



OAKFORD
ARCHAEOLOGY

**Archaeological evaluation
on land behind Pine Tree Lodge, Abbotskerswell,
Devon**



on behalf of
Mr Mel Adderley

Report No. 17-10

Project No. 1393

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OAKFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Oakford Archaeology in May 2017 on land behind Pine Tree Lodge, Abbotskerswell, Devon (SX 8572 6898). The work comprised the machine-excavation of 3 trenches totalling 50m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide. These targeted a series of buildings identified on the 1841 Tithe map.

The heavily robbed out remains of at least three buildings, shown on 19th century mapping, were present in trenches across the site. The remains included a single wall foundation, three robber trenches and a single drain. No evidence was found of floor surfaces or discrete features preceding the buildings. No finds were recovered pre-dating the 19th century.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for ARB Architecture on behalf of Mr Mel Adderley and sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation undertaken by Oakford Archaeology (OA) in May 2017 on land behind Pine Tree Lodge, Abbotskerswell, Devon (SX 8572 6898). The work was required by Teignbridge District Council as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).

1.1 The site

The site (Fig. 1) lies on the northern edge of the historic village of Abbotskerswell, at a height of between c. 42 and 48m AOD on a south facing slope. The underlying solid geology belongs to the Whiteway Mudstone Group of slate. The sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 345 to 375 million years ago in the Carboniferous and Devonian Periods, and gives rise to silty clay soils (Geological Maps of England and Wales 1980).

1.2 Archaeological background

Little is known of the development of the area around Abbotskerswell in the immediate post-Roman and early Saxon period. The manor of *Cærswyll* is mentioned for the first time in a Saxon estate charter dated AD 956. The manor of *Carsuella* is recorded again in the Domesday Book of 1086. It was held by Horton abbey of St Wolfrida at Horton, prior to 1066 and during the Norman reorganisation of the land holdings following the Conquest, and the death of Harold at Hastings, the manor and its land remained a monastic possession of the abbey.¹

The village, variously known as *Kareswil*, *Karswill Abbatis*, *Abbotescharswell*, *Abbodescarswill* and *Abbots Keswell*,² grew up in a sheltered valley to the south of Newton Abbot. The pattern of the village is characterised by a number of large farmsteads with the prosperity of the village at this time largely based on farming and to a lesser extent cider making.

The development lies on the northern edge of the historic core of the village. Nothing much is known about the area and its development until the early 19th century. By the 1841 Tithe Map (Fig. 2) the site is occupied by two properties. The southern property (plot 258) was owned by William Creed and occupied by Thomas Pocock. It comprised a house along the street frontage with a further outbuilding at the rear. The northern property (plots 255, 256 and 257) was owned and occupied by William Creed. This consisted of a main range along the street frontage separated by a yard from a further two large outbuildings at the rear. In addition, there was a large orchard at the back and a sizeable garden to the north. The Creed family were substantial landowners within the parish and William himself owned 111 acres of land in Abbotskerswell.

By 1888 (Fig. 3) these properties appear to have been demolished when Burrow Park - now called 'The Manor House' - was built and the garden and surrounding landscape reordered. The land pattern remained unaltered throughout the late 19th and into the early 20th century (Fig. 4).

¹ *Thorn and Thorn 1985, 7.2.*

² *Gover et al. 1932, 504.*

2. AIMS

The principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, character, extent, depth, date and condition/state of survival of any archaeological features and deposits within the footprint of the proposed development.

3. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by Oakford Archaeology (2017), submitted to and approved by the DCHET prior to commencement on site. This document is included as Appendix 1.

The work comprised the excavation of 3 trenches totalling 50m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide. They were positioned to target a series of buildings identified on the 1841 Abbotswell tithe map. Trench positions were agreed with the DCHET prior to commencement on site. The positions of trenches as excavated are shown on Fig.7.

Machine excavation was undertaken under archaeological control using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless grading bucket. Topsoil and underlying deposits were removed to the level of either natural subsoil, or the top of archaeological deposits (whichever was higher). Areas of archaeological survival were then cleaned by hand, investigated and recorded.

The standard OA recording system was employed. Stratigraphic information was recorded on *pro-forma* context record sheets and individual trench recording forms, plans and sections for each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and a detailed digital photographic record was made. Registers were maintained for photographs, drawings and context sheets on *pro forma* sheets.

4. RESULTS

Relevant detailed plans and sections are included as Figs 5-6 and context descriptions for the trenches are set out in Appendix 2.

A generally uniform overlying layer sequence of turf and topsoil onto natural subsoil was encountered in all areas. The depth of the overlying deposits ranged from 0.35-0.45m.

