

Marches Archaeology

**The Old Chandlery
Saint Mary's Lane
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire**

A report on a watching brief

October 2003

Marches Archaeology Series 306

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors

This report is produced by

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**The Old Chandlery
Saint Mary's Lane
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire**

**A report on an
archaeological watching brief**

NGR: SO 8907 3262

Report by

Adrian F. Nash

Contents

Summary

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Archaeological and historical background
- 3 Scope and aims of the project
- 4 Methodology
- 5 Description
- 6 Discussion and conclusion
- 7 References
- 8 The archive

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Summary

The site is situated in Saint Mary's Lane, Tewkesbury (NGR: SO 8907 3262). The site is set back from the street frontage but there is an access route leading to it from Saint Mary's Lane. To the north of the site is the river Avon, with a garden of an adjoining property in between.

Saint Mary's Lane is within the area of medieval settlement of Tewkesbury and as such is a site of archaeological interest. A standing building on the site is Grade II listed and is noted by the Gloucestershire Site and Monument Record (SMR 8016) as an 18th century tannery-drying house.

The client, Mosaïque Design Consultants Limited, wished to redevelop the site and incorporate the existing building into an office complex with a new building attached to the old drying house. Marches Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the watching brief during the construction of the new building.

Documentary research was undertaken to establish what potential archaeological remains would be present on site. Early 19th century map evidence did not show the tannery building. The earliest located reference to a tannery in Tewkesbury is in a National Gazetteer dated to 1868. The first edition Ordnance Survey plan of 1880 shows the tannery-drying house and a complex of associated building and is clearly labelled as a tannery. The later maps no longer refer to the site as a tannery and by 1925 the tannery complex looks like it may have been divided. The site is now called 'the Old Chandlery' but this may be a recent occurrence referring to the site's last use as a boathouse by a marine service.

The watching brief found that the site had been heavily disturbed by more than one phase of building in the modern era. A series of pits were found cutting the natural. These were vertical sided with flat bottoms. These pits were filled with yellow brown clay without any dating evidence. It seems likely that these pits were associated with the 19th century tannery.

1 Introduction

Planning permission has been granted by the local planning authority to convert and extend premises at the above site (ref. 03/2768/0262/FUL). The site is situated at NGR: SO 8907 3262 (Fig. 1).

The site is within the area of medieval settlement of Tewkesbury and as such is a site of archaeological interest. The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor required that in order that the archaeological resource was adequately protected archaeological supervision and monitoring had to be carried out during ground works associated with the proposed development.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor has produced a "Brief for an archaeological watching brief". Dennis Rayton, architectural consultant on behalf of the client, Mosaique Design Consultants Limited, commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services detailed in the Brief.

A project proposal was produced based on the stipulations set out in the Brief. This formed a written scheme of investigation for the archaeological.

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Tewkesbury

Tewkesbury is situated 10 miles north-east of Gloucester at the confluence of the rivers Avon and Severn, in the Vale of Evesham. The town lies on a terrace of Keuper Marl cut through by the Avon and Swilgate rivers (Hannan, 1981, 91).

The earliest evidence for occupation in the vicinity of Tewkesbury dates from the Neolithic as was demonstrated during the excavations in the early 1970s of the Roses Theatre (Hannan, 1993).

Evidence for occupation in the Roman period have been found throughout Tewkesbury. The evidence for consists mostly of finds, with only the occasional evidence for structural remains. It has been suggested that the Roman road from Worcester to Gloucester, was where Oldbury Road runs today, though this has not been substantiated. Hannan, in his synopsis of available data in 1993 surmised that the most likely form of occupation was as an extended rural settlement or scattered farms centred on the oldest part of the town at Oldbury (Hannan, 1993).

The evidence for the continuity of settlement from the Roman period to the Saxon has not been found, though Hannan argues that is likely the settlement did continue rather than be abandoned and then resettled (Hannan, 1997). During the middle and late Saxon period Tewkesbury was in the territory of the *Hwicce*, a sub-kingdom of Mercia and was an estate centre (*op. cit.*). In circa 980 an abbey at Tewkesbury was established which was a dependent of Cranborne Abbey.

During the Norman Conquest, Tewkesbury was laid waste and its value fell from £100 to £12 and twenty years later its value had not fully recovered (Elrington, 1968). During that time the manor was held by Queen Maud who established 13 burgesses

and a market (Moore, 1982). After Queen Maud's death in 1083, William II gave Robert FitzHamon the manor of Tewkesbury and other estates and he founded the Benedictine Abbey in 1102 when the choir of the present church was consecrated (Hannan, 1997). The earliest surviving fabric of the abbey church dates from the late eleventh century. Throughout the remainder of the medieval period the abbey was of regional importance and its architecture ranks highly amongst medieval churches (Appleton-Fox, 2001a). The town flourished in the medieval period and by the 13th century had expanded to the limits of the flood plains of the rivers (Hannan, 1997). It is likely that it was during this period that settlement occurred in the area around St Mary's Lane.

