

**NEW FOUL DRAIN AND OTHER WORKS, LYTES CARY,
CHARLTON MACKRELL, SOMERSET
Archaeological Observations and Recording**



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June 2006

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August 2005 – April 2006**

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New Foul Drain and other works, Lytes Cary, Charlton Mackrell, Somerset

Archaeological Observations and Recording, August 2005 – April 2006

SUMMARY

Terrain Archaeology carried out an intermittent program of observations and recording at Lytes Cary, between August 2005 and April 2006, during the installation of a new foul drain (from ST53352639 to ST53292655) and other works close to and inside the house.

Within the house, part of the footings of the west end of the North Wing and an earlier stone flag floor were exposed and recorded. These are probably part of a brewhouse constructed at the end of the North Wing mid 17th century.

Immediately south of the house, the remains of a garden wall and an outhouse wall were exposed. These structures had been demolished to make way for the building of the West Wing in 1907.

No significant archaeological features were found in the drain trench.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake archaeological observations and recording during the installation of a new foul drain at Lytes Cary, Charlton Mackrell, Somerset and was subsequently asked to undertake further small observations during works inside and just outside the house.

Lytes Cary lies on the eastern/northern side of the River Cary valley at ST533265 (Figure 1). The topography is fairly flat, dipping down towards the west and the south. It lies about 28 m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as Upper Lias clays and limestones.

The new foul drain was laid in a trench, which ran WSW from Lytes Cary house, then SSE along the farm track to a manhole southeast of the farmyard (ST53352639) (Figure 2). The drain trench was then extended to run along the outside of the West Wing of the house, up to the southern side of the south entrance (Trench 2). Observations were also made during the installation of new pipework inside Lytes Cary House (Trench 3) and the excavation of an electric cable trench (Trench 4) across the yard.

The fieldwork was carried out intermittently between 8th August 2005 and 28th April 2006 by Peter Bellamy and Steven Tatler.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the following for their help and cooperation during this project: Helen Brown, Martin Papworth, and Simon Larkins (*National Trust*); Robin Sibley and Sibley Bros; Mike and Glynn of M & M Contractors; and Jo Draper.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Lytes Cary lies to the west of the Roman Fosse Way (Figure 1) and Roman remains have been reported from the field to the north of Lytes Cary Cottages.

Lytes Cary is first mentioned in 1284–5 as ‘Kari’ and may possibly be identified as the larger of two manors of this name mentioned in Domesday (Dunning 1974, 100). The present form of the name is first mentioned in 1333 (*ibid.*). The smaller of the two Domesday settlements may be identified as Tuckers Cary or Little Cary, later known as Cooks Cary or Lower Lytes Cary. There are extensive earthworks of medieval closes and possible building platforms in the field to the west of Lytes Cary, which may be the remains of Tuckers Cary.

The manor house of Lytes Cary is probably of 14th century origin. The chapel was probably built shortly before 1343 and the original house is likely to be of similar date. The house was the home of the Lyte family from the 14th to the 18th century. The Great Hall was refurbished in the 1460s, but the house acquired its present character in the early 16th century when the Porch and Oriel were added to the Great Hall and the Parlour range was added to its south side. (Garnett 2001, SVBRG 2005).

After the Lytes gave up the estate in 1755, the house fell into decline. In the late 18th century, a farmhouse was erected in place of the original north range and the west range was demolished some time before 1810.

In 1907, Sir Walter Jenner acquired the property and restored it, building the present west range in 1907. The 1903 and 1930 Ordnance Survey maps show a number of changes to the farm buildings in the early 20th century (Figures 3 and 4) and the present farm track behind the house was constructed at some time after 1930. Jenner bequeathed the property to the National Trust in 1948.

There has been little archaeological fieldwork at Lytes Cary. In 1999 Terrain Archaeology undertook a watching brief during the construction of a new drain and soakaway from the farm buildings on the north side of Lytes Cary (Bellamy 2000). The results of this were largely negative. Again, in 2004, Terrain Archaeology undertook another watching brief during the construction of a new water main supply to Lytes Cary. For most of the route of the pipeline, the archaeological results proved negative, but a small number of features were found close to the house itself (Bellamy 2004).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the archaeological observations was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

METHODS

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct and *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*, although no written brief was issued for the project.

The groundworks for the foul sewer (Trench 1) comprised the machine excavation of a continuous trench 0.7 m wide and 1.2 m deep (Plate 1), from the west side of Lytes Cary house along the track to a manhole connection to the south of the house, along the course shown on Figure 2. The observation of the pipe trench was partial, as defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, with a suitably qualified archaeologist present as and when seemed appropriate. For much of its course, the drain trench was dug immediately adjacent to a water main observed by Terrain Archaeology in 2004 (Bellamy 2004). The results of this earlier watching brief were largely negative and it was

decided not to observe the new foul drain trench, except in the area where it did not run parallel to the water main, i.e. at its southern end where it passed the farmyard (as shown on Figure 2).

The foul drain pipe connections to the house were undertaken separately and were laid in a hand-excavated trench (Trench 2), 0.4 m wide and 0.4 m deep, which ran along the side of the West Range of the house and through the wall beside the doorway (Figure 5).

Another trench (Trench 3) was excavated to install pipework inside the house at the northern end of the Gallery. It was dug by hand along part of the corridor in the North Wing and through a blocked doorway into the Gallery in the South Wing (Figure 3). The blocking of the doorway was removed prior to the archaeological observations. In addition, a small section of trench was observed in the east side of the Kitchen.

Another trench (Trench 4) was machine-excavated to accommodate a new mains electric cable from the junction box behind the shed at the western end of the yard up to the eastern side of the entrance to the North Wing of the house (Figures 2 and 9).

All deposits exposed in the trenches were recorded using elements of Terrain Archaeology's recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. All depths recorded were below existing ground surface.

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the National Trust. The archive will be deposited with the National Trust.

RESULTS

Trench 1 – The foul drain south of Lytes Cary

The full length of the foul sewer pipe trench was not observed, as it was dug immediately adjacent to the water main that was observed by Terrain Archaeology in 2004 and no significant archaeological features were revealed (Bellamy 2004). The foul drain continued southwards beyond Maytree Cottage along the eastern side of the farmyard (Figure 2).