4.1 The trenches

Trench 1 (Detailed plan and section Fig. 5. Plates 1-2)

This trench measured 15m x 1.6m, was orientated approximately E-W and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m. The work exposed the remains of a wall foundation at the western end of the trench. The recorded layer sequence is set out in Table 1, Appendix 2.

Feature 104 was an approximately E-W and N-S aligned wall foundation, 1m wide and at least 0.52m deep. The foundation consisted of medium to large size local limestone rubble bonded with clay. No finds were recovered from the wall.

Trench 2 (Detailed plan and section Fig. 5. Plates 3-11)

The trench measured 15m x 1.6m, was orientated approximately N-S, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.3m. The only archaeological features present were two parallel running

E-W aligned linear features (203 and 205) located towards the northern end and centre of the trench. Context descriptions for this trench are set out in Table 2, Appendix 2.

Feature 203 was a linear feature aligned approximately E-W. This probable robber trench was 0.58m wide and 0.05m deep, with gently breaking sides and a flat base. No finds were recovered from its single fill (204). This consisted of a uniform dark brown silty clay deposit similar to the overlying topsoil. This feature probably continues into Trench 3.

Feature 205 was a linear feature aligned approximately E-W. This probable robber trench was 0.65m wide and 0.17m deep, with sharply breaking sides and a flat base. No finds were recovered from its single fill (206). This consisted of a uniform dark brown silty clay deposit similar to the overlying topsoil.

Trench 3 (Detailed plan and section Fig. 16. Plates 12-14)

This trench measured 20m x 1.6m, was orientated approximately N-S and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.3m. The only archaeological features present was a single E-W aligned linear feature located towards the centre of the trench and a single N-S aligned 19th century drain at the north end of the trench. The recorded layer sequence is set out in Table 3, Appendix 2.

Feature 303 was a linear feature aligned approximately E-W. This probable robber trench was 1.58m wide and 0.28m deep, with gradually breaking sides and a flat base. No finds were recovered from its single fill (304). This consisted of a uniform dark brown silty clay deposit similar to the overlying topsoil. This feature probably continues into Trench 2.

Feature 305 was a linear feature aligned approximately N-S. This probable drain was 4.85m long, 0.73m wide and 0.23m deep, with sharply breaking sides and a flat base. Two low walls, consisting of local limestone rubble lined the edges with a central channel. 12 sherds of late 18th-19th century Staffordshire transfer decorated white earthenware were recovered from its single fill (307). This consisted of a uniform mid reddish brown sandy clay deposit.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The trench evaluation constitutes a thorough examination of the site, with trenches positioned to target the buildings shown on the 1841 Tithe map. Extensive mid- to late-19th century landscaping has been confirmed across the entire site, and the total removal of this material within each trench has revealed some evidence for buried archaeological features and deposits. This evidence is somewhat limited, both in terms of the number and the variety of features identified. Furthermore, the interpretation and dating of the exposed features is hampered by a general lack of pottery, lithics and other dating evidence from secure contexts. The distribution of archaeological features identified during the evaluation is shown on Fig. 7.

The development site lies along the edge of a former routeway of possible medieval date. No evidence for activity of this date was found on the site during the work, although structural remains of former buildings were identified in all trenches, including a single wall and robber trenches.

The principal feature identified comprised the corner of a wall foundation exposed within Trench 1. The wall appears to represent the south and west walls of a building as depicted on the 1841 Tithe map. Further evidence for the buildings shown on the mid-19th century map was identified in Trench 2 where two parallel E-W aligned linear features may be the remains of robber trenches. Although heavily truncated by later landscaping activity the northern most

linear was located on the suspected line of the outbuilding shown on the map, while the linear in the centre of Trench 2 may be the remains of an internal wall.

To the east a further robber trench was identified in Trench 3. The feature in the centre of the trench appears to represent the heavily robbed-out remains of the northern wall of an outbuilding shown on the 1841 Tithe map. To the north a later stone lined drain is located on the same alignment as the rear wall of the main property shown on the 19th century mapping. Interestingly the drain runs into, but not beyond the line of the E-W aligned robber trench to the south, suggesting that it may have been constructed within the robbed out remains of the rear wall of the house. The small amount of pottery recovered from the fill of the drain suggests a late 19th century date for its disuse.

Finally, although archaeological remains are present immediately below the level of topsoil, together with the lack of stratified remains such as floors and surfaces, suggests that the archaeological remains have been subject to extensive past truncation. The likely context for this is the conversion of the land to an orchard in the mid- to late-19th century.

