

# Land adjacent to the Old School House, Bishop's Tachbrook, Warwickshire

## Archaeological Evaluation



*understanding heritage matters*

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1326  
May 2013



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

**Project:** Land adjacent to the Old School House  
Bishop's Tachbrook

**Commissioned by:** Hannah Boden

**Project Report No.** 1326

**Site Code:** BS12

**NGR:** SP 3145 6138

**Planning Reference:** W/13/0095

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## Summary

**An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land adjacent to the Old School House in Bishop's Tachbrook, opposite the church of St Chad. Although the site lies on the probable medieval street frontage, no evidence for any earlier building, or other significant archaeological remains, was recorded on the site.**

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Warwick District Council for the erection of a new property on land adjacent to the Old School House, Church Hill, Bishop's Tachbrook (Planning Ref. No. W/13/0095). The proposed development lies within an area of significant archaeological potential, within the probable extent of the medieval settlement of Bishops Tachbrook (Warwickshire Historic Environmental Record No. MWA 9502). Because of the development's potential to disturb archaeological deposits, including structural remains, associated with the medieval and later occupation of the area, it was requested that an archaeological evaluation be carried out ahead of any building work. This may be the first phase of archaeological work on the site, should archaeological remains exist here.

1.2 A Brief for an archaeological evaluation was prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist which required the excavation of two evaluation trenches measuring 10m x 1.6m each. A Written Scheme of Investigation was agreed with the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the planning Authority and was commissioned from Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire and carried out in May 2013. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code BS12.

## 2 Location

2.1 The development site is located in the north-east part of the village of Bishop's Tachbrook, at National Grid Reference SP 3145 6138.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Mercia Mudstone (British Geological Survey 1984). The site is currently part of a field to the west of the Old School House.

## 3 Methodology

3.1 The main aim of the evaluation was to determine if there were any significant archaeological remains in the area to be developed; to form an understanding of their value and their potential to shed light this area of Bishop's Tachbrook.

3.2 Secondary aims included placing the results in their wider local and regional contexts as appropriate.

3.3 The objectives were to locate, record and analyse archaeological materials and deposits and to disseminate the results in an appropriate format.

3.4 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications prior to any work being carried out.

## 4 Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The site of the proposed development is located in the centre of the likely extent of the medieval settlement of Bishop's Tachbrook and lies on the eastern side of Church Hill, north-east of the church (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 9502). There have been recorded finds of Romano-British pottery (MWA 1252) on the eastern side of the village, but there is currently no clear evidence to indicate prehistoric or Roman settlement close to the village.

4.2 At the time of Domesday a priest is mentioned in the manor of Tachbrook, suggesting that a church existed by the 11th century. The manor was held by the Bishops of Chester and later Coventry and Lichfield, hence the name of the village as Bishop's Tachbrook (VCH 1949). The earliest part of the church of St Chad's date to the mid-12th century (MWA 711). The north doorway is Norman and has one order of columns and pellets in the hood mould (Pevsner and Wedgwood 1966, 214). There are blocked Norman windows on the north side of the chancel. The church was altered and enlarged in the 14th and 15th centuries and rebuilt in 1855.

4.3 To the south-east of Bishop's Tachbrook lies the remains of an area of deserted post-medieval village, known from documentary sources (MWA 5216); trackways and enclosures are visible on aerial photographs in this area.

4.4 The earliest map of the area is an estate map of Bishop's Tachbrook parish dating to c.1800 (WRO CR 1886/M33). This, along with an estate map of the Earl of Warwick's estate of 1806 (WRO CR1886/M34) show the site as being undeveloped, but with a property on the street frontage just to the south and a building roughly in the location of the present Old School House (Figs 2 and 3). The site is also shown, unoccupied on maps of 1840 and 1844 (Figs 4 and 5). The First and Second Edition Ordnance Survey maps also show the site as being unoccupied (Ordnance Survey 1887 and 1905; Figs 6 and 7), although trees are indicated within the field on the First Edition map.

4.5 There has been a school in Bishop's Tachbrook since before 1771, but the school building to the east was constructed in 1863, replacing an earlier building. The Old School House is shown as a school on the early Ordnance Survey mapping, from 1887 to 1925 but schooling ceased there in 1962 and the Ordnance Survey mapping of 1972 shows it as the parish hall. The school building was sold in 2008.