In 1471 a key battle of the War of the Roses was fought at Tewkesbury. At a site called Bloody Meadow, Edward IV defeated the Lancastrians. Queen Margaret was taken prisoner, and her son Edward, Prince of Wales, son of Henry VI, was killed. With Edward's death the Lancastrian cause had also died.

In the 16th and 17th centuries the town was famous for the production of woollen cloth and mustard (Hannan, 1981, 90), it is even said that William Shakespeare had commented on the thickness of the mustard (Wildy, 1993). During the 16th century the medieval buildings on the High Street replaced the medieval buildings that were smaller and were positioned further back in the burgage plots. By 1672 the High Street had the highest share of the large houses in Tewkesbury (Verey, 1980).

In the early 19th century the town was ranked as the second most important town in Gloucestershire (Hannan, 1981, 90). The 1821 parliamentary returns give a population for the town as 4,962 inhabitants (Wildy, 1993), which grew to its 19th century high of 5,780 by 1831 (Hannan, 1981, 90). The town growth then stagnated and declined as it failed to adapt from cottage industries to a factory system.

The National Gazetteer in 1868 described the town as 'a parish, market, and sessions town, municipal and parliamentary borough...' and consisted of 'three principal streets, with several smaller streets running off in different directions, but all paved and lighted with gas' (Hinson, 1993). The Gazetteer notes that the following 'manufactories of stockings, lace, and nails, also a tannery, corn mills, and malting establishments' (*op. cit.*).

2.2 The site

The site is situated in the backlands of the plots on the north side of the historic Saint Mary's Lane. To the north of the site is the river Avon though a garden now divides the site from the river. The site is known as the Old Chandlery and was most recently used by Tewkesbury Marine Services. The site's name, chandlery, suggests a place where a Chandler sold commodities. A Chandler is a 16th century term for a dealer in goods, most often the term suggests a candle seller but the term can be used to describe other dealers such as a corn-Chandler or a ship-Chandler. The term chandlery is commonly used in marine circles today and so is likely that the origin for the site's name is recent reflecting the last use of the site before it was abandoned.

The Gloucestershire Sites and Monument Record notes that that a standing building on the site is of historic interest and it has been grade II listed (SMR 8016). The building is described as an 18th century tannery-drying house. The building is a two storey painted brick building with a half hipped gable end and a tiled roof. The first floor is weather boarded and the brickwork has ventilation openings. The building has two narrow windows with segmental brick heads. It was noted that the ground floor originally was open with square corner piers.

The Sites and Monuments Record notes that Saint Mary's Lane has several other buildings of interest all of which are grade II listed. The earliest date to the early 16th century and include No. 2 (SMR 8013), groups No. 6 (SMR 8014) and No. 7 (SMR 8015) and Nos. 16 and 18 (SMR 8017). Nos. 16 and 18 Saint Mary's Lane is to the south west of the site and consists of a two-storey cottage constructed with an open timber frame with painted brick nogging.

The other listed buildings on in the lane are Nos. 28, 30 & 32 (SMR 8018) and no. 34, which are 18th century in date. Nos. 28, 30 & 32 (SMR 8018) are interesting example of red brick stocking frame workers cottages dating to around c1780. They form a group in the record with No 34 (SMR 8019), which is the end terrace with a roughcast end elevation.

Nathaniel Hartland produced the earliest available cartographic evidence for the town in 1807 (Fig. 2), the map shows Saint Mary's Lane with buildings along the street frontage. The plan does show some buildings in the backlands of the plots but on the site there does not seem to be a building relating to the 18th century tannery-drying house. The nearest possibility is an extension to the rear of the buildings on the site, though it does not appear to be in the right location. A question that this report cannot answer is how accurate Hartland's plan is, though the plan appears to be reasonably detailed as it does show the division of plots and the shape of the buildings.