The pottery assemblage recovered from the site is minimal, despite examination of spoil heaps. This further indicates that the potential for significant archaeological survival is low. As a result, it was agreed with the DCHET that no further archaeological site work was necessary.

6. PROJECT ARCHIVE

A project archive will not be produced. A summary of the archaeological investigations has been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (oakforda1-286501).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This evaluation was commissioned by Mel Adderley and administered on behalf of the client by Alex Bolt (ARB architecture). The project was managed for Oakford Archaeology by Marc Steinmetzer. The fieldwork was carried out by Jonathan Martin and Marc Steinmetzer; the illustrations for the report were prepared by Marc Steinmetzer. Thanks are hereby recorded to Lucy Brown who undertook the historic research and the staff of the Devon Heritage Centre. The finds analysis was undertaken by John Allan. Thanks also to Stephen Reed (DCHET).

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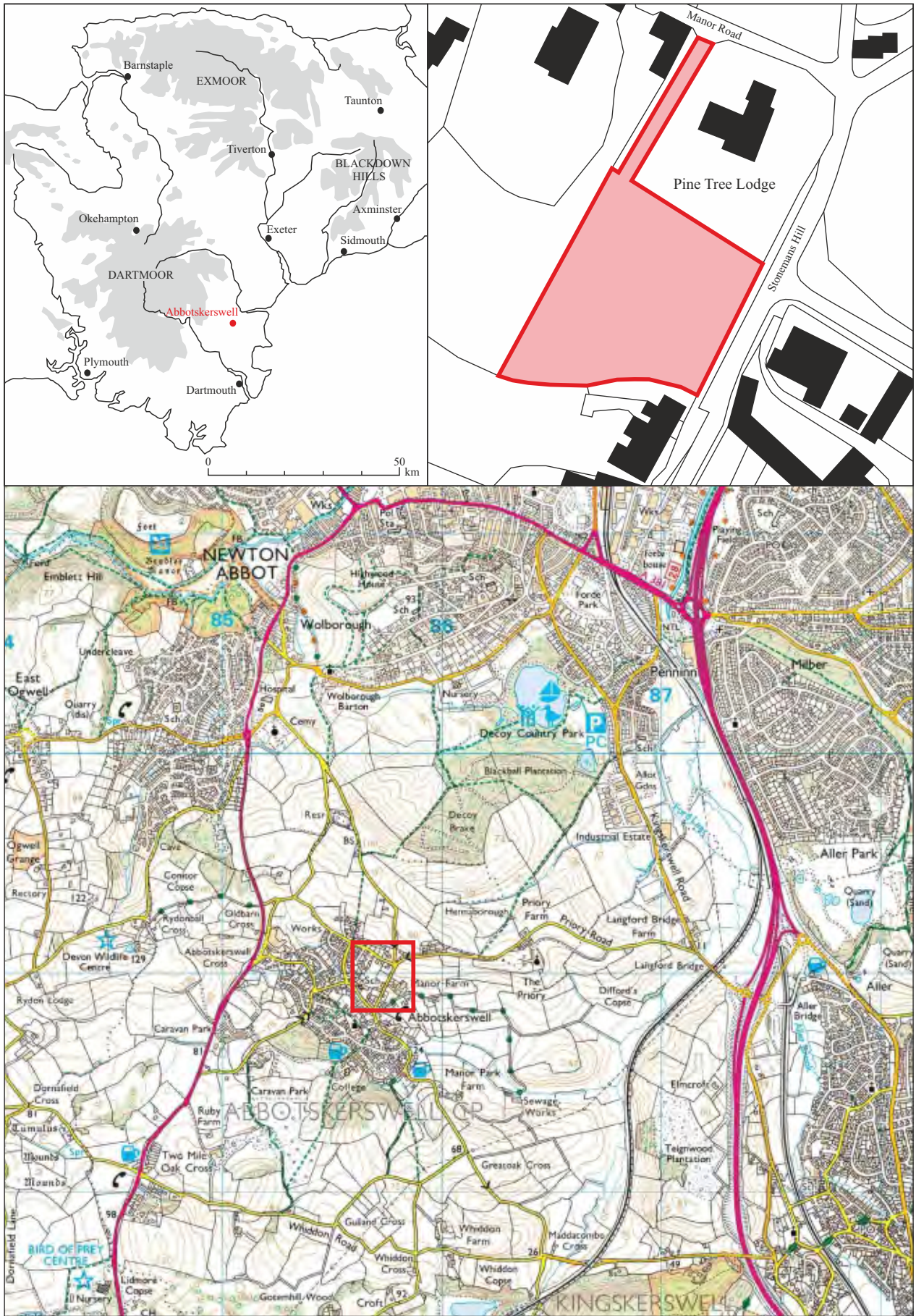


Fig. 1 Location of site.