4.6 Archaeological work within the village includes an evaluation within an area close to St Chad's church where medieval pottery was recovered, along with evidence that the field had previously been part of a larger graveyard (EWA 7560; Coutts and Jones 2005). Recent work at 17 School Hill did not reveal any evidence of medieval settlement, but a stretch of brick wall was recorded, corresponding to a wall on the First Edition mapping (Jones 2012).

4.7 The Historic Environment Record also lists a garden, designed in 1935, to the south-

east (MWA 12943).

## 5 Evaluation

5.1 Two 10m long trenches were excavated on the site in positions shown on Fig. 8. The trenches were excavated using a mini-excavator with a 0.70m wide toothless bucket.

5.2 Trench 1 ran approximately north-east to south-west in the northern part of the site. It was excavated down to the geological natural olive green clay (106), at a depth of between 0.90m and 1.20m, sloping down to the north. This was overlaid by 0.20 to 0.45m layer of reddish brown clay loam (101). Layer 101 was sealed by 0.43m of dark grey silty clay loam topsoil (100). At the northern end of the trench there was a large modern pit (104), cutting from ground level down onto natural clay. It was over 3.00m wide and 1.22m deep and had a moderate sloping southern side and a flattish uneven base. It was filled by a dark grey clay loam with a few small pebbles and lumps of tarmac (105). Cutting pit 104 was a smaller pit (102). This was 1.70m wide and 0.76m deep with moderately sharp sloping sides and a rounded base, it was also cut from the present ground level. It was filled by a dark grey clay loam with few small pebbles and lumps of tarmac (103). No finds were recovered during the excavation of Trench 1.

5.3 Trench 2 ran approximately east-west in the southern part of the site. It was excavated down to the geological natural olive clay (204), which was recorded at a depth of 1.10-1.20m below present ground level. The natural clay was overlaid by 0.33 to 0.45m of reddish brown clay loam (203). Overlying layer 203 was a 0.30 to 0.52m layer of dark grey silty loam (202), identified as a former topsoil layer. Overlying this was a 0.18 to 0.50m of a redeposited brown clay loam (201). Sealing layer 201 was a 0.20m layer of tarmac and tarmac make-up. No finds were recovered during the excavation of Trench 2.

## 6 Conclusions

6.1 Although the site lies on the frontage of a medieval street it seems unlikely that the area investigated has formerly been occupied by a building, or to have been used for anything other than agriculture or horticulture, before part of it was surfaced in tarmac. The site was devoid of any significant archaeological remains and no archaeological finds were recovered. The two pits found Trench 1 probably date to the latter part of the 20th century.

## Acknowledgements

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Hannah Boden for commissioning the work and the County Planning Archaeologist for approving the WSI.

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WRO CR 1886/M446 *A Plan of the Parish of Bishops Tachbrook in the County of Warwick, 1840*. Warwickshire County Record Office.

## Appendix

### List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Topsoil
101	Layer of reddish brown clay loam
102	Modern pit cut
103	Fill of pit 102
104	Cut
105	Fill of 105
106	Natural clay
200	Tarmac
201	Layer of brown clay loam
202	Old topsoil layer
203	Layer of reddish brown clay loam
204	Natural clay



