

The Gardeners, The Wells Road St. Ann's, Nottingham

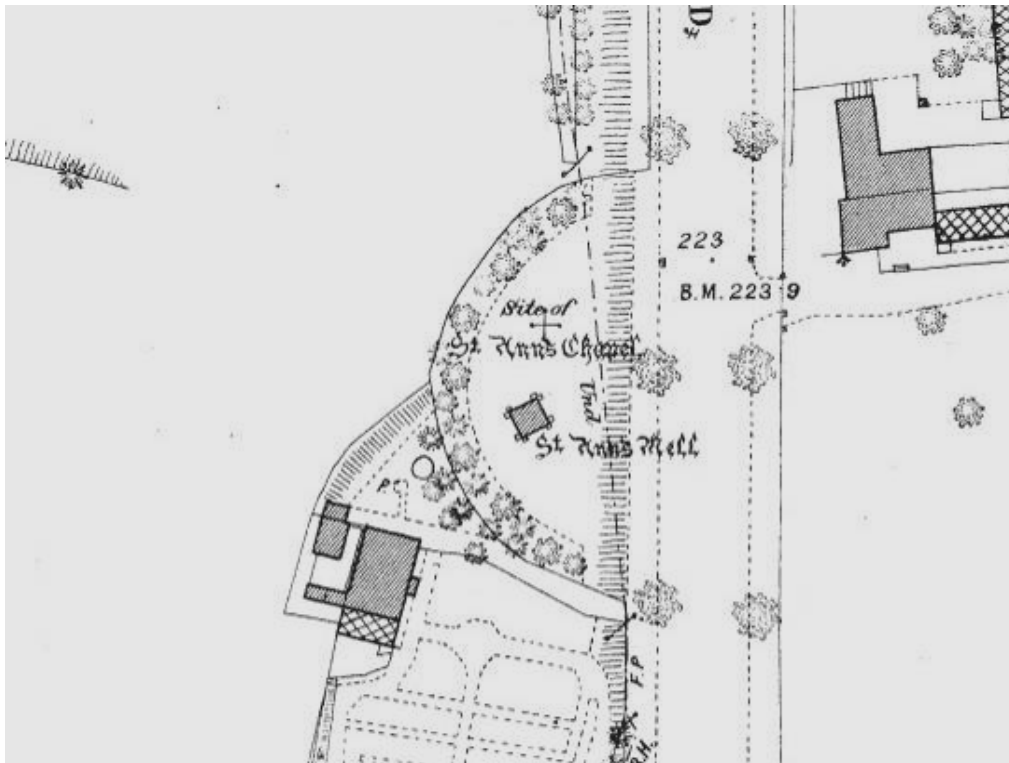
Report on an Archaeological Evaluation

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St Ann's Well 1882

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Summary

Trent and Peak Archaeology was contracted by Dr. Peter Wardle of The Historic Environment Consultancy so undertake an archaeological evaluation at the former site of The Gardeners public house, St. Ann's, Nottingham, in line with planning conditions relating to proposed residential development.

Archaeological deposits were thought more likely to survive in the less disturbed western part of the site and five trenches were accordingly laid out to first test this area and then extend eastwards to assess the depth of overburden and extent of disturbance (or survival of deposits) in the eastern half of the site. The presence of a sewer/drain within the eastern boundary limited the extent of excavation in this direction.

The trenches confirmed that natural deposits were quite close to the surface in the west of the site (c. 400mm below the tarmac in places). However, the only features/remains present related to 19th century development of the site (including granite setts along the edge of Kildare Road, which was formerly much wider). Deposits may have been truncated when this road was laid out (or during works associated with the construction of the railway), or there may never have been anything much in this part of the site.

About 8m in from the western edge of the site, the natural deposits are cut away quite sharply. Although the ground slopes generally in this direction, the alignment of this matches the alignment of the railway embankment and viaduct and this is probably in large part an artificial cut (potentially removing any earlier deposits).

East of this there is at least 1.4m of made ground, with disturbed ground going quite a bit deeper in places. The footprint of the former public house stands on a terrace considerably raised above the former car park. Comparison of the levels here with the level of natural deposits found in Trench 2 indicates that there would be 3m (or more) of made ground in this area and that if anything has survived the construction of the railway here it is likely to remain undisturbed unless significant earth-moving and changes in level are proposed.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Trent and Peak Archaeology was contracted by Dr. Peter Wardle of The Historic Environment Consultancy so undertake an archaeological evaluation at the former site of The Gardeners public house, St. Ann's, Nottingham, in line with planning consent (11/00037/PFUL3; 14/01452/PDS4). The intention of the investigation was to gain an understanding of the degree to which the ground is disturbed towards the west of the site and assess the survival of any archaeological remains that are present. This information will be used to facilitate the formulation of a mitigation strategy by foundation design with the objective of physically preserving archaeological remains in situ.

1.2 The site (NGR SK 58907 41896) is bounded by The Wells Road to the east, Kildare Road to the west, the junction of The Wells Road and Kildare Road to the south and a housing development site to the north. The Nottingham City Archaeologist Gordon Young has advised that the application site may contain archaeological remains pertaining to the ancient St. Ann's Well and associated buildings, along with later post-medieval construction.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND.