The observed part of the trench was 74 m long by 0.7 m wide and up to 1.2 m deep. The underlying natural was a compact brown clay (101) containing bands of stone and patches of dark bluish-grey clay towards the base of the trench. Above this was the make-up of the track, which comprised a distinctive layer, up to 0.5 m thick, of tightly-packed pitched Lias slabs (102). This was identical to the track make-up further to the north. It was observed southwards up to about 10–20 m from the southern end of the pipe trench. The track to the south of the farmyard is now partly covered with topsoil and grass. At the east end of the farmyard, the pitched stone track structure was sealed by a layer of compact reddish-brown gravel scalplings (103), up to 0.35 m thick, part of the existing track through the farm. Most of the above deposits were sealed by a 0.2 m thick layer of greyish-brown clayey loam topsoil (100).

Only a single feature cut into the natural clay was observed. This was a stone-filled field drain (105), which crossed the trench in a NE–SW direction opposite Maytree Cottage (Figure 2). It had vertical sides and a flat base and was 0.7 m wide by 1.2 m deep. No other features were observed.

Trench 2 — The drain trench along the West Wing

Trench 2 ran parallel to the West Wing of the Manor House from the end of Trench 1 in the yard through the gate to the garden and up to the door (Figures 2 and 5). It was 11.5 m long, up to 0.5 m wide and 0.6 m deep and was excavated by hand after the removal of the Lias flagstone path (Plate 2). The trench was not deep enough to expose the underlying natural clay.

The truncated remains of two walls were found running roughly perpendicular to the West Range (Figure 5). The northern wall (110) was 0.6 m wide and comprised roughly coursed limestone, bonded with lime mortar (Plate 3). This wall is on the precise line of the south wall of an outhouse built on the end of the North Wing during the 19th century, as shown on the 1903 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 3). It is likely that wall 110 is the remains of the south wall of this building, which was demolished when the West Wing was constructed in c. 1907. No traces of any internal surfaces were found, but these may be more deeply buried. About 1.5 m to the south was another similar mortared limestone wall (113), 1.0 m wide (Figures 5–6; Plate 4). This footing is on the line of the north wall of a garden on the south side of the house (Figure 3), which was constructed pre-1886 and enlarged from a paddock shown on the 1809 enclosure map (SVBRG 2005). It is likely that this is the remains of this garden wall and which was also demolished in order to construct the West Wing in c. 1907.

The only sub-surface deposit revealed in the trench was a yellowish-grey clay (107), over 0.5 m thick, containing occasional limestone pieces (average size 100 mm and up to 450 mm across) and some mortar debris, which produced a small quantity of 18th and 19th century pottery, glass, clay tobacco pipe and shell. This deposit may be part of a levelling layer associated with the building of the west range in c. 1907.

Trench 3 – Observations in the North Wing

Trench 3 was located across a blocked doorway between the Gallery in the West Wing and the corridor to the Kitchen in the North Wing (Figure 7, Plate 5). This part of the house is thought to have been built in the mid 17th century and may have been originally constructed as a brewhouse (SVBRG 2005). The Gallery was added in c. 1907. The stone blocking of the opening was removed prior to the archaeological observations. This trench was dug to allow access for pipework from the Gallery into the corridor. It was L-shaped, running beneath the doorway then turning along the corridor of the North Wing towards the Hall (Figure 8) and measured 1.5 m by 0.4 m across and up to 0.55 m deep.

The footings of the south wall of the North Wing were exposed and a section cut through them (Plates 6–7). The footings (119) comprised Lias blocks (up to 700 mm x 400 mm x 120 mm across) mainly laid horizontally, but with vertically-set slabs along the northern side, bonded with lime mortar (Figure 8). Along the northern edge of the footings was another row of vertical Lias slabs, which appear to be sitting in the top of the footings trench (Figure 8). The function of this vertical setting is unclear, but may be the remains of a stone drain running along the inside edge of the room.

Within the area of the corridor, part of the deposits underlying the present Lias flagstone floor (115) was excavated. The track was not deep enough to expose the underlying natural. The earliest deposit exposed was a yellowish-brown clayey loam (118) with frequent Lias pieces (between 50–320 mm across) with occasional fragments of mortar. The precise relationship between this deposit and the footings trench is uncertain, but the construction trench appeared to be cut into this layer. If this is the case, then context 118 is probably a levelling layer deposited prior to the construction of the western end of the North Wing. Alternatively, if it butted against the footings, then it is likely to be a make-up layer for the original floor of this building. Part of a stone flag floor was found on top of context 118. This comprised horizontally-laid Lias slabs set in pale yellowish-brown silty loam and lime mortar (117), up to 0.06 m thick. This floor was sealed by 0.15 m thick layer of light yellowish-brown silty loam (116) with frequent peagrit and moderate Lias and mortar pieces. This is probably the make-up for the present Lias flagstone floor (115). No artefacts or any other dating evidence was recovered from the deposits in this trench.

Trench 4 – Electricity cable trenches in the yard north and west of the House

Trench 4 was excavated to accommodate the new mains electric cable running from a junction box behind the shed at the western end of the yard up to the eastern side of the entrance to the North Wing of the house (Figures 2 & 9). It was approximately 35 m long, up to 0.5 m wide and 0.6 m deep. A six-metre spur was excavated towards the West Wing of the house, but unfortunately, most of this had been backfilled before observations could be made. Finally, another trench running to the shed in the corner of the yard was excavated to replace an oil pipe, but was completely within the original trench cut to install the oil pipe (Figure 9).

The underlying natural consisted of a compact mid brown clay (125) containing Lias fragments. At the eastern end of the trench, a vertically-sided, possibly rectangular feature (124) was found cut into the natural clay (Plate 8). This feature was one metre wide and over 0.35 m deep and was filled with a firm, mid yellowish-brown clayey loam (123) containing a large quantity of large, partly void, limestone and Lias stone rubble. There appeared to be no structure to the rubble and it may, therefore, represent a soakaway associated with earlier drainage for the house.

Directly in front of the North Wing of the house, two deposits were observed overlying the natural clay (Figure 9). The lower deposit consisted of crushed pieces of tile and brick (122) up to 0.1 m thick. Above this was a layer of limestone/ Lias pieces (121) up to 0.1 m thick. These deposits probably represent the remnants of earlier yard surfaces. The present yard surface (126) consists of limestone chippings up to 0.2 m thick.

Finds

Artefacts were only recovered from context 107 in Trench 2 (Table 1)

Material	Number	Weight (g)
Post-medieval pottery	14	159
Clay tobacco pipe	1	7
Glass	1	104
Iron	1	182
Shell	3	30
Animal bone	1	8

Table 1: Finds assemblage from context 107

Fourteen sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from context 107. These were identified by Jo Draper. It comprised a mixed assemblage which included one sherd of Surrey/Hampshire Border Ware, four sherds from an 18th century tin-glazed bowl, three sherds of earthenware, and four sherds of mid 19th century industrial whitewares.