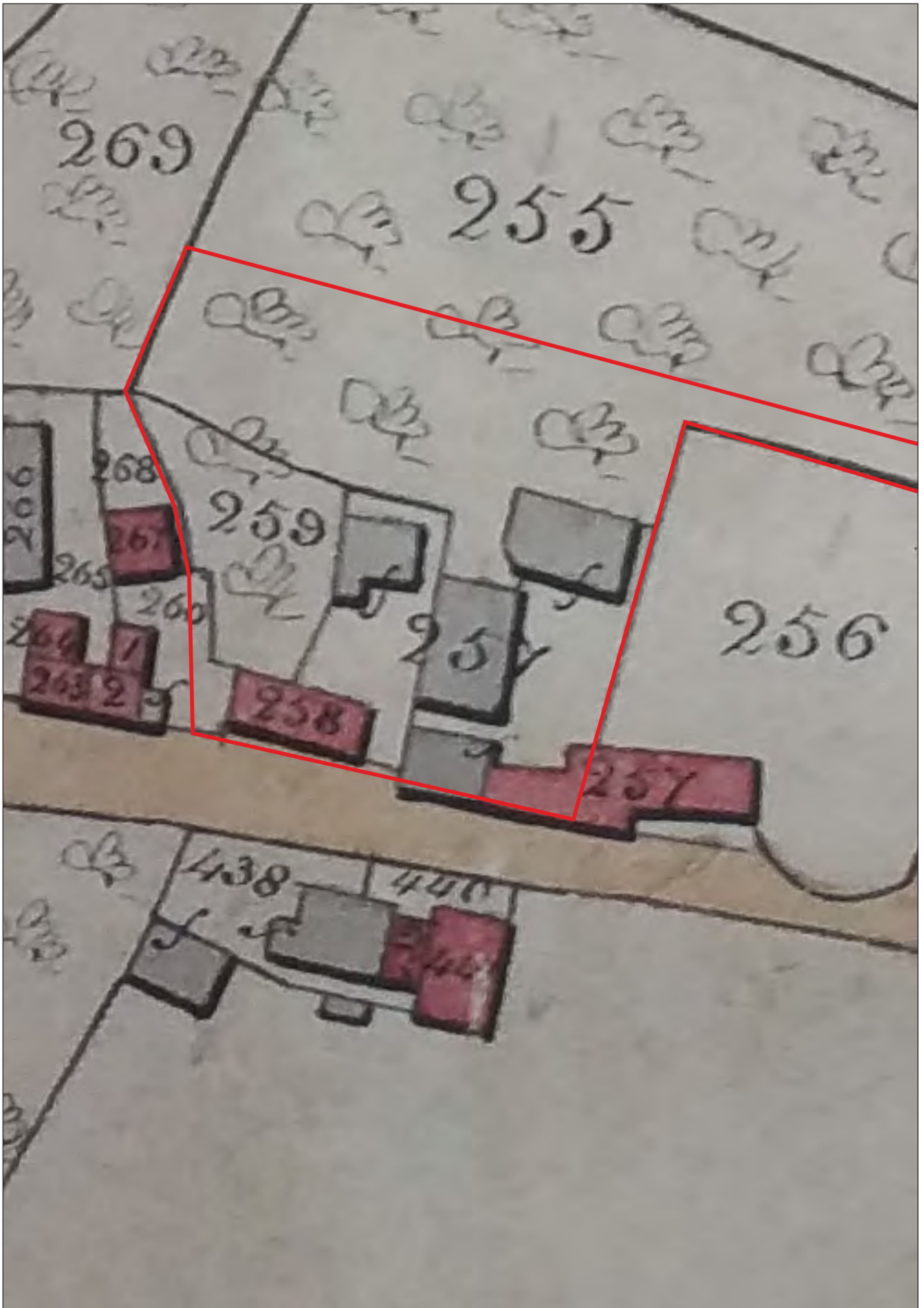


Fig. 2 Detail from the 1841 Abbotskerswell Tithe map.