2.1 The proposed redevelopment site is located approximately 2km north-east of Nottingham City Centre, in the district of St. Ann's. The site lies at c. 68m. O.D., sloping down generally from north to south and from west to east, although the natural contours have been much altered by later terracing. The north-eastern portion of the proposed development site was not investigated, due to the depth of made ground and potential high level of modern disturbance from the now demolished public house, The Gardeners, a 1960s construction. The terrace on which it sat rises some 2.5m above the level of The Wells Road at its eastern end.

2.2 The 1:50,000 British Geological Mapping shows that site is situated on Tarporley Siltstone Formation, a sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 237 to 250 million years ago in the Triassic Period. This indicates a local environment previously dominated by lakes (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). No superficial geology is recorded for the site location.

2.5 The archaeological work is in line with the planning consent which states that:

No development involving the breaking of ground shall take place, unless a programme of archaeological investigation and works, for those parts of the site which are proposed to be excavated below existing ground level or basement levels, has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of archaeological investigation and works shall include:

- a) an archaeological evaluation of the site;*
- b) arrangements, supported by the conclusions of an archaeological evaluation, for the excavation of the affected areas, and the implementation of a watching brief during the course of the development;*
- c) arrangements for the recording of any finds made during the investigation and for the preparation of a final report;*
- d) arrangements for the deposition of the records of finds, and any significant finds, capable of removal from the site, in a registered museum; and*
- e) arrangements for the publication to a summary of the final report in an appropriate journal.*

The archaeological investigation and works approved under this condition shall be carried out in accordance with the approved programme.

Reason: to ensure that any archaeological remains of significance are safeguarded on accordance with BE15, BE16 and BE17 of the Local Plan.

2.6 Further consultation with Dr. Peter Wardle and the Nottingham City Archaeologist indicated that a total of five trenches of around 10-15m in length would be sufficient to evaluate the site, with

the exact length dependant on available space and previous disturbance. Archaeological deposits were thought more likely to survive in the less disturbed western part of the site and the trenches were accordingly laid out to first test this area and then extend eastwards to assess the depth of overburden and extent of disturbance (or survival of deposits) in the eastern half of the site. The presence of a sewer/drain within the eastern boundary limited the extent of excavation in this direction.

3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.

3.1 A desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken during 2011 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) (Clarke 2011). This document concluded that there was a possibility of medieval and post-medieval remains surviving on the site beneath the later railway embankments. A second desk-based assessment was undertaken by the Historic Environment Consultancy in 2014 (Wardle and Lacey 2014).

3.2 A medieval healing spring (SMR M2057) is reputed to have been present on or near the site, possibly below The Gardeners public house and associated car park. Early references are uncertain - the well known as the 'Brodewell' was probably elsewhere but the 'Oswell' might refer to this location. The site was appropriated by Cluniac monks from Lenton Priory in 1409. The monks are recorded as having built a chapel adjacent to the well, dedicated to St. Ann, the mother of the Virgin Mary (Clarke 2011, 3). The well thereafter became known as St. Ann's Well, although it has also been known locally as Robin Hood's Well due to stories associating Robin Hood with this vicinity. After the dissolution of the monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII ownership of the land reverted to the town of Nottingham and the spring became more secular. Woodard House, later St Ann's House, was built in 1609, apparently reusing parts of the chapel or its foundations. The site became a local attraction with supposed relics of Robin Hood displayed and ale on sale to visitors. By the mid 19th century popularity had diminished. St Ann's House was demolished and a new house built (Clarke 2011, 6). The spring was enclosed and a monument in the form of a gothic spire constructed over it. In 1887 this was demolished when the whole site was cleared to make way for the embankment and viaduct of the Nottingham Suburban Railway which remained in use until 1954. The Gardeners public house was constructed on the site in 1968 after the closure of the railway (Clarke 2011, 7).

3.3 Excavations were undertaken on the terrace of The Gardners by David Greenwood, an amateur archaeologist, during 1987 with the intention of locating St. Ann's Well. The excavation revealed evidence for made ground and debris associated with the railway, along with building remains said to date to the former St. Ann's House, built in 1609 and demolished in 1856 (Wardle and Lacey 2014, 23; map evidence suggests that this was somewhat further to the north). Excavation were taken down to at least 4m below the terrace level without apparently finding anything of significance. Bore holes taken below this level were reported to have revealed red brick in lime mortar at 6.4m, with sherds of medieval and Romano-British pottery brought up from successively deeper levels (all of which would be significantly lower than the current level of The Wells Road; a recent borehole in this vicinity found natural clay at 5m) (Wardle and Lacey 2014, 23, 66).

3.4 A geotechnical survey was undertaken on the site during 2013, consisting of test pits and boreholes (Wardle and Lacey 2014, 38). The results of the survey suggested a concentration of made ground around the centre and east of the site containing a large amount of building debris and rubble. This is likely to be associated with the railway construction and demolition. The boreholes were excavated to considerable depth, however, none of the holes revealed any water as expected from Greenwood's excavations in the 1980s. The survey indicated that undisturbed ground may be present towards the western edge of the site (Wardle and Lacey 2013, 38).

3.5 Although it was clear that the site was much disturbed by redevelopment, particularly the construction of the railway viaduct, it was possible that early remains may still be present below the disturbance, particularly in the less-disturbed western half of the site.

4. OBJECTIVES.

4.1 ***The objective of the archaeological evaluation can be stated as:***

4.2 To determine the extent of disturbed ground on the development area.

4.3 To assess the condition, survival, quality and significance of any archaeological remains found, particularly remains relating to St. Anne's Well. If archaeological remains were found then further, more comprehensive, examination may take place if they will be disturbed by the development.