The remaining artefacts were all represented by single examples only and comprised a clay tobacco pipe stem fragment, a sherd from an 18th century wine bottle, and a post-medieval horseshoe.

The shell comprised two oyster and one cockle fragment. The animal bone fragment is probably dog.

CONCLUSIONS

The observations made during the installation of the new foul drain and other works in and around Lytes Cary House have revealed little of archaeological interest except in the area close to the house itself. The observations of the foul drain trench have confirmed earlier observations (Bellamy 2004) that indicated there was very sparse archaeological evidence surviving along the length of the farm track and that the construction of this track in the 20th century is likely to have

destroyed any shallow archaeological features. The only feature encountered was a stone-filled field drain.

The works outside the west side of the house revealed the remains of two walls that pre-date the construction of the West Wing in c. 1907. These walls are shown on the 1903 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map and can be identified as the remains of an outhouse and a garden wall, which were demolished to build the West Wing. The trench in this area was not deep enough to determine whether there were any other earlier features or deposits that pre-dated the landscaping associated with the c. 1907 building works.

Evidence from the trench excavated in the yard outside the North Wing of the house would indicate that this area has been used as a yard for some time and the arrangement of outbuildings has probably changed very little. The large stone-filled feature found near to the door of the North Range may have been a soakaway.

The small trench within the house revealed details of part of the footings of the south wall of the west end of the North Range, probably constructed in the mid 17th century as a brewhouse (SVBRG 2005). Part of an earlier stone flag floor was exposed, but no dating evidence was obtained. The trench was not deep enough to determine whether earlier structures or deposits pre-dating the existing building survive in this area.

PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53204) will be deposited with the National Trust, Wessex Regional Office. No finds were retained from this watching brief.

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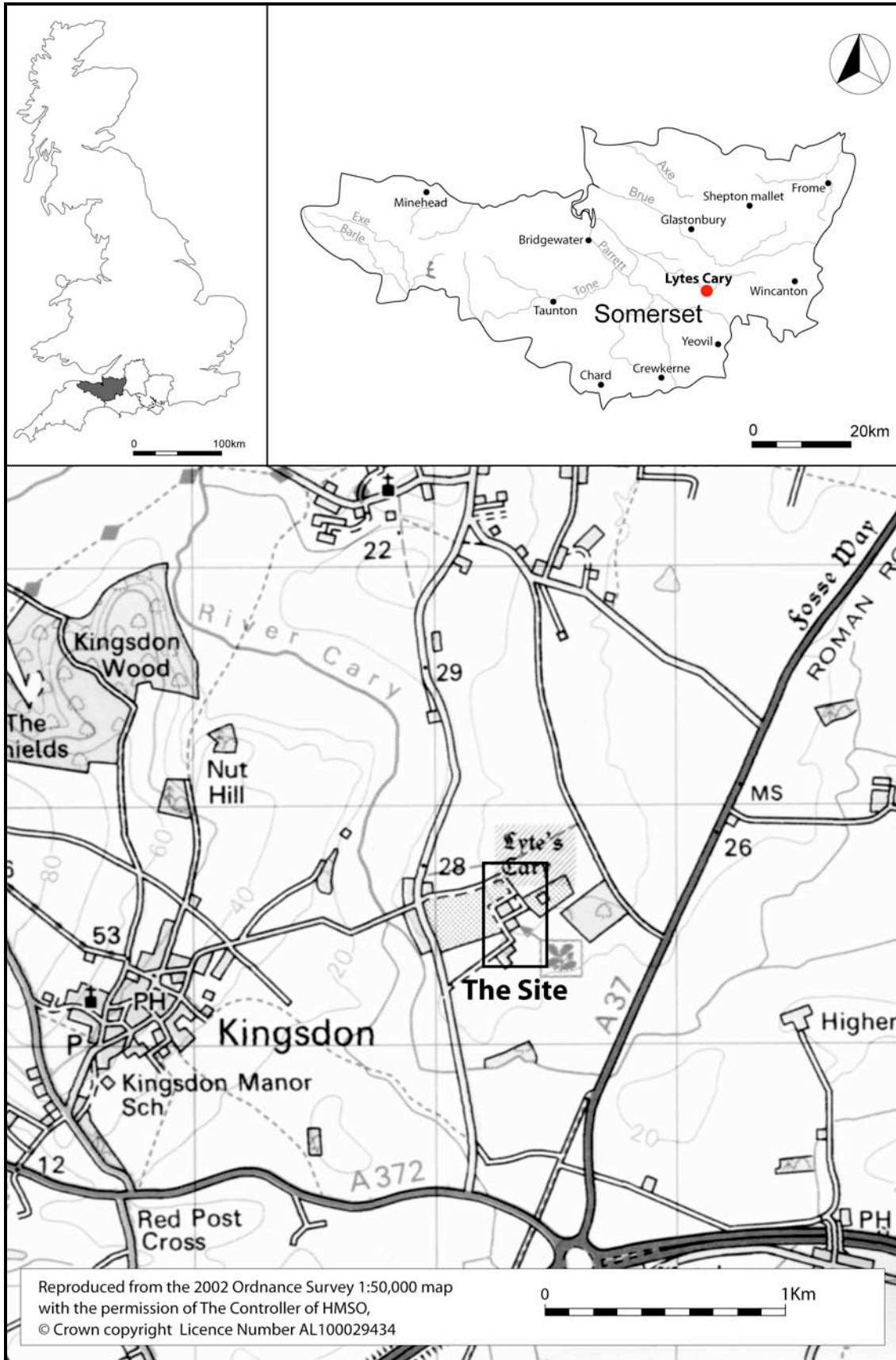