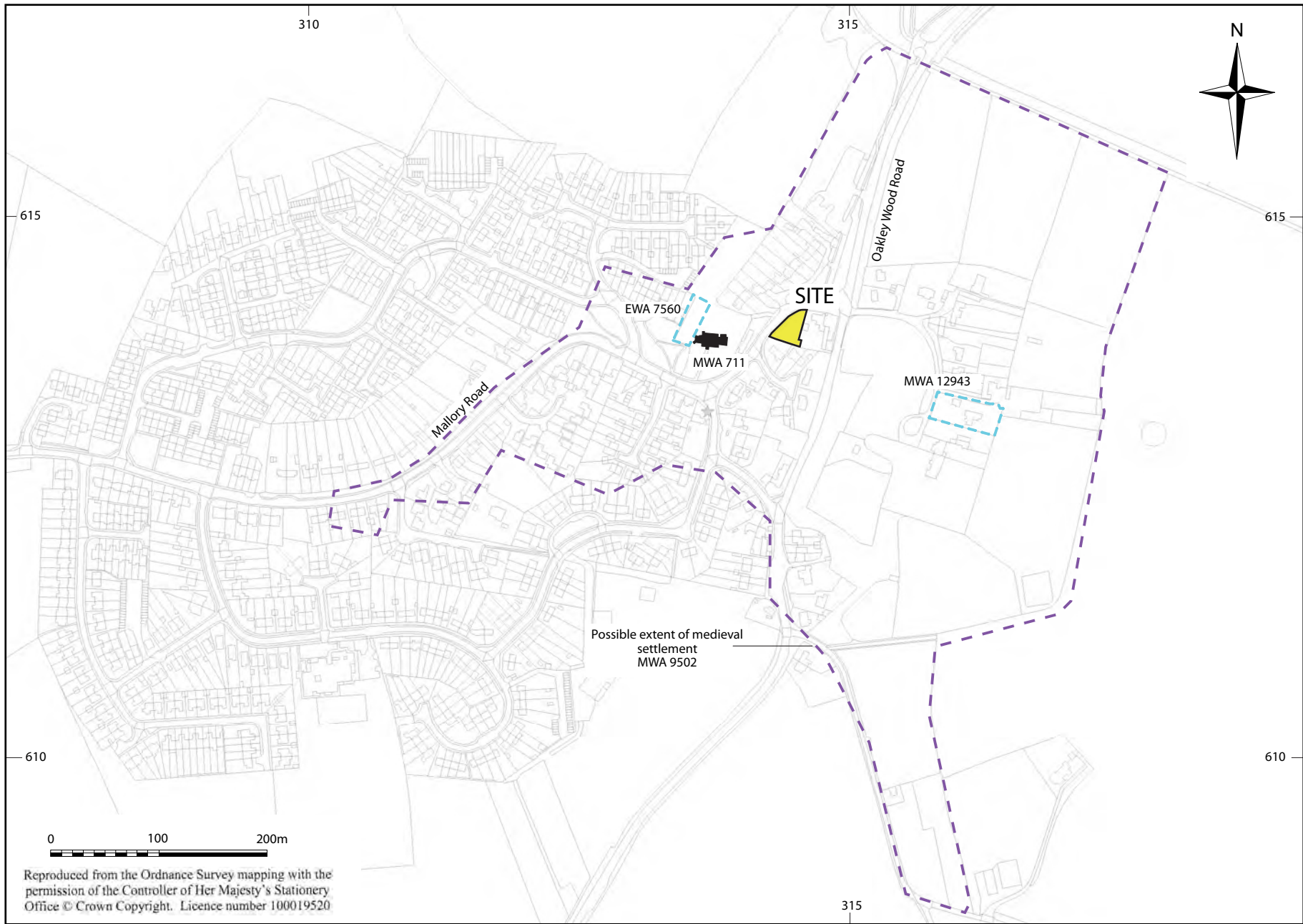


Fig 1: Site location

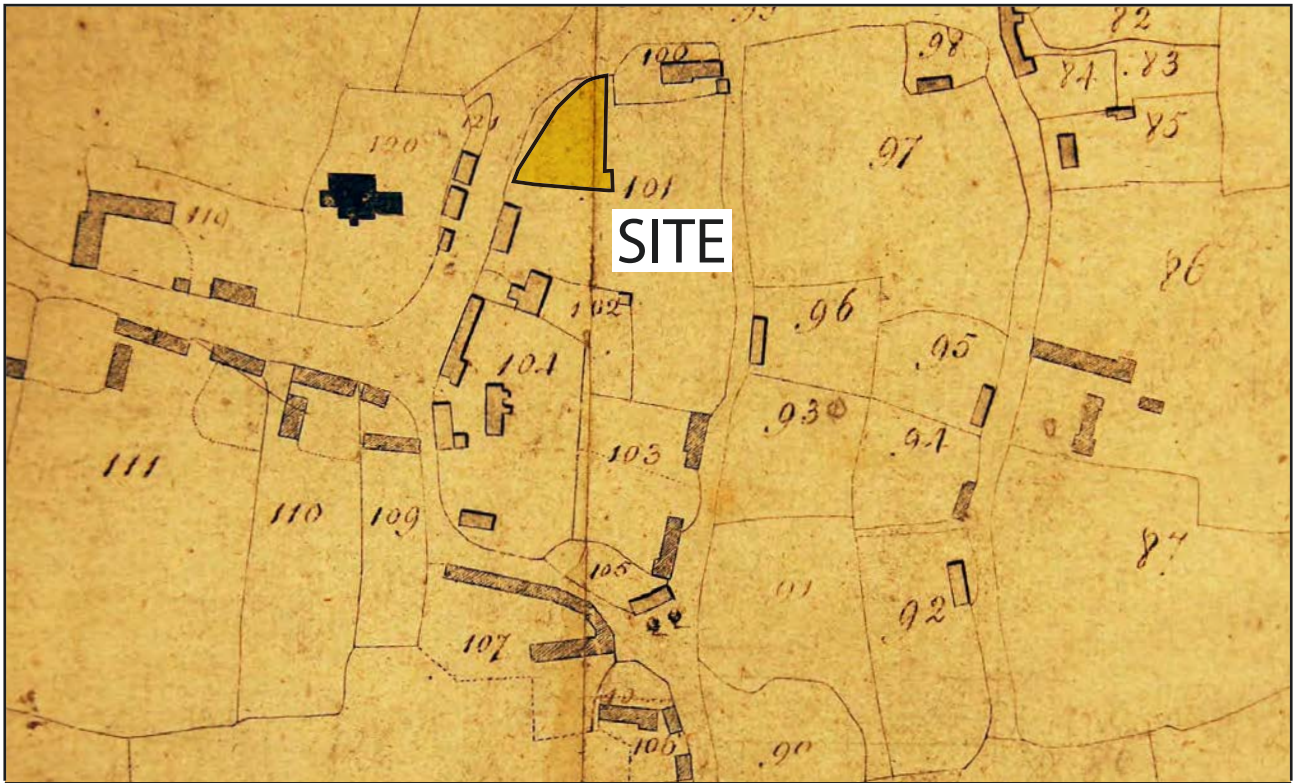


Fig 2: Detail from Bishop Tachbrook estate map of c.1800 (WRO CR 1886/M33)



Fig 3: Detail from Earl of Warwick