5. METHODOLOGY.

5.1 ***The methodology can be summarised as:***

5.2 At all times the project to follow current IfA best practice as laid out in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute for Archaeologists 2008).

5.3 Excavation of five evaluation trenches within the limits of the site, focused on the western half and avoiding the tree at the southern limit. Trenches excavated using a wheeled excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

5.4 A plan of any archaeological remains to be produced. A written, drawn and photographic record of the trenches to be maintained. Drawings to be produced at a suitable scale, normally 1:10 or 1:20 for sections and 1:50 for plans.

5.5 If archaeological remains were found, a sampling strategy to be agreed and a more detailed written scheme of investigation to be submitted for approval. Excavation to be carried out by machine unless archaeological remains are located. Mechanical excavation should cease if archaeological remains are found.

6. RESULTS.

6.1 As noted above, a total of five trenches were excavated. The results are discussed below:

6.2 Trench 1 was located towards the north of the proposed development site, and was aligned north to south. It was 2m wide and 15.5m long and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m (exclusive of feature depth). The trench was sealed by modern tarmac (1001) overlying a bedding layer of crushed orange brick (1002) to a depth of 0.2m. This bedding layer was situated directly above a layer of probably redeposited natural clay and mudstone (1002) which was 0.7m deep. A machine-dug slot was excavated through the northern part of the trench in order to determine depth. Deposit (1003), a mid brown clayish silt, observed towards the north of the trench was revealed in this slot to extend below the redeposited natural. It had a depth of 0.5m. Redeposited natural (1004) was again present below this deposit to a depth of approximately 0.5m (1.5m below ground level). A layer of redeposited topsoil (1006) was present below this layer which was 0.29m deep. Undisturbed natural was found at a depth of 1.8m below ground level. Due to the similarity of the redeposited natural to the undisturbed natural it is difficult to tell how far this material extends but it may cover much of the trench area here.

Further towards the south, 0.5m south of the machine-dug slot, a small portion of modern brick construction (1009) was revealed. This is likely to be related to the former Gardeners public house which was constructed in the 1960s. The structure was surrounded by a gravel backfill (1008). A modern wooden post was present adjacent to the structure, and a disused metal pipe was also present running north-south.

6.3 Trench 2 was located 10.5m south of Trench 1 and aligned east to west. It was 14.25m in length and 2m wide. At the east of the trench a large deposit of ashy silt was uncovered (2006). This was excavated by machine to a depth of 2.5m but the base was not found. The edge of this feature [2007] truncated natural deposits to the west, sloping steeply downwards to the east, and is probably

an excavated slope associated with the construction of the viaduct that was subsequently backfilled. The feature showed several layers of debris and ash indicating tipping of different deposits during the backfilling process.

At the western end of the trench a cobbled surface was exposed (2008). This was composed of squared granite setts, approximately 13cm x 11cm x 11cm in size, bedded into a deposit of black ash and cinders mixed with fine mid brown soil (2003). The full width of the surface was not revealed in this trench, but was also found in Trenches 3 and 5, extending at least 32m north-south (see section 8 below). It is thought that the surface constitutes part of the pedestrian walkway alongside the old Kildare Road which was substantially wider than the modern road (as can be seen from older Ordnance Survey maps). A small lens of redeposited topsoil was found below (2001) within (2002), natural clay.

A concrete footing was found towards the centre of the trench. This was obviously modern and matches the position of a terrace wall on recent maps (when the pub was still in existence). It was left in situ to avoid any cables or pipes that could be present below.

6.4 Trench 3 was located 3m south of Trench 2 and was 12m by 2m in size. It abutted the western end of Trench 4, creating an L-shape. The trench was a maximum of 0.75m deep. The cobbled surface was present within this trench (numbered (3003) but the same as (2008)) for the entire length of the trench at the western edge. At the south-eastern corner of the trench a loosely constructed brick structure (3006) was encountered aligned north to south. This appeared to be approximately 0.5m wide and two courses deep, but no bricks were mortared and most appeared to be slightly displaced. It was situated above a layer of mid yellow sand (3007) and surrounded by an ashy backfill material (3005). The exact purpose of this structure is unknown, but as a disused electricity junction plate was present immediately east of it, it is possible that the bricks were covering an electrical cable. Therefore, the bricks were not removed.

6.5 Trench 4 was situated directly east of the southern end of Trench 3. It was aligned east to west and was 10.75m by 2m. It had a maximum depth of 1.36. Much of the trench was devoid of features. However, the deep feature seen in Trench 2 ((2006)/[2007]) was again present here, labelled as [4003] with the fill as (4002). The feature was excavated to a depth of 1.36m and levelled off before finding the base.

6.6 Trench 5 was situated 13m south of Trenches 3 and 4 and was 8.5m long and 2m wide. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.1m. The cobbled surface seen in Trenches 2 and 3 was again present here, recorded as (5006). In this trench the full width of the pavement could be seen as 1.2m. West of this was a metalled surface made of chunks of granite heavily compacted into an ashy deposit (5007). It is likely that this rougher surface constituted the actual road surface. The deep feature, here [5008] was again seen at the eastern end of the trench, but as it had been investigated with the machine in Trenches 2 and 4 it was not excavated to significant depth here.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 The archaeological evaluation trenches did not reveal any finds or features dating to before the 19th century. The pavement/road surface and brick structure visible in Trenches 3-5 are likely to be no older than 19th century in date, while the demolition disturbance prevalent across the centre and east of the site is likely to be mid 20th-century in date. Natural mudstone was present quite close to the surface at the western edge of the site. This was difficult to distinguish from potentially redeposited material (e.g. in Trench 1) but was here at least 2m thick and truncated to the east by disturbance associated with the railway. These natural deposits may have been truncated when Kildare Road was laid out (or during works associated with the construction of the railway), or there may never have been anything much in this part of the site.