Figure 1: Location map

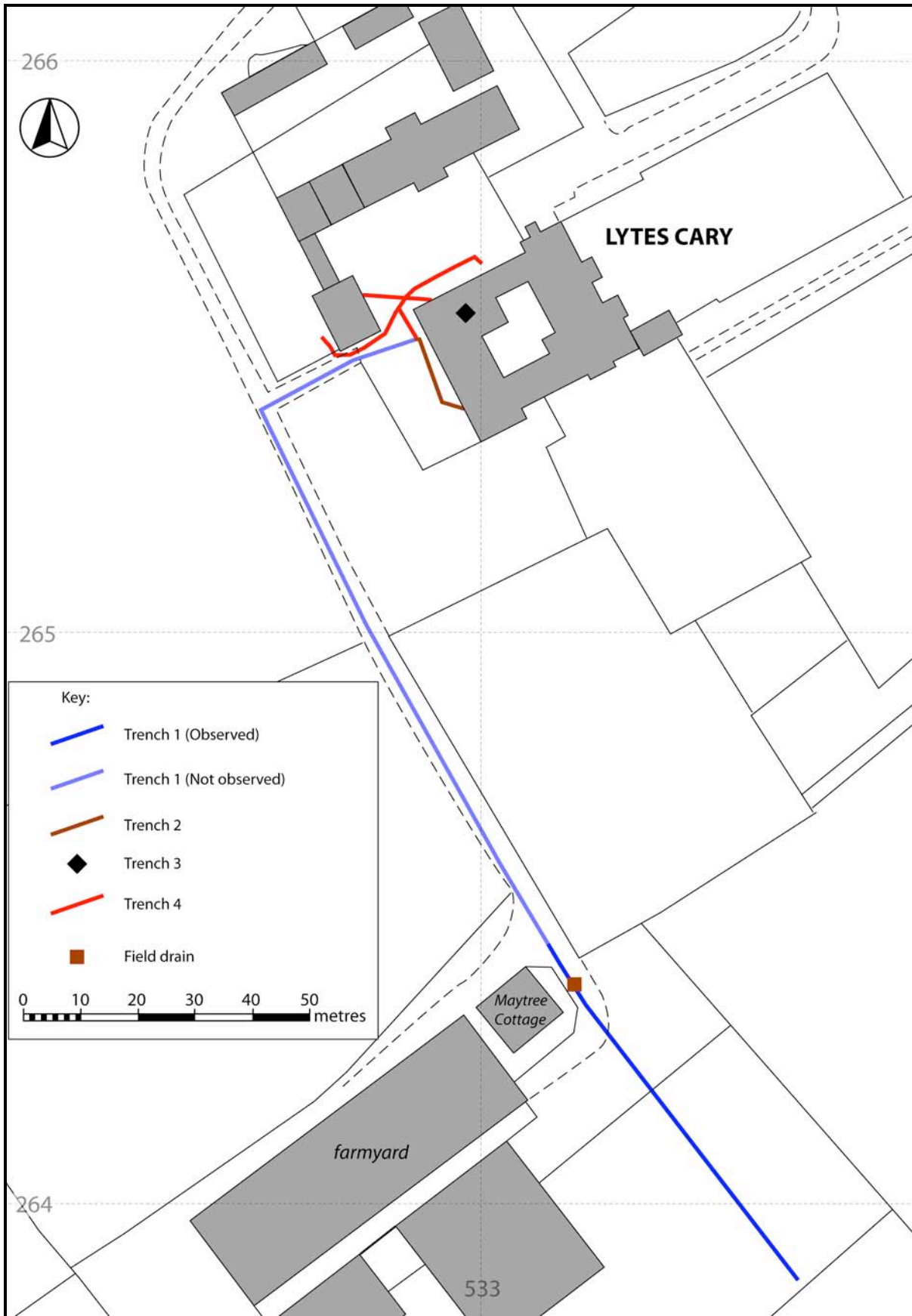


Figure 2: Trench location plan

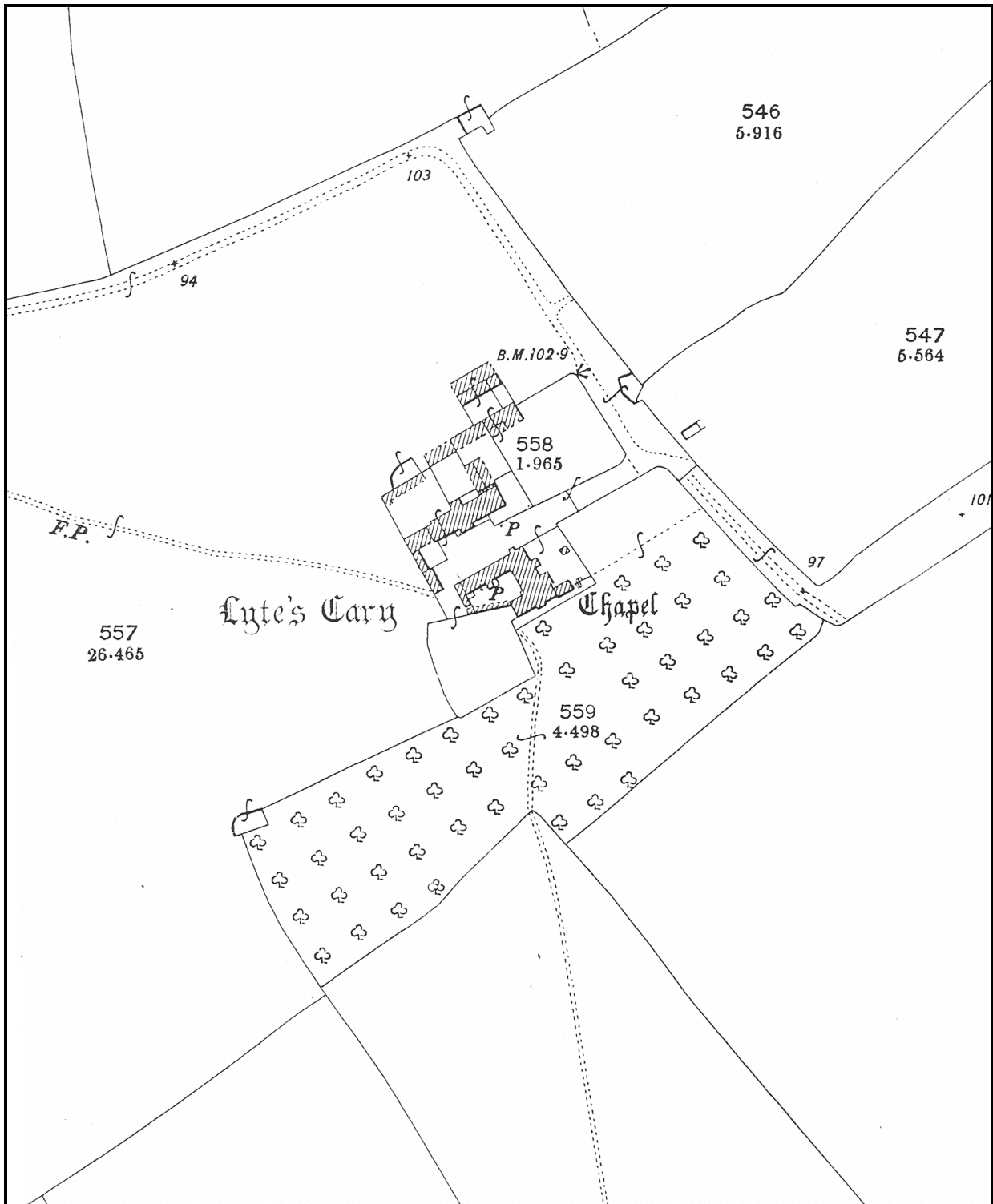


Figure 3: Extract from 1903 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map (© Crown Copyright reserved)

