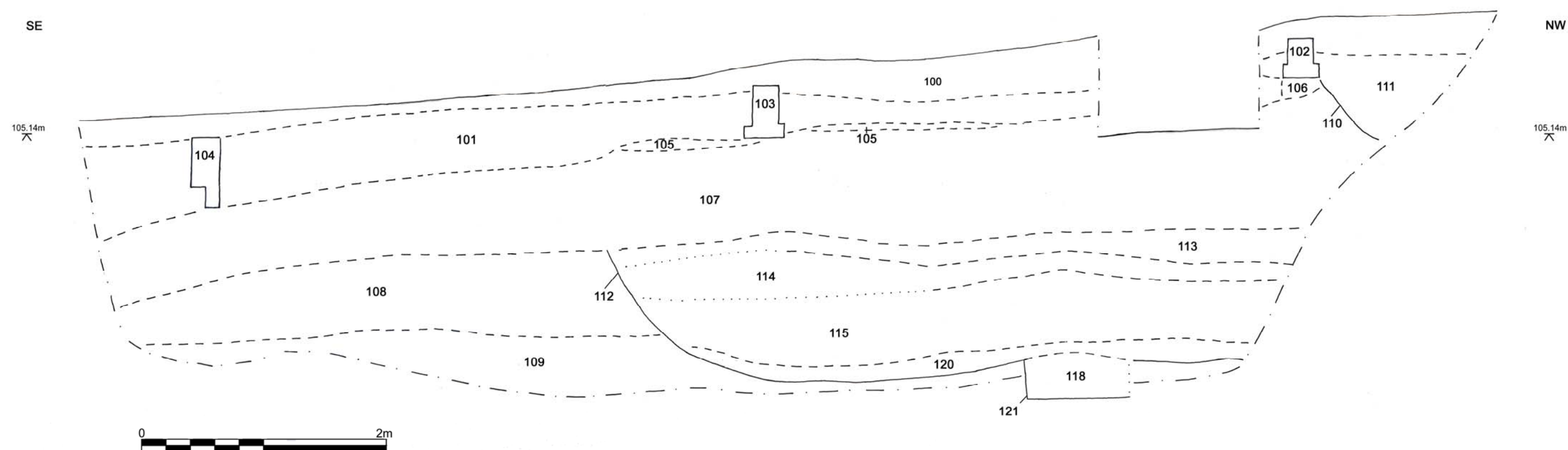


FIG. 8
North-east-facing section of the
trench.

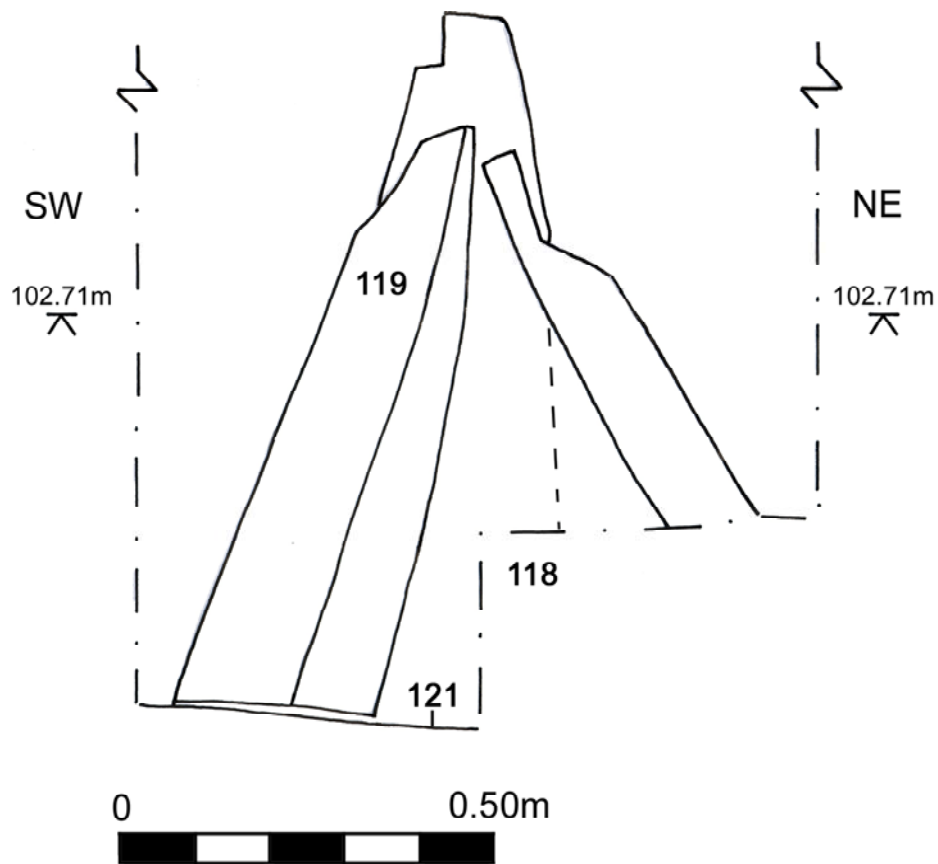


FIG. 9

South-east-facing section of wooden structure (119).



PLATE 1

The trench following the first phase of excavation (looking north west) showing walls (102), (103) and (104) (scales: 2.0m).



PLATE 2

Wall (103) with underlying layer (105) in the north-east-facing section (scales: 2.0m).



PLATE 3

North-east-facing section of the trench showing cut [112] (scale: 2.0m).



PLATE 4

The trench following the second phase of excavation (looking north west) showing post (119), with feature (116) in the foreground (scale: 2.0m).



PLATE 5

Post (119) prior to sectioning of cut [121] (looking north west) (scale: 0.25m).



PLATE 6

Post (119) following sectioning of cut [121] (looking north west) (scale: 0.25m).



PLATE 7

Biscuit-fired, transfer-printed nursery plate sherds from (107). The complete maxim reads, 'For age and want save while you may, no morning sun lasts all the day'.



PLATE 8

J.W. Pankhurst 'White Granite' ironstones from (107). The body styles are 'Full Ribbed' (left) and 'Scrolled Bubble'.



PLATE 9

Sagger wall fragment from (114), with triangular holes for pins.