About 8m in from the western edge of the site, the natural deposits were cut away quite sharply. Although the ground slopes generally in this direction, the alignment of this matches the alignment of the railway embankment and viaduct and this is probably in large part an artificial cut (potentially removing any earlier deposits).

East of this there is at least 1.4m of made ground, with disturbed ground going quite a bit deeper in places. The footprint of the former public house stands on a terrace considerably raised above the former car park. Comparison of the levels here with the level of natural deposits found in Trench 2 indicates that there would be 3m (and probably considerably more) of made ground in this area. Greenwood's excavation during the 1980s suggested that medieval remains were present some six metres or more below the terrace level, which, if this is to be believed, would indicate that medieval remains might be present but not reached during the evaluation. However, if anything has survived the construction of the railway here it is likely to be deeply buried and remain undisturbed unless significant earth-moving and changes in level are proposed.

7.2 St Ann's Well excites much local interest and many competing theories. Some visiting the site insisted that it must be re-exposed, others that it must remain untouched. The truth is that we do not really know precisely where it was, even if we wished to find it, and that it is most likely either substantially destroyed by the construction of the railway, or deeply buried beneath what remains of the embankments and viaduct.

The 'well' as described by Thoroton appears to have been a stone structure forming a plunge pool, presumably fed by a spring which drained into The Beck running down the valley from the heights around Mapperley towards the town. Although it was a focal point throughout the later medieval period, by the mid 19th-century it seems to have been largely forgotten. The older buildings were cleared away and a new house built, and then this too swept away with the coming of the railway after which there remained no above-ground trace of the well.

Information on the location of this original pool is imprecise. Some references would place it in the cellar of the former St Ann's House (Wardle and Lacey 2014, 12). This older building, as depicted in early 19th century paintings, and which apparently incorporated parts of St Anne's Chapel, can be reasonably well located. It is shown on Jackson's 1851-61 Map of Nottingham and although much had changed by the time of the first large scale OS mapping, the pattern of fields to the east remains the same allowing the two to be compared (Figure 7). This house and outbuildings lay to the north of Tarbotten's monument and north of the existing site boundary. If anything survives of them they lie beneath the railway embankment which to the north survives to an even greater height.

When the site was cleared in the 1850s, the Borough Engineer, Tarbotten had a gothic monument in the form of a spire constructed, in the process producing something much more well-like. This lay slightly to the south and east of the site of St Ann's House, but north and east of the later house. The monument is shown on the 1881 Ordnance Survey mapping and its former location carried through as a monument symbol in subsequent editions. This location was targeted by Greenwood's 1987 excavations which appear to have found something, but at a depth in excess of 4m below the current ground level, and in the absence of a detailed record it remains unclear whether this was anything

more than the remains of Tarbotten's monument/well (if even that) and whether Tarbotten's monument was even on the site of the original well