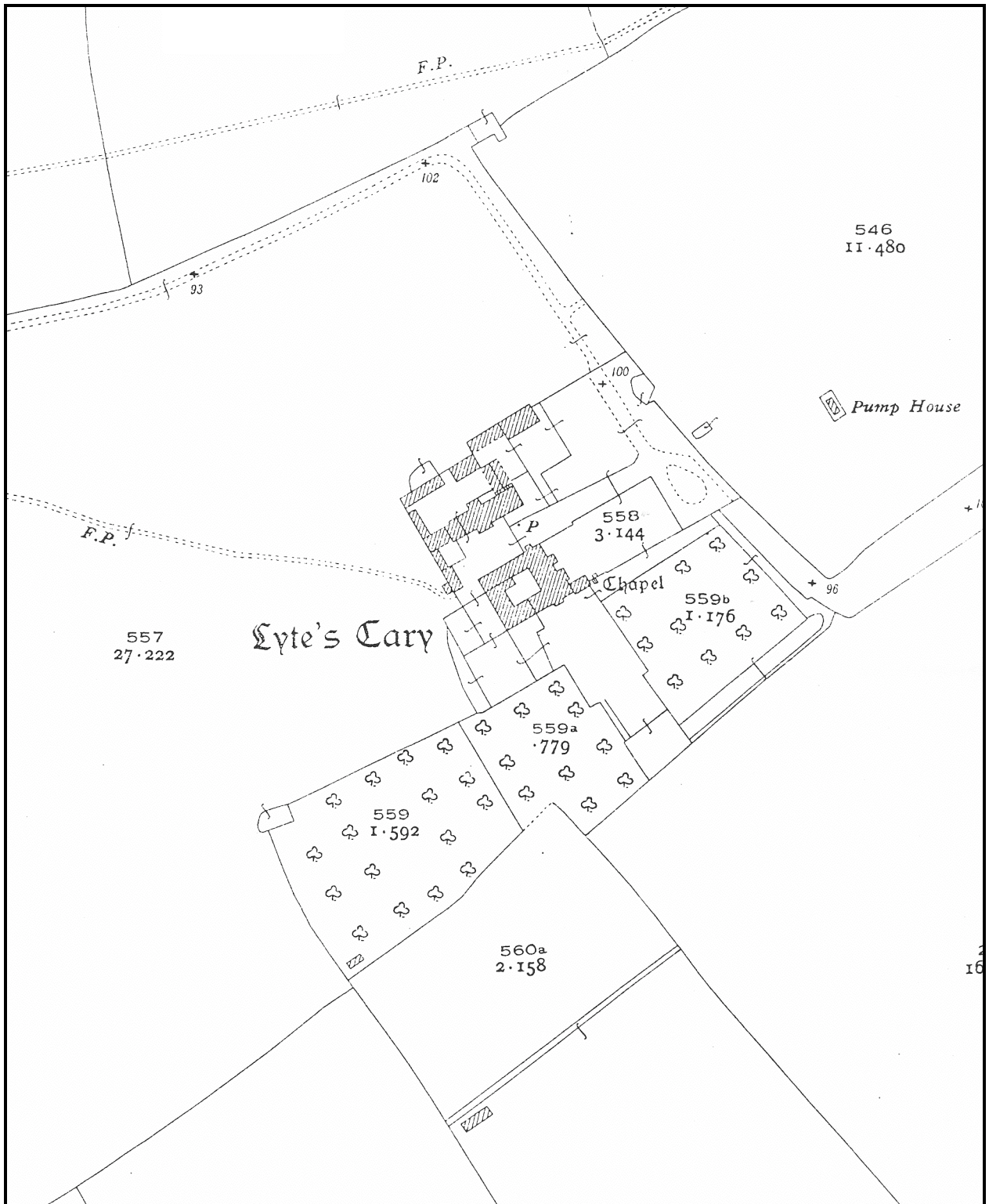


Figure 4: Extract from 1930 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map (© Crown Copyright Reserved)