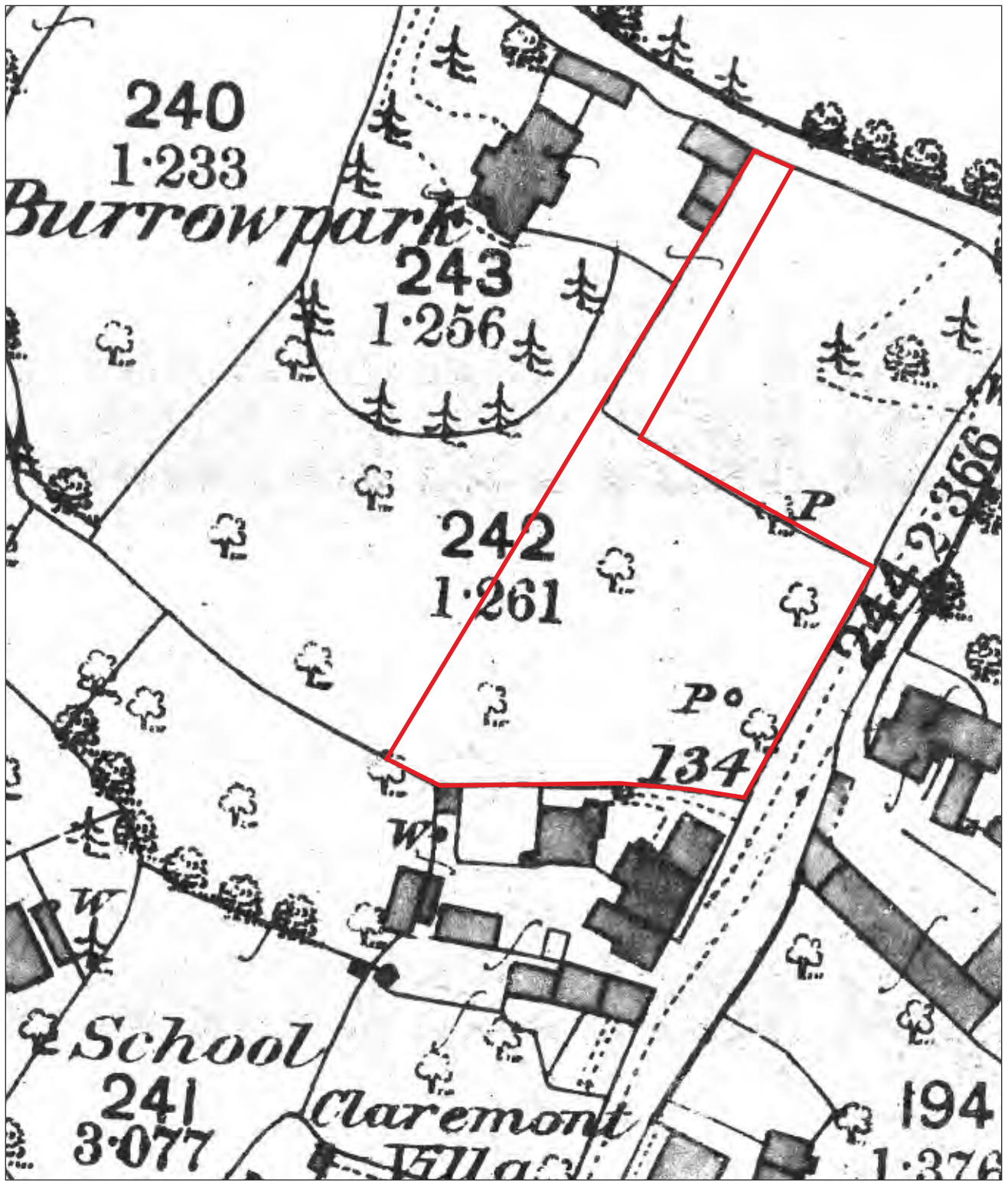
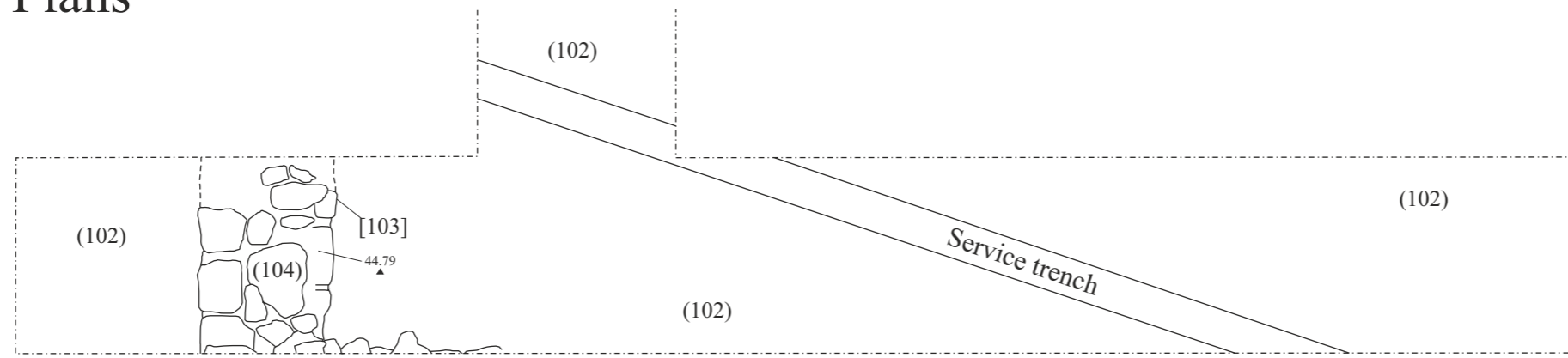