The 1825 tithe map of the town shows a similar layout to that of the 1807 map but does not show minor outbuildings in the back lands of the plots (Fig. 3). Pigot's Directory for 1830 records the following people were occupying and working in Saint Mary's Lane:

NAMES	RANK / OCCUPATION	ADDRESS.
HAMPLETT Henry	Stocking Manufacturer	St Mary's Lane, Tewkesbury
PERKINS William	Stocking Manufacturer	St Mary's Lane, Tewkesbury
SMITH William	Boot & Shoe Maker	St Mary's Lane, Tewkesbury
VOSPER John	Stocking Manufacturer	St Mary's Lane, Tewkesbury
WALKER William	Cooper	St Mary's Lane, Tewkesbury

The recorded stocking manufactures may have occupied the red brick cottages at nos. 28, 30, 32. There is no mention of a tanner, though there is a boot and shoemaker, a trade that used as its raw material the leather, which would have been produced by a tannery. However, these two processes are very different and it is hardly to be

expected that a boot and shoemaker would also have been a tanner. If this were the case it is likely that the information would be recorded in contemporary Directories.

The National Gazetteer of 1868 records that the town had a single tannery and presumably this is the one situated on the site (Hinson, 1993). The site is labelled as a tannery on the 1880 Ordnance survey plan (Fig. 4). The tannery-drying house (SMR 8016) is shown clearly on the plan and appears to be part of a complex of buildings that extend beyond the current site boundary. The complex has buildings along the banks of the river and there are buildings to the east and west of the drying house. The buildings to the west are situated on the location of the new building subject to the watching brief. Access to the complex, which is to the south-east of the drying house is from Saint Mary's Lane. The access road has now been divided.

The 1900 Ordnance Survey plan shows the site has changed little except that a building that in north-west corner of the complex, next to the river bank may have been demolished (Fig. 5). The site on this plan is no longer labelled as a tannery, although other industrial sites such as the malt house and Saint Mary's works, which were also shown on the 1880s map, are noted. The map may be indicating that the site was no longer being used as a tannery.

The 1925 Ordnance Survey plan shows that tannery site had been divided with a fence or wall running north to south in line with the east side the tannery drying house (Fig. 6). The wall appears to have cut off the access to Saint Mary's lane and the tannery-drying house. To the north-west of the drying house a new building is shown.

3 Scope and aims of the project

The scope of the project was defined in the Project Proposal as:

- { observation of all topsoil stripping, other earthmoving and trench excavation until natural subsoil is reached
- { the sequence of soil deposits present and all archaeological deposits and features shall be recorded
- { all artefacts shall be collected, identified and catalogued
- { if significant archaeology is identified the archaeologist on site should inform the client and the County Archaeological Officer in order that appropriate action may be taken to minimise the damage to such deposits and to record them appropriately.

The aims of an archaeological watching brief are defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:

'to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works'

and:

'to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the

resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

4 Methodology

Observations of all groundbreaking activity in association with this proposed development were made and appropriate recording was undertaken. Where a machine was employed to excavate a toothless bucket was used as prescribed in 2.2 of the Brief.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers were allocated and context record sheets completed. Scale drawings of significant data were made. A photographic record was made using black and white negative and colour transparency film. No samples were taken.

5 Description

The tannery drying building (SMR 8016) described above had been abandoned for some time. The site is being redeveloped and the old tannery building incorporated into a new office complex. To achieve this aim a new building to the west of the old tannery house was to be erected. The new building was to be free standing structure attached to the existing building by a corridor.

Representatives of Marches Archaeology were present on site from the 22nd July 2003 and were on site periodically until the 31st July 2003. During this period the foundations for the new office structure were excavated and the floor of the tannery building was taken up. The removal of the existing floor, which was concrete, revealed nothing of archaeological interest. The client informed Marches Archaeology that the existing drainage facilities would be utilised so there would be no drainage trenches excavated.

The foundation trenches (Fig. 7) were excavated 0.6m wide but varied in depth dependent upon the level of the natural. The natural consisted of firm but crumbly red clay [15]. In the north-west corner the natural was tested and a silver grey clay [29] was seen below [15]. Overlying it in the same area was a layer of brown soft clay with small stones, pebbles charcoal flecks [27]. There were also pieces of animal bone and oyster shell, but no pottery was found. The layer was at the northern limit of the trench 0.5m thick though it then quickly became thinner running out 2.9m further to the south in the west trench. Sealing the layer was a thin (40mm) layer of red clay [28] indistinguishable from [15].

Overlying the natural in the south trench of the rectangle forming foundation was a layer of pebbles in red clay [34]. This layer had been truncated by modern disturbances [03].

In the west and east trenches were a series of features cutting [15] that had similar characteristics (Figs. 7 & 8). The features [17], [22/24], [26], [31] and [33] were vertically sided cuts with a sharp break of slope at the bottom. The bottoms of the features were flat. The extent of the cuts to the east and west of the trenches was not determined apart from it being clear that [31] and [33] did not extended into the east

section of the east trench. Cuts [17] and [22] were separated by 1.4m of natural clay, while cuts [24] and [26] were separated at the bottom by 0.7m. As the sections of [22/24] and [26] rose, which included a step in [24], the natural disappeared and the fill of the features merged.