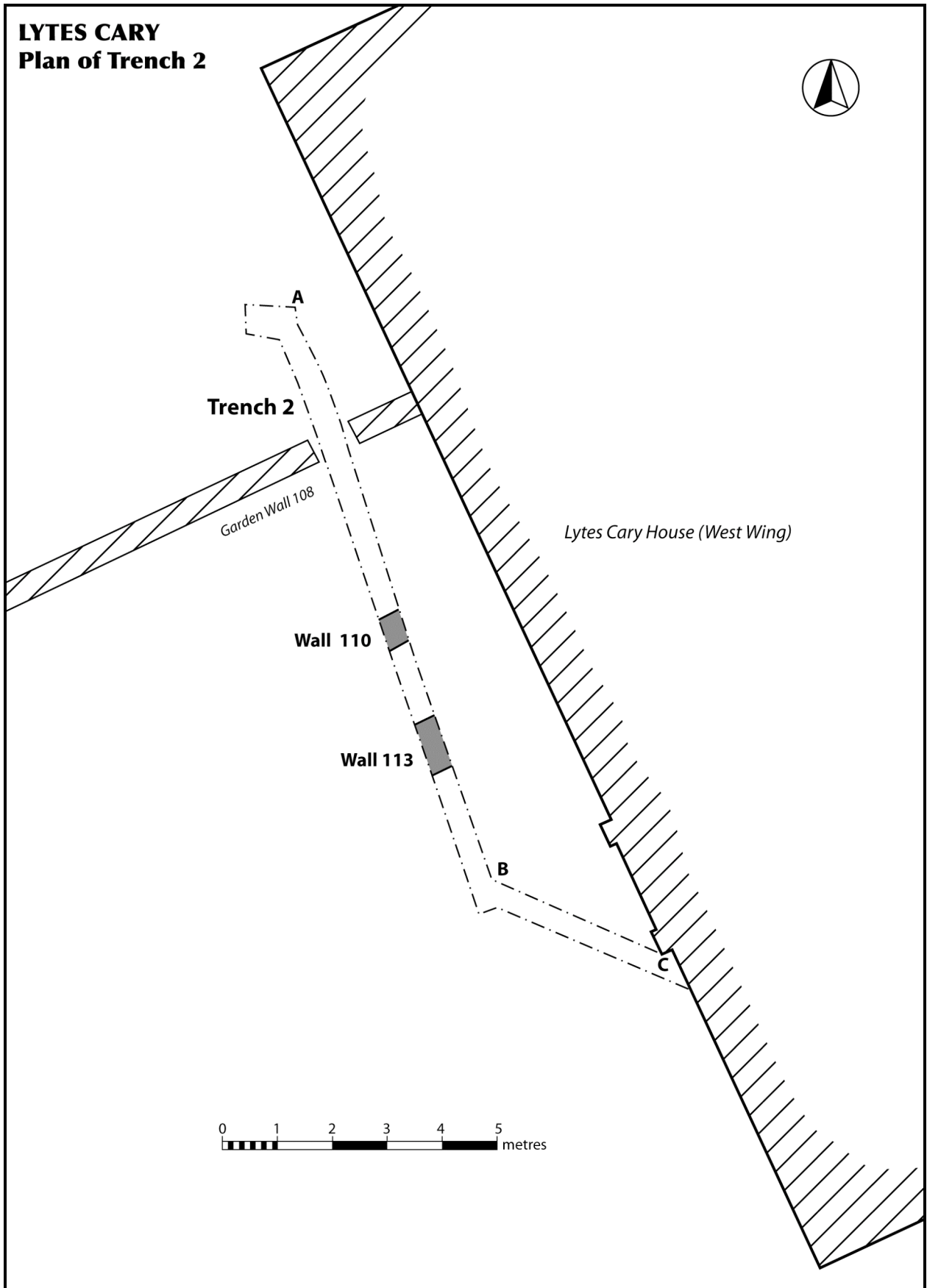


Figure 5: Plan of Trench 2

LYTES CARY West-facing section of Trench 2

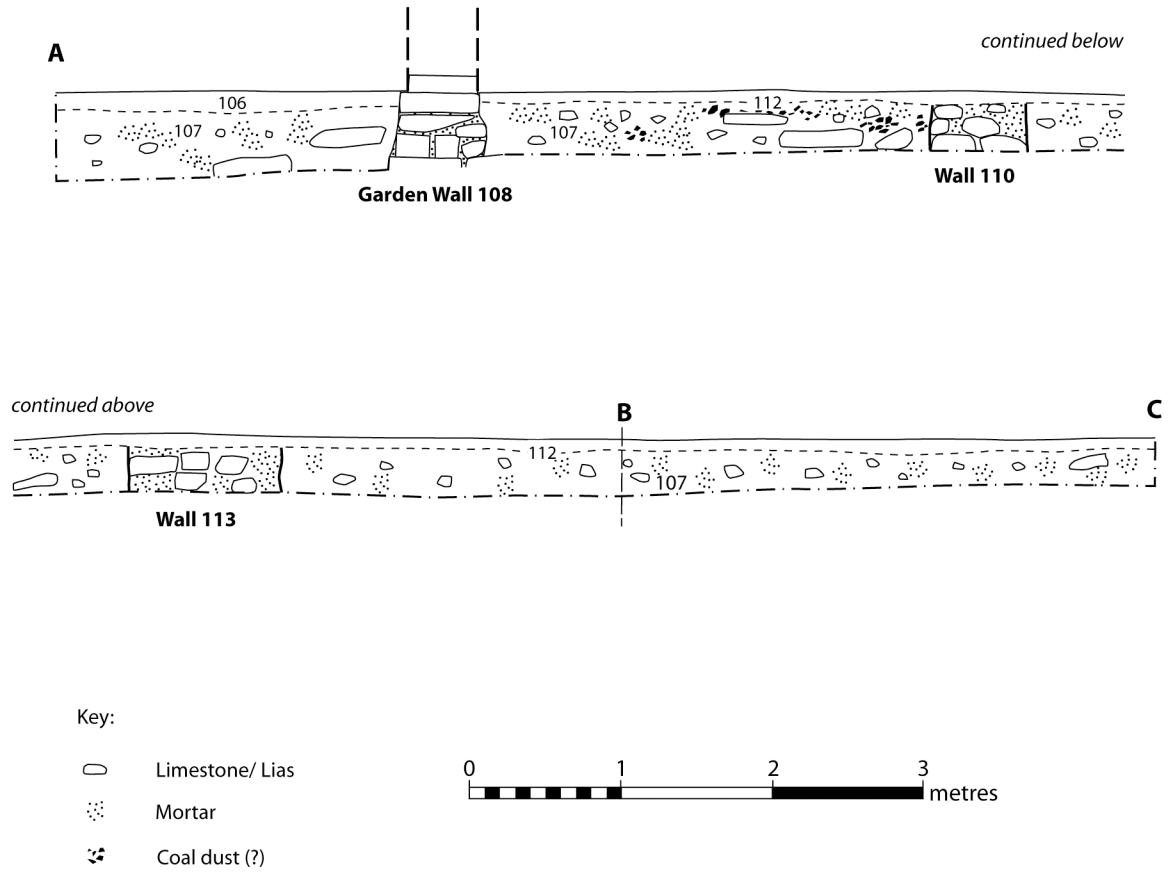


Figure 6: Section along Trench 2

LYTES CARY
Location of Trench 3