Fig. 3 Detail from the 1st edition 1888 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet CXV.3.

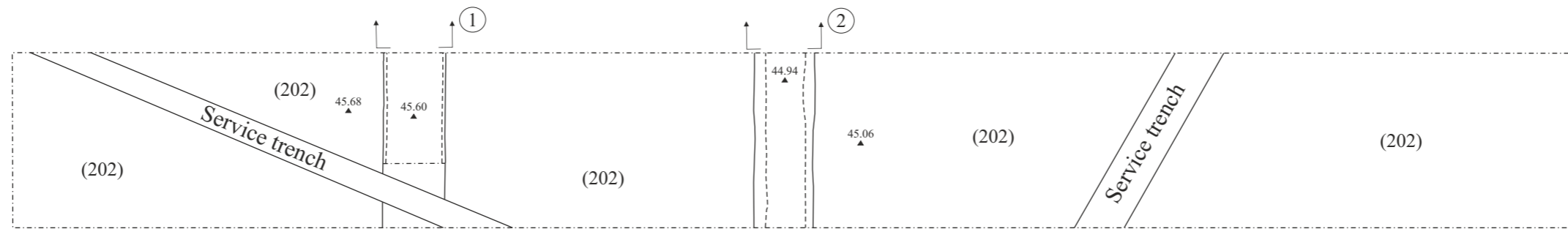


Fig. 4 Detail from the 2nd edition 1905 Ordnance Survey map Devonshire Sheet CXV.3.

Plans



0.82



Sections

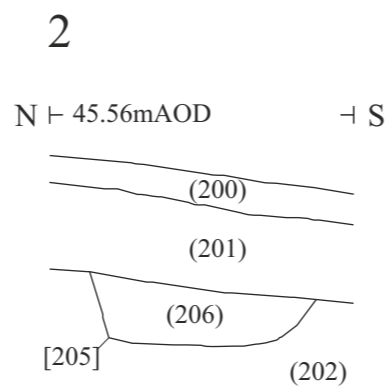
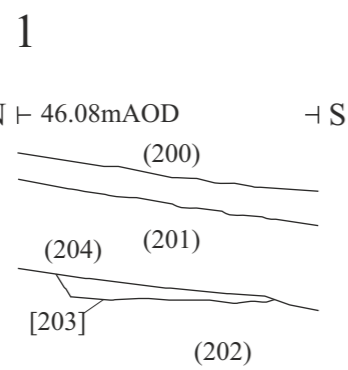
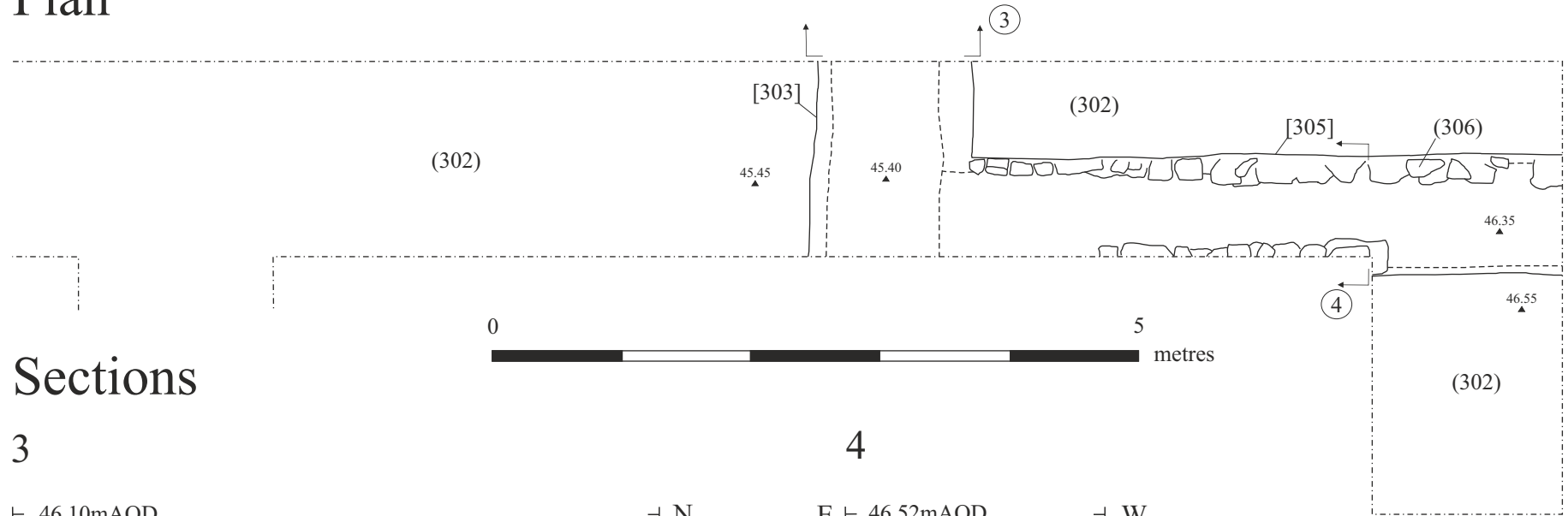