The fills [6], [21/23], [25], [30], and [32] consisted of mixed yellow brown/grey clay (Figs. 7 & 9). Only [21/23] had any inclusions that included some small pieces of charcoal and lime. There was no dating evidence found.

In between cuts [17] and [22/24] was part of a feature that may have been sub-circular in shape [20] (Figs. 7 & 8). The feature was partially obscured by the east section of the trench. What was seen of the feature was 1.1m long and 0.46m wide with sides that sloping slightly more than 45°. The break of slope at the bottom of the feature was gradual and the bottom, though not fully seen, appeared concave. At the south it was filled with grey clay that may have been a form of lining [16]. Filling the rest of the feature was red-brown silt and pebbles, the pebbles constituted 60-80% of the fill [19].

Covering [19] was a brown loose loam with an inclusion of mortar and brick fragments [18]. Though this initially appeared to be a fill it was clear after the feature was excavated that this context was associated with more recent activity on the site.

In the east trench there was a 2m long by 1m wide cut [14] (Fig. 8). The cut was filled with grey brown loam with mortar and brick fragments [13]. The fill was indistinguishable from the modern layer [03] above.

To the north-west of [14], partially obscured by the trench section was a 0.6m wide by 0.25 wide feature [12]. The 0.2m deep feature was filled with yellow brown silted clay with an inclusion of sub-rounded pebbles [11].

In the north trench there was a vertical cut [10] through [6]. The cut was filled with a dark almost black loam with flecks of charcoal [9]. A modern concrete [02] footing had truncated the fill.

Also cutting [6] were modern features including [8], which was a steep sided flat-bottomed cut that was 1.4m wide. The feature was 0.6m wide and filled with mixed red-brown silt with flecks of mortar [7], within the make-up was lots of tile. Also cutting [6] was a 0.9m wide vertical cut [5], which contained grey-brown silt with lots of whole and halved bricks and modern metal objects. Cutting across the fill was a modern concrete foundation [02].

Across the whole of the area was layer of grey-brown loam [3] which had a content of mortar, charcoal and modern bricks. Also the layer contained animal bone, cattle horn and modern pottery. The creation of this layer has truncated many of the features encountered during the watching brief (Figs. 7 & 8). The layer appeared to have been deposited after the demolition of a building on the site, probably just before the concrete foundations from the last building [02] were sited. Part of the concrete floor [1] from that building was left in-situ to west of the foundations next to the adjoining building (Fig. 9).

6 Discussion and conclusion

If the 19th century map evidence is to be trusted the tannery drying building is not 18th century but mid 19th century. The tannery was in existence from at least 1868 and was still open until 1880. The 1900 cartographic evidence suggests that the site had changed little from 1880 but it may no longer have been a tannery. By 1925 the tannery site has been divided suggesting either that leather production on the site had ceased or had been reduced. It is not clear from the documentary evidence when the tannery building was redeveloped as a boathouse. It seems likely that the site current name, 'the old Chandlery' developed from the site's marine use.

The excavation for the new foundation showed that the area had at least two structures built on the site, one of which was reasonably recent. The demolition of the older building had led to the truncation of features associated with the building or features that may have been earlier. The vertically sided, flat bottomed features, [17], [22/24], [26], [31] and [33], seem unusual especially as they have been filled by clay that is clearly not the same as the localised natural. Since the only known use of the site prior to becoming a boathouse was as a tannery it seems likely that these features are something to do with that process. The excavation of the new foundations has only partially removed these features. At some point in the future it will be possible to investigate in more detail what exactly these features are but for now the new building will have no further impact upon them.

Some of the other features found were not necessarily associated with the clay filled features, but unfortunately they did not produce any dating evidence. The layer [27] did have evidence of animal bone and oyster shell but again no dating evidence. The way that its depth grew greater as it became nearer the river Avon may suggest that the deposit has something to do with the river, but there was no way of testing this.

The site is located within an area where medieval settlement remains have been identified and so it seemed likely that significant archaeological finds and deposits would be found. Unfortunately, the site has been excavated in later periods and the features that were found are undated. However, only part of the site has been affected by the excavation of the foundation trenches and so significant archaeological remains may well survive in other areas of the site.