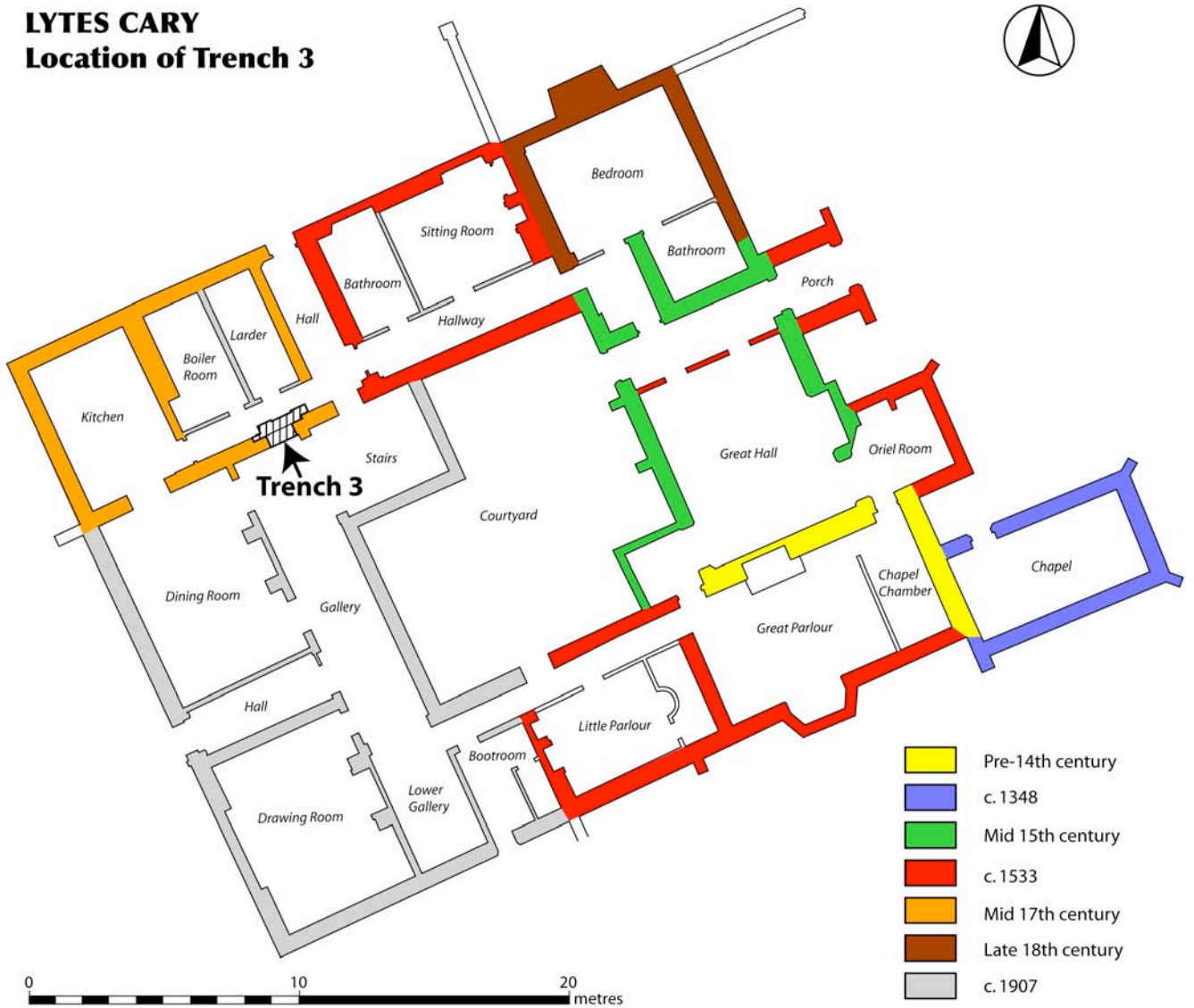


Figure 7: Location of Trench 3 (building and phase information taken from Garnet 2003 and SVBRG 2005)

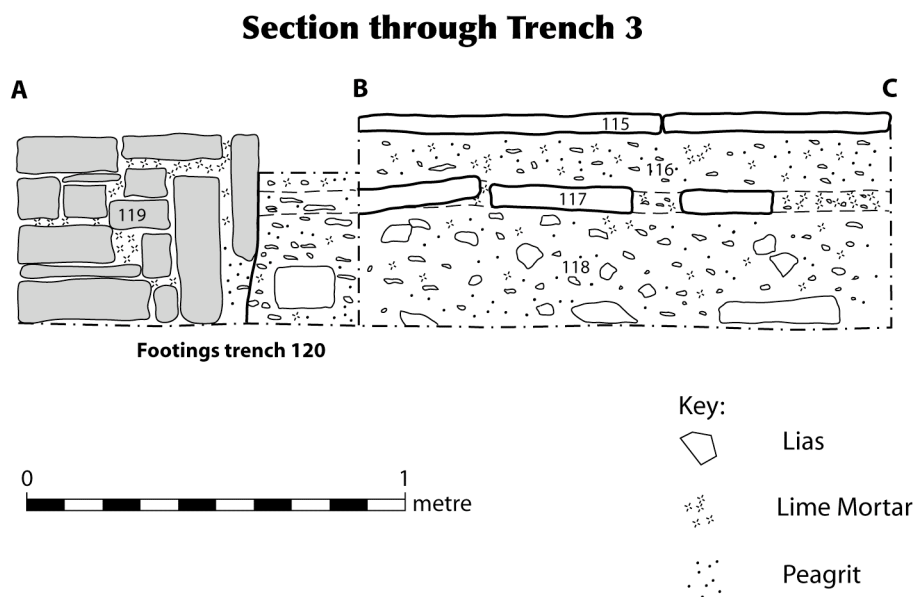
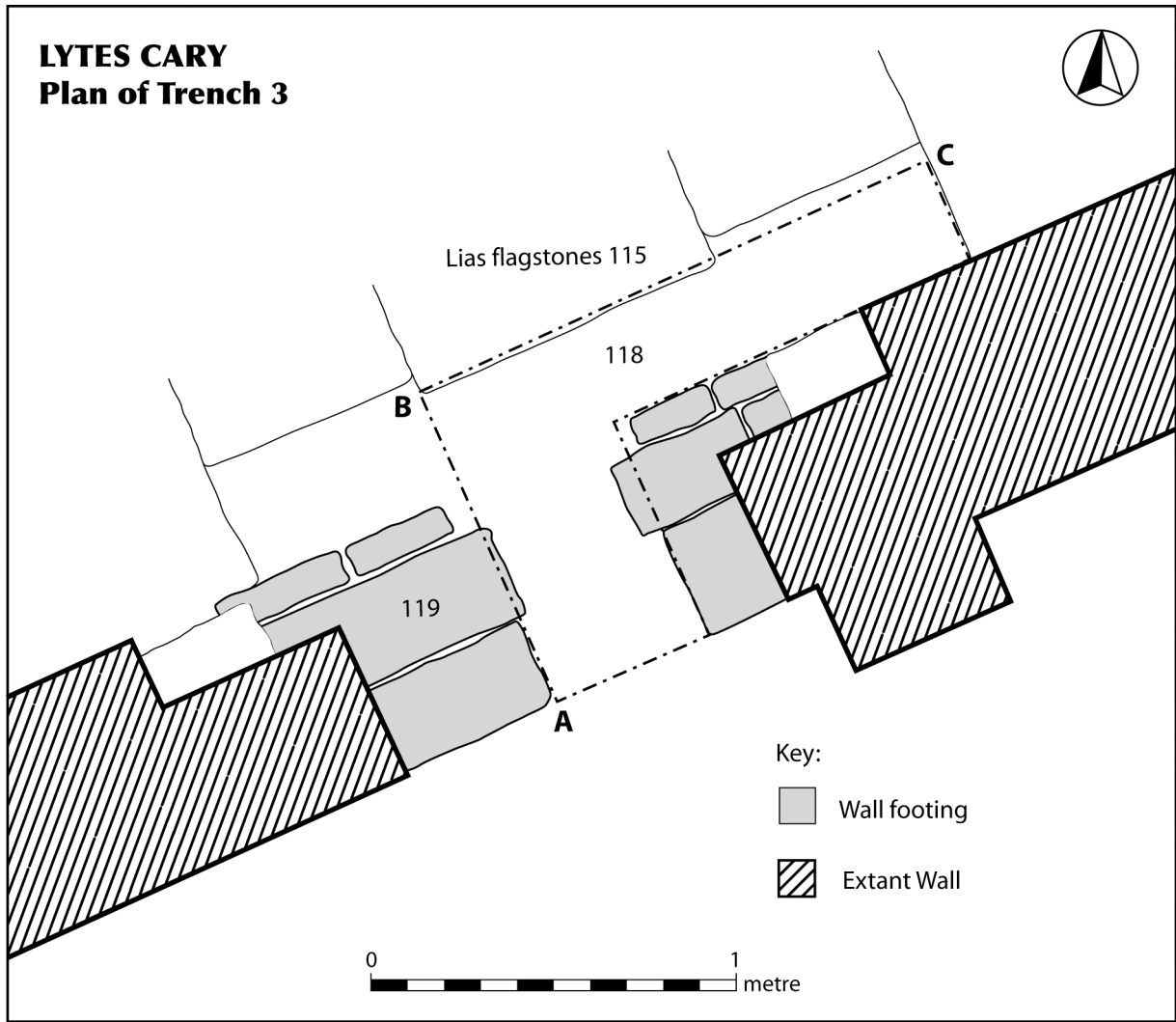