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Bibliography

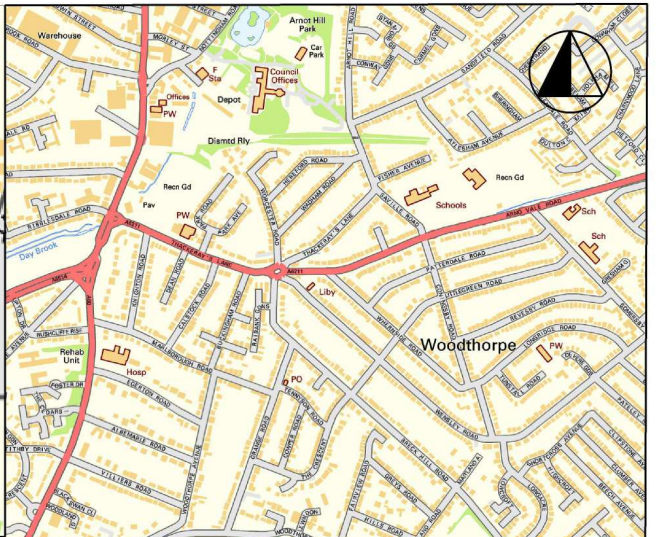
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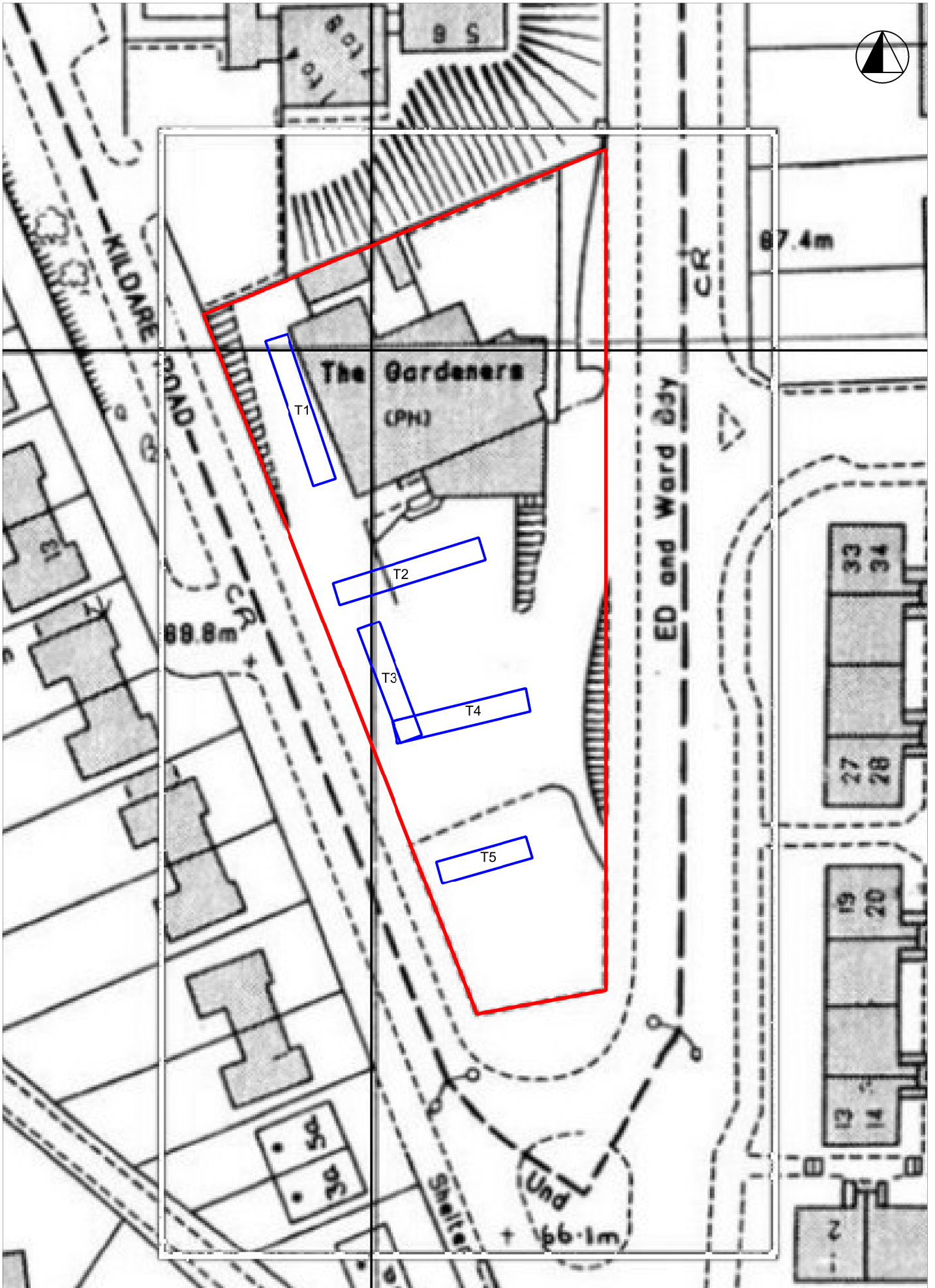
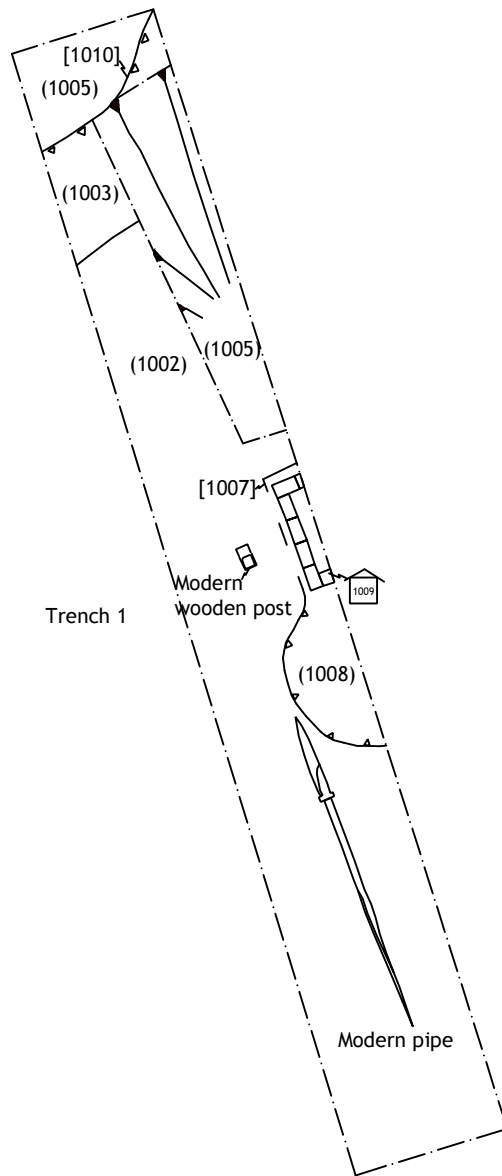
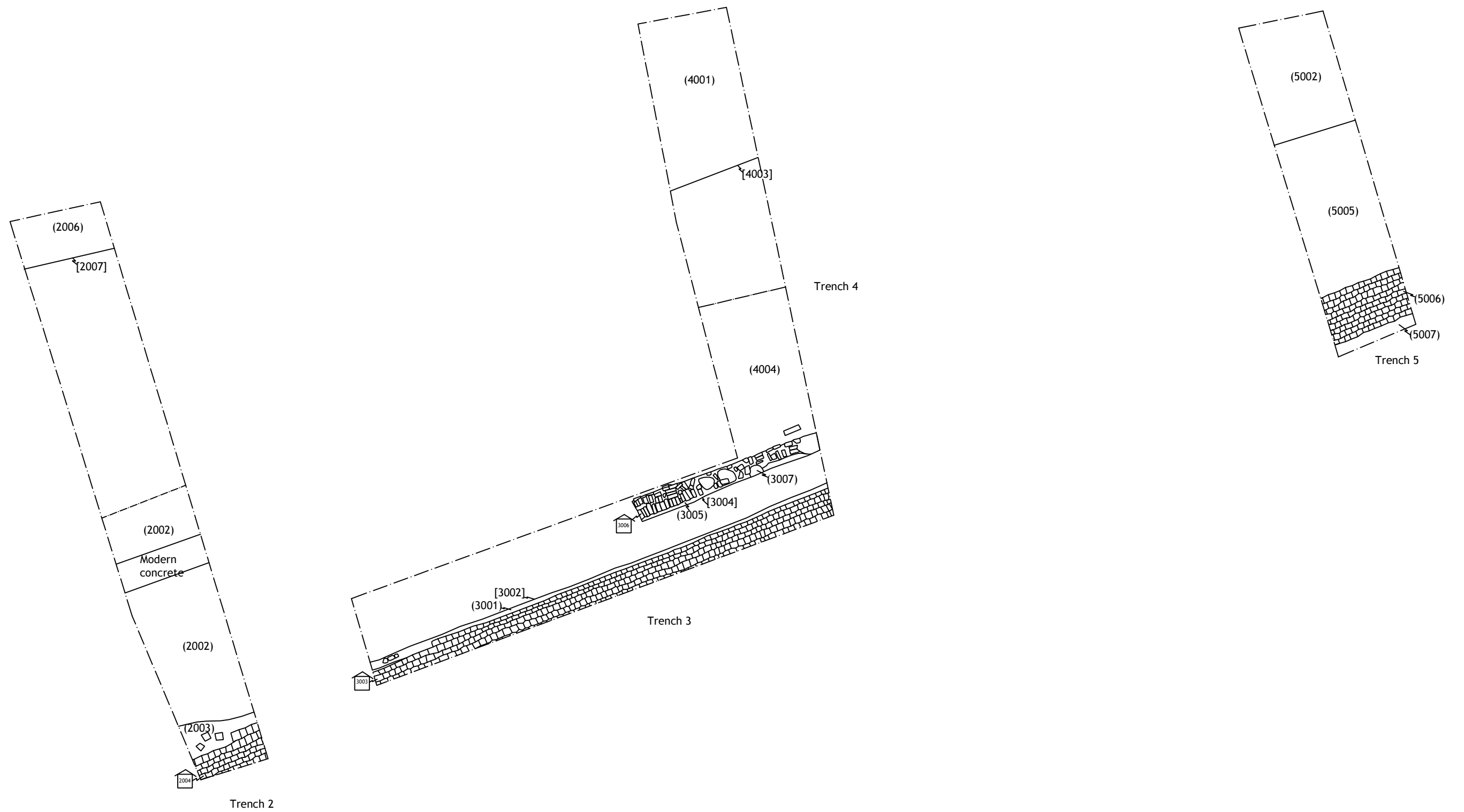
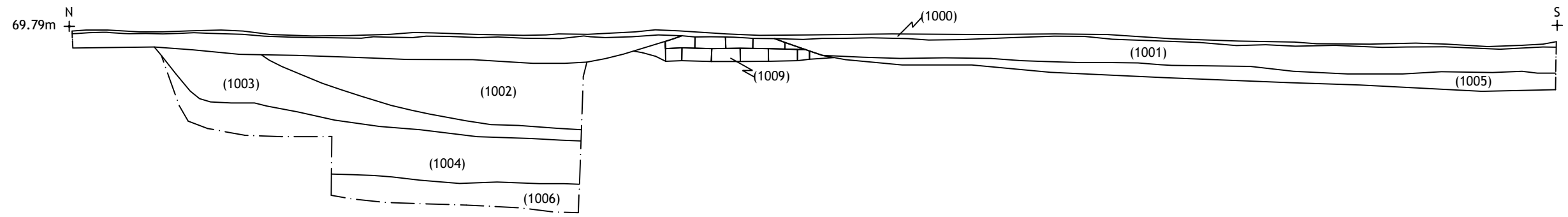