7 References

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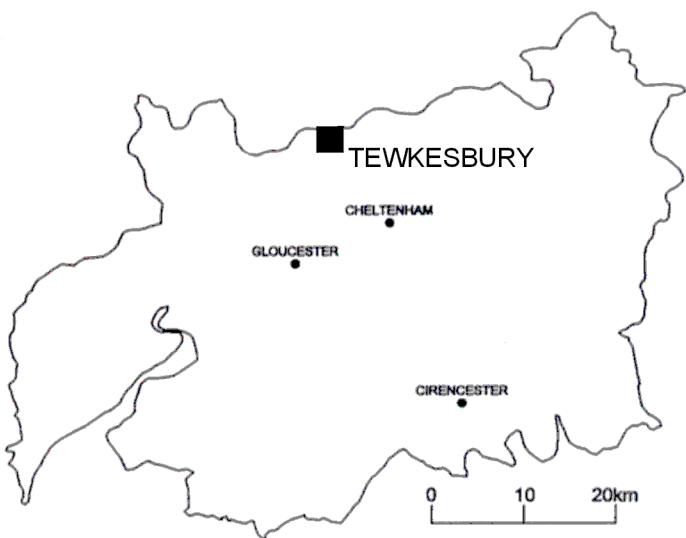
8 The Archive

The archive consists of:

- 1 This report
- 2 Sheet of field drawings
- 1 Context index
- 34 Context sheets
- 2 Photographic index
- 1 Sheet of black and white negatives
- 1 Sheet of colour transparencies

The site code is OCT03A

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology with the intention to transfer to Tewkesbury Borough Museum.



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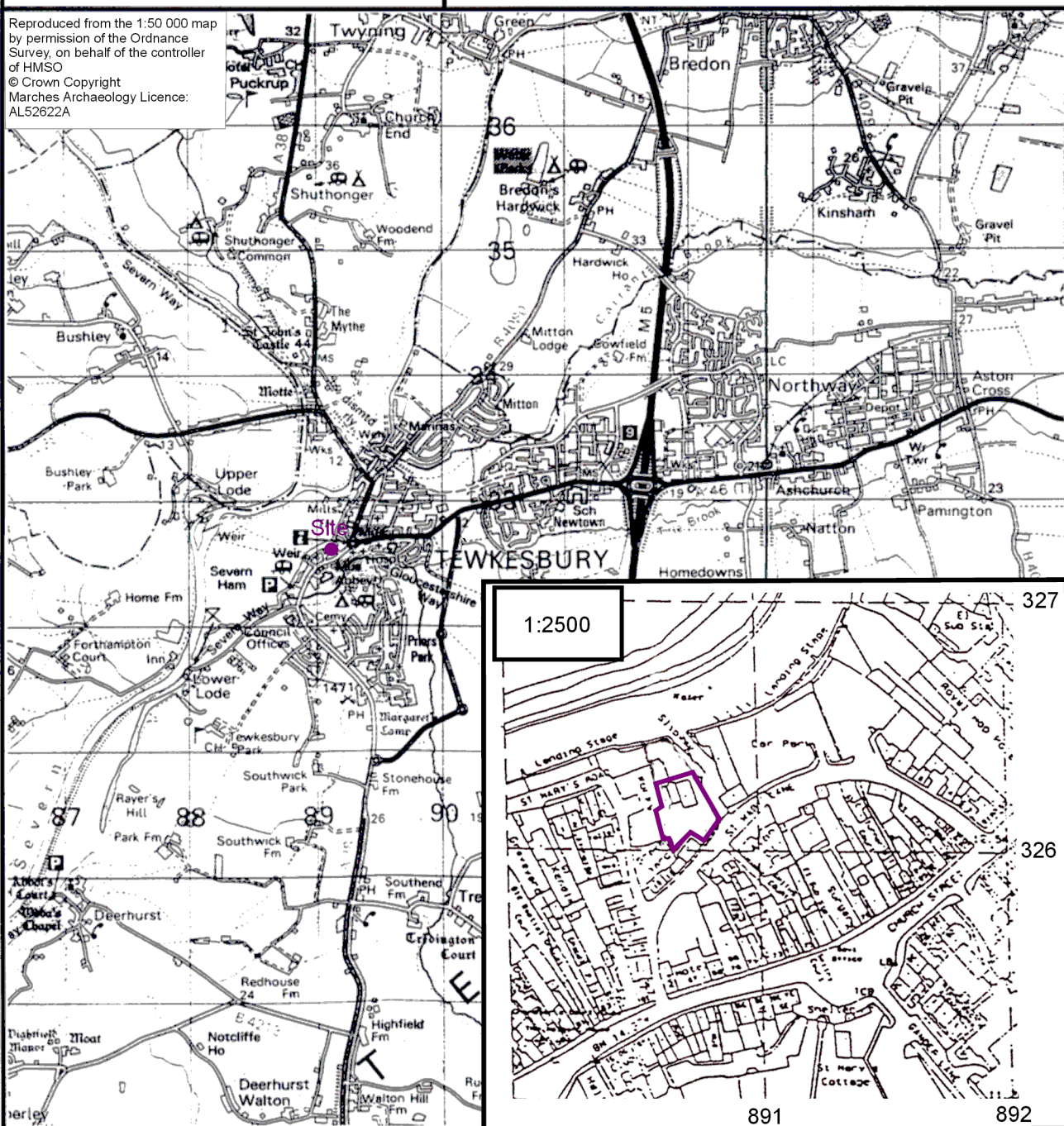