Figure 8: Detail plan and section of Trench 3

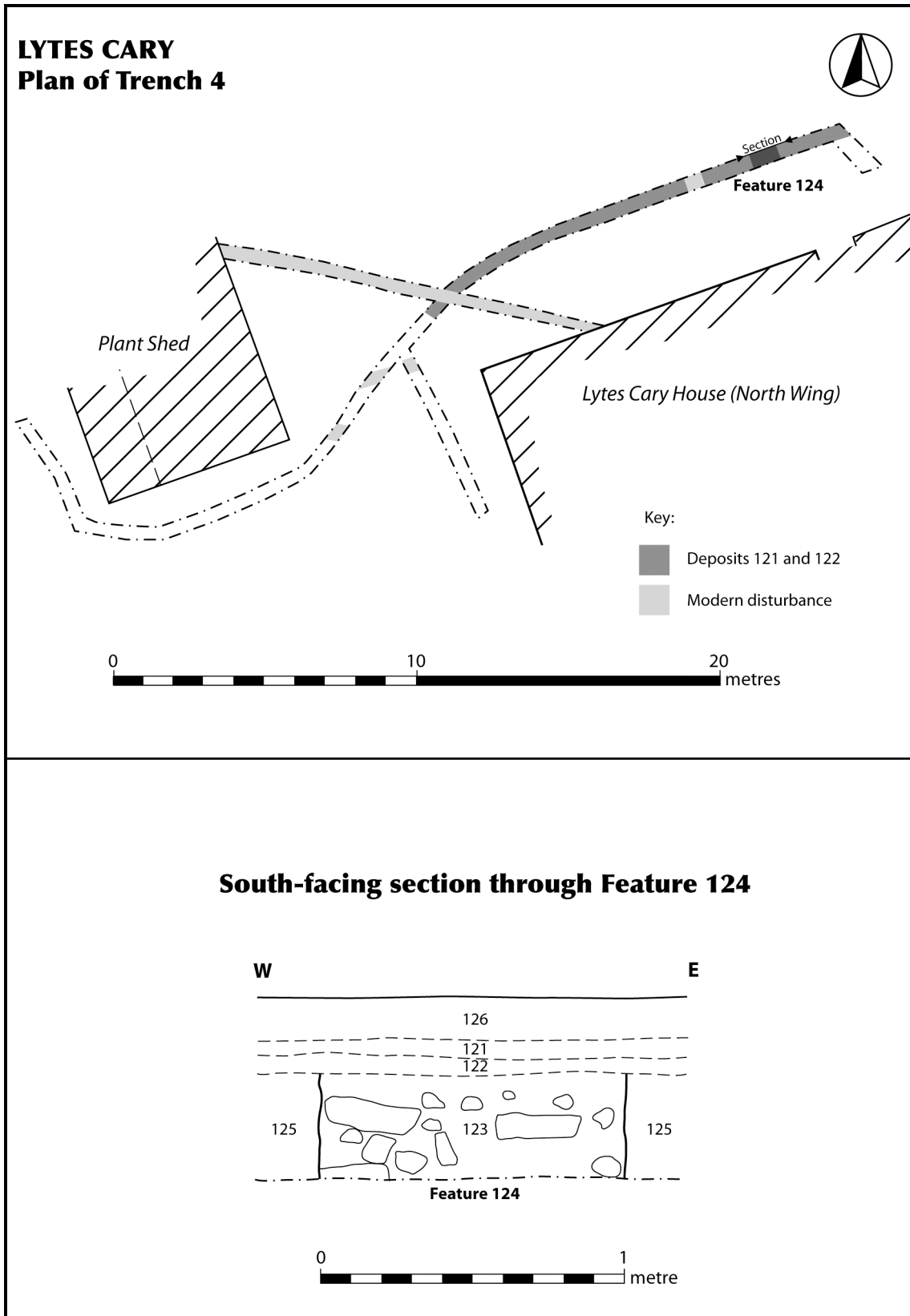


Figure 9: Plan of Trench 4 and section through Feature 124



Plate 1: General view during excavation of foul drain trench (Trench 1), looking North.



Plate 2: General view of Trench 2 along West Wing of Lytes Cary House, looking North.



Plate 3: Wall 110 exposed in base of Trench 2.



*Plate 4: Wall 113
exposed in Trench 2.*



*Plate 5: View westwards along corridor in
North Wing of the house showing location
of Trench 3.*



Plate 6: View of wall footings 119 in Trench 3.



Plate 7: View of trench cut through wall footings 119.



Plate 8: Feature 124, looking north, in Trench 4.