Fig. 5 Trenches 1 and 2 plans and sections.

Plan

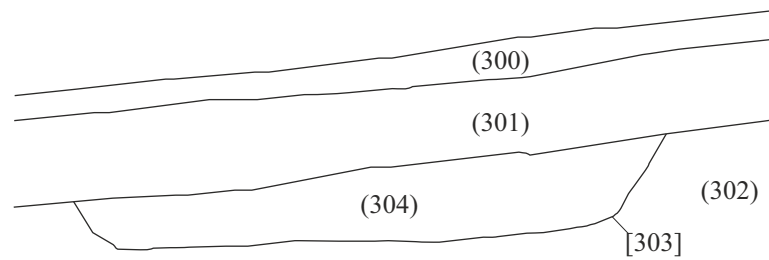


Sections

3

S † 46.10m AOD

† N



4

E † 46.52m AOD

† W

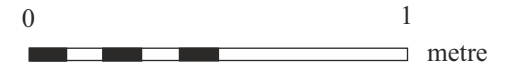
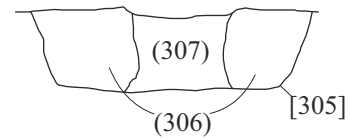


Fig. 6 Trench 3 plan and sections.

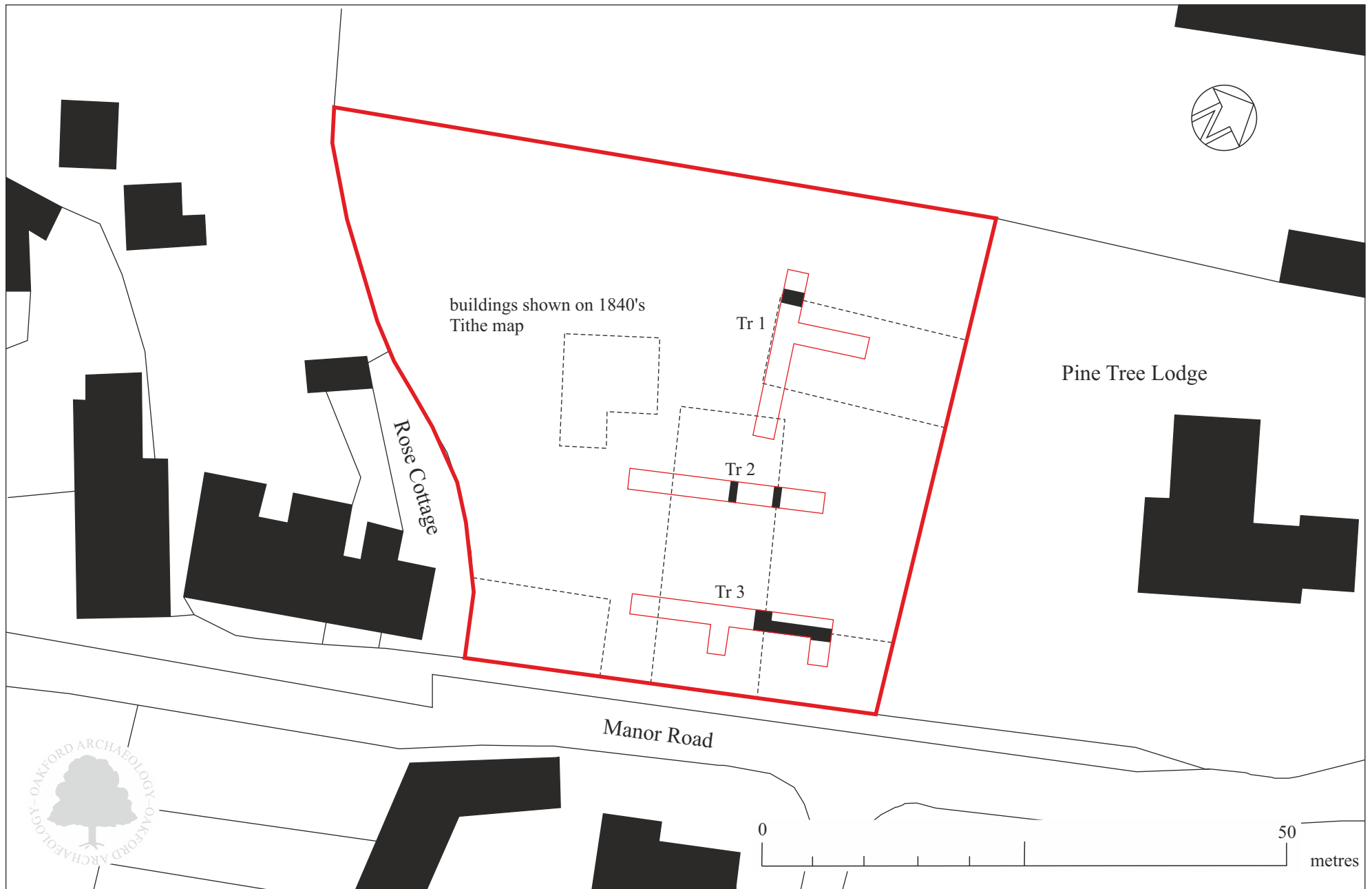


Fig. 7 Plan showing location of trenches and principal features identified.



Pl. 1 General view of Trench 1 with wall foundation (103). 1m scale. Looking southeast.



Pl. 2 General view of wall foundation (103). 1m scale. Looking south.



Pl. 3 General view of Trench 2 with robber trench [203] in background. 1m scale. Looking south.



Pl. 4 Section through robber trench [203]. 0.5m scale. Looking west.



Pl. 5 Section through robber trench [205]. 0.5m scale. Looking east.



Pl. 6 General view of Trench 3 showing robber trench [303] in foreground and drain [305] in the background. 2m scale. Looking north.



Pl. 7 General view of Trench 3 with drain [305] in foreground and robber trench [303] in background. 0.5m and 1m scales. Looking south.



Pl. 8 General view of Trench 3 with drain [305] in foreground and robber trench [303] in background. 2m scale. Looking south.



Pl. 9 Section through robber trench [303]. 1m scale.
Looking east.



Pl. 10 Section through drain [305]. 0.5m scale. Looking south.

Appendix 1:

Written Scheme of Investigation for
Archaeological works

Appendix 2: Context descriptions by Trench

Table 1: Trench 1

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
100	0-0.1m	Dark brown silty clay	Topsoil
101	0.1-0.3m	Dark brown silty clay	Subsoil
102	0.3m+	Shillet	Natural subsoil
103	0.3-	N-S and E-W aligned wall foundation	Foundation trench
104	0.3-	Medium to large local limestone rubble	Wall foundation

Table 2: Trench 2

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
200	0-0.1m	Dark brown silty clay	Topsoil
201	0.1-0.3m	Dark brown silty clay	Subsoil
202	0.3m+	Shillet	Natural subsoil
203	0.3-	E-W aligned linear	Cut of robbing
204	0.3-	Dark brown silty clay	Fill of robbing
205	0.3-	E-W aligned linear	Cut of robbing
206	0.3-	Dark brown silty clay	Fill of robbing

Table 3: Trench 3

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
300	0-0.1m	Dark brown silty clay	Topsoil
301	0.1-0.3m	Dark brown silty clay	Subsoil
302	0.3m+	Shillet	Natural subsoil
303	0.3-	E-W aligned linear	Cut of robbing
304	0.3-	Dark brown silty clay	Fill of robbing
305	0.3-	N-S aligned linear	Cut of drain
306	0.3-	Small local limestone rubble	Drain wall
307	0.3-	Dark brown silty clay	Fill

Appendix 3: Finds quantification

Context	Feature	Spot date	Quantity	weight	Notes
307			12		12 sherds of late 18 th -19 th century Staffordshire transfer decorated white earthenware