Fig. 1 Location of the site

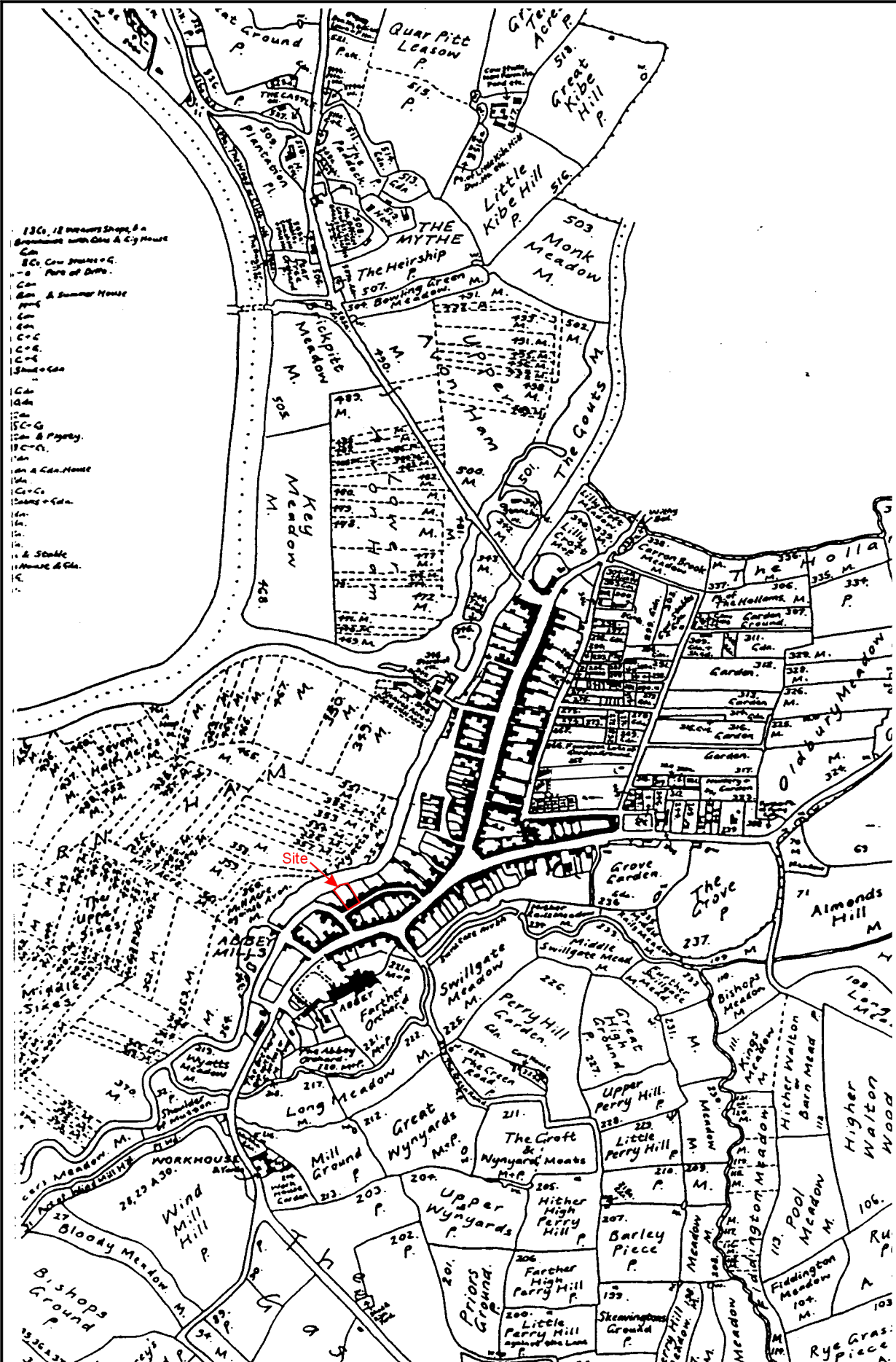


Fig. 3 Tithe plan of 1825 (redrawn)

TEWKESBURY

Eagle Factory
(Collar)

Site

Abbey Mills U
L (Corn) Malthouse

Alms-houses (1674)

Pavilion
R M 97.5

St. Mary's Abbey Ch.