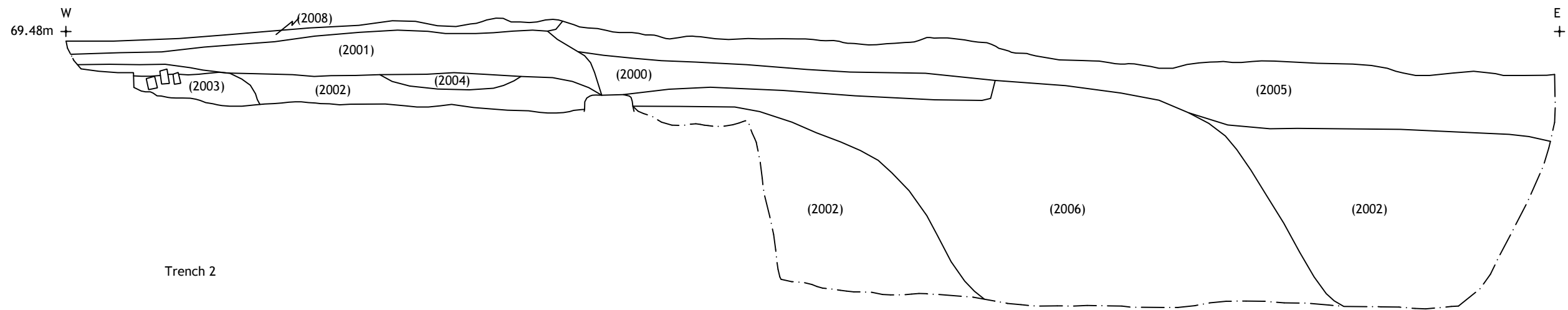
Figure 2: Location and layout of trenches in relation to former location of The Gardeners (OS 1981)