Fig. 5 Ordnance Survey plan of 1900

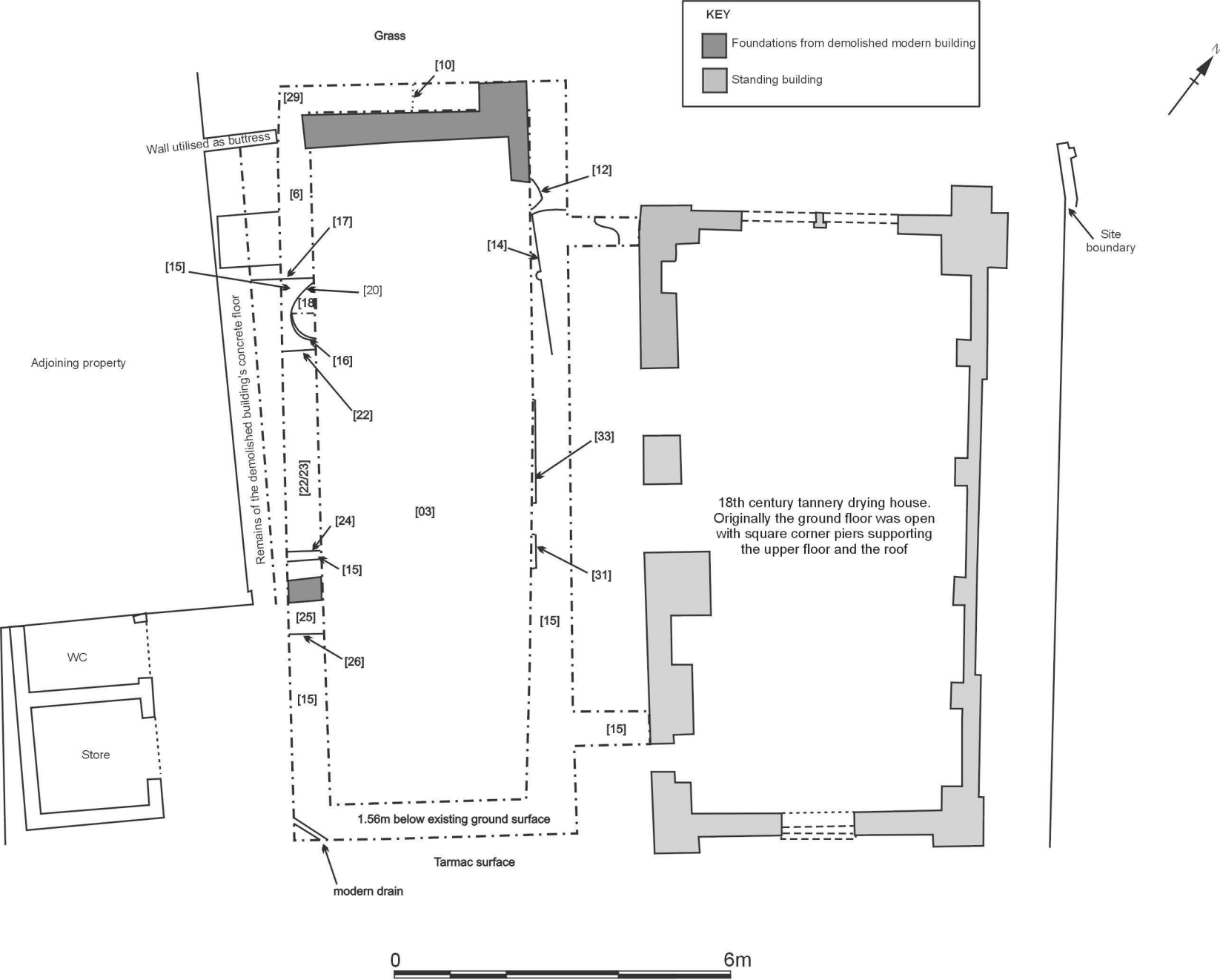


Fig. 7 Plan of the site showing excavated trenches and the 'Old Chandlery' building

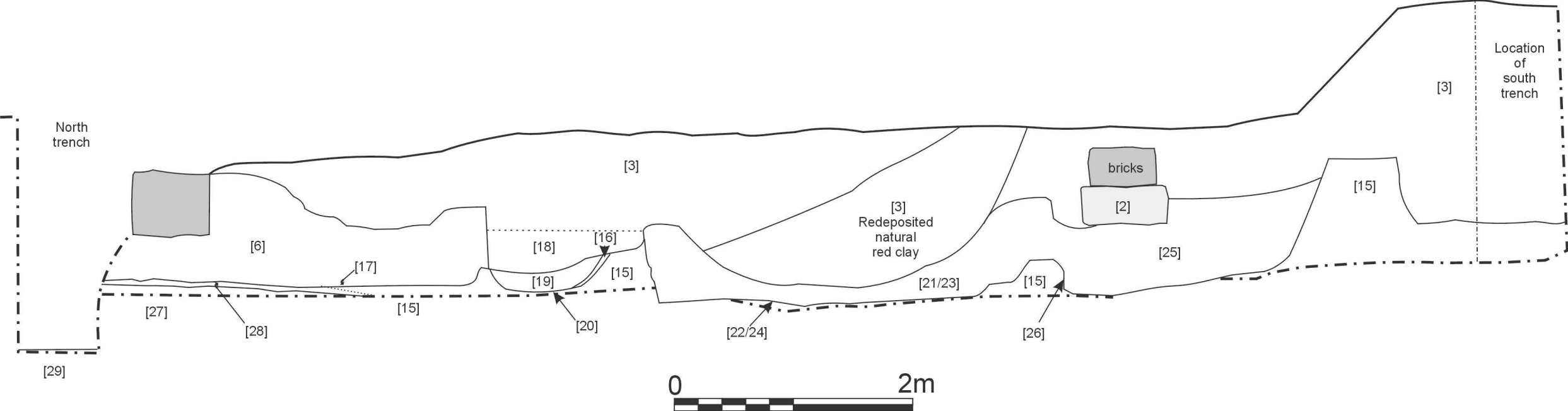


Fig. 8 The east section of the west trench

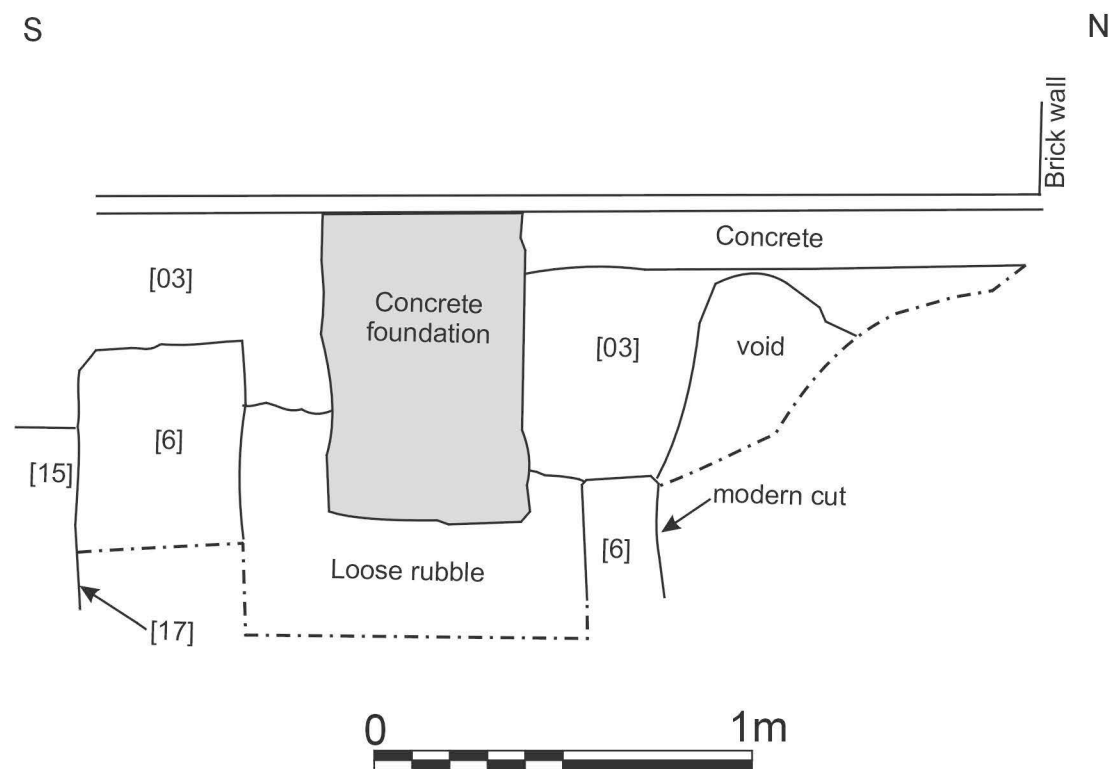


Fig. 9 A sample of the west section of the west trench