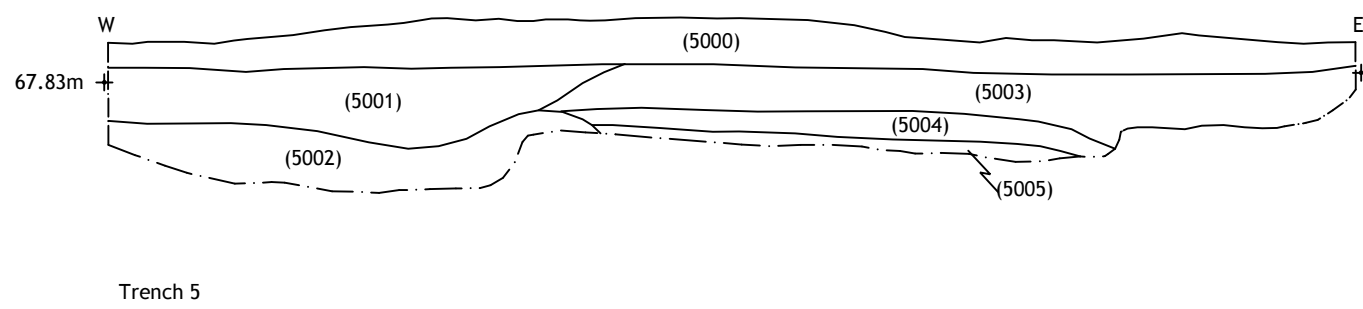
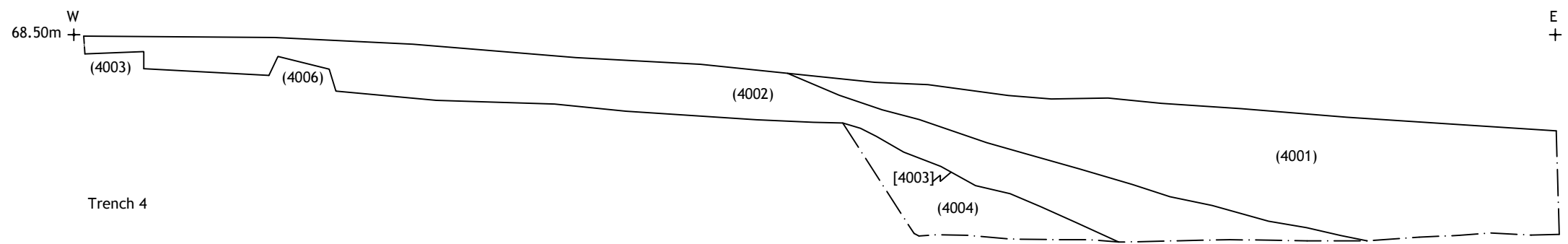
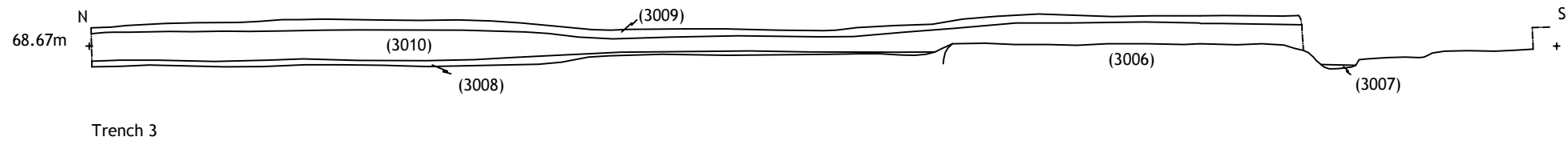




Trench 1



Trench 2



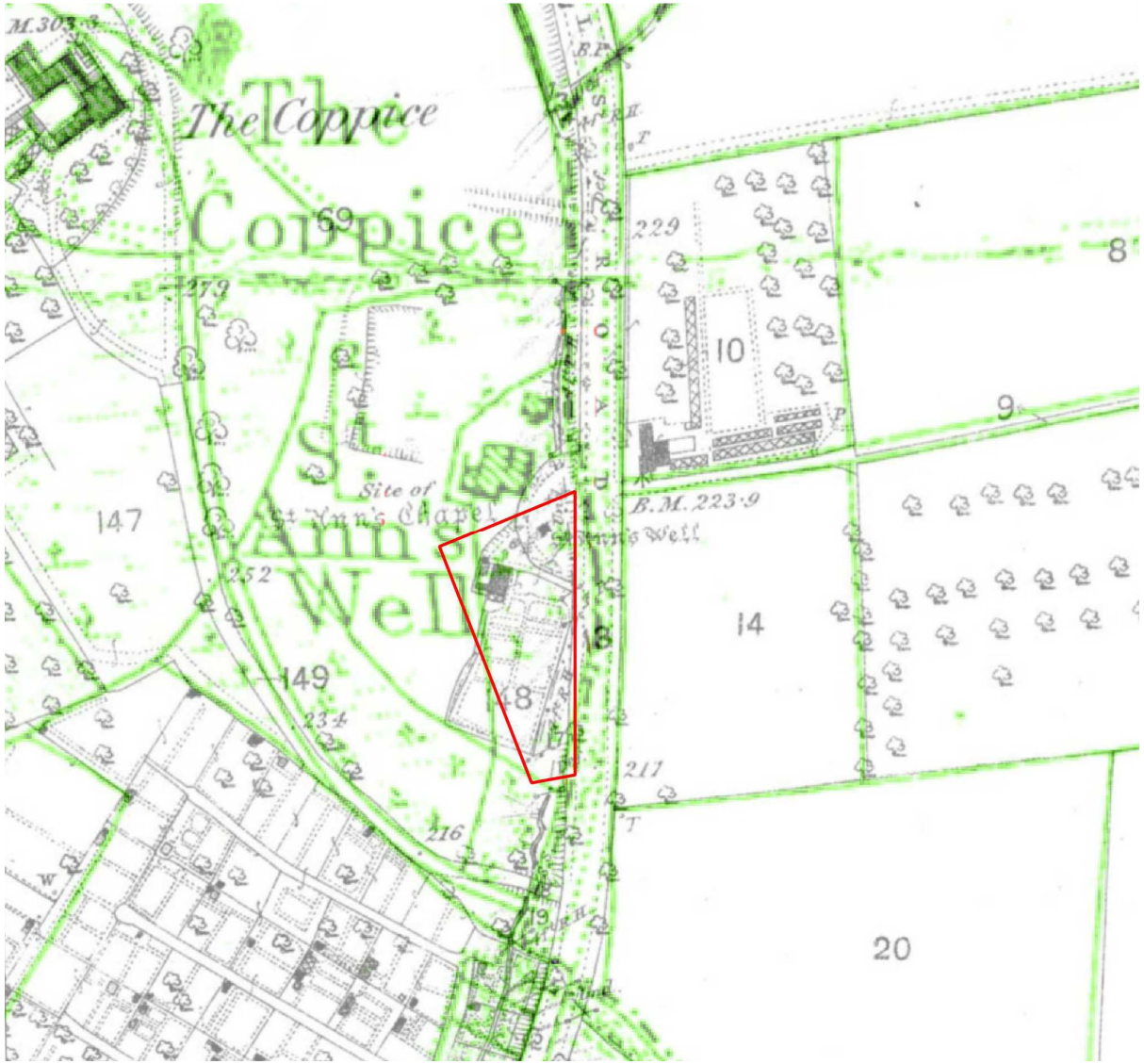


Figure 7 Jackson's 1851-61 Map of Nottingham (green).
 1881 OS overlay (above). 1981 OS overlay (below)



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking NNW



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking ENE



Plate 3: Trench 2 southeast-facing section showing redeposited mudstone



Plate 4: Trench 3 looking SSE



Plate 5: Trench 5 looking WSW



Plate 6: Trench 5 looking ESE showing former cobbled walkway of Kildare Street

Context	Trench	Category	Description
1000	1	Layer	Tarmac
1001	1	Layer	Sub base
1002	1	Layer/fill	Redeposited natural
1003	1	Fill	Upper fill of [1010]
1004	1	Fill	Redeposited natural - fill of [1010]
1005	1	Natural	Natural substratum
1006	1	Fill	Buried topsoil - fill of [1010]
1007	1	Cut	Construction cut
1008	1	Fill	Fill of [1007]
1009	1	Structure	Modern brick structure
1010	1	Cut	Large ditch or terrace
2000	2	Layer	Tarmac
2001	2	Layer	Tarmac sub base
2002	2	Natural	Natural substratum
2003	2	Layer	Bedding for cobbled surface (2008)
2004	2	Deposit	Redeposited topsoil
2005	2	Layer	Topsoil
2006	2	Fill	Demolition rubble backfill
2007	2	Cut	Cut of embankment/stream
2008	2	Deposit	Cobbled surface
3001	3	Fill	Ashy bedding layer for cobbled surface
3002	3	Cut	Cut for cobbled surface
3003	3	Deposit	Cobbled surface
3004	3	Cut	Cut for brick structure
3005	3	Fill	Fill of [3004]
3006	3	Structure	Brick structure
3007	3	Layer	Sandy bedding layer for (3006)
3008	3	Natural	Natural substratum
3009	3	Layer	Tarmac
3010	3	Layer	Crushed brick bedding for (3009)
4001	4	Fill	Demolition rubble deposit
4002	4	Fill	Sandy fill of [4003]
4003	4	Cut	Cut of embankment/stream
4004	4	Natural	Natural substratum
5000	5	Layer	Topsoil
5001	5	Layer	Redeposited topsoil and rubble
5002	5	Layer	Clinker and demolition rubble
5003	5	Layer	Subsoil
5004	5	Deposit	Clinker and concrete
5005	5	Natural	Natural substratum
5006	5	Deposit	Cobbled surface
5007	5	Deposit	Metalled surface
5008	5	Cut	Cut for (5002)