Estate map of 1806 (WRO CR 1886/M34)



Fig 4: Detail from Estate map of c.1840 (WRO CR 1886 (M446))

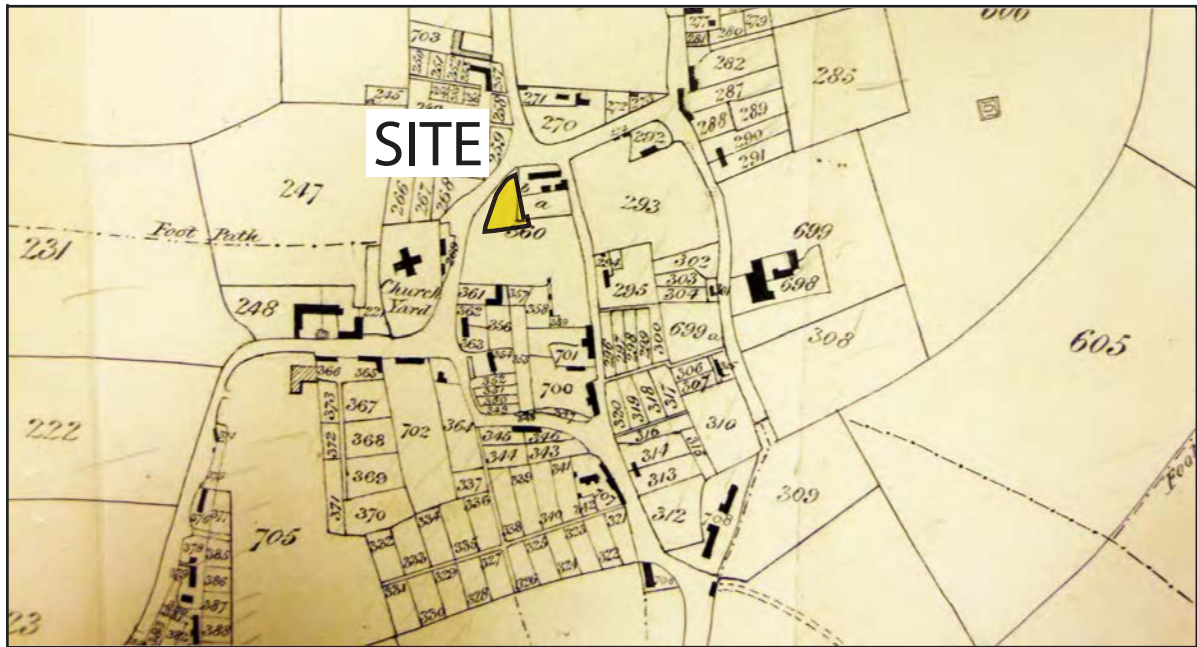


Fig 5: Detail from Bishops Tachbrook tithe map of 1844 (WRO CR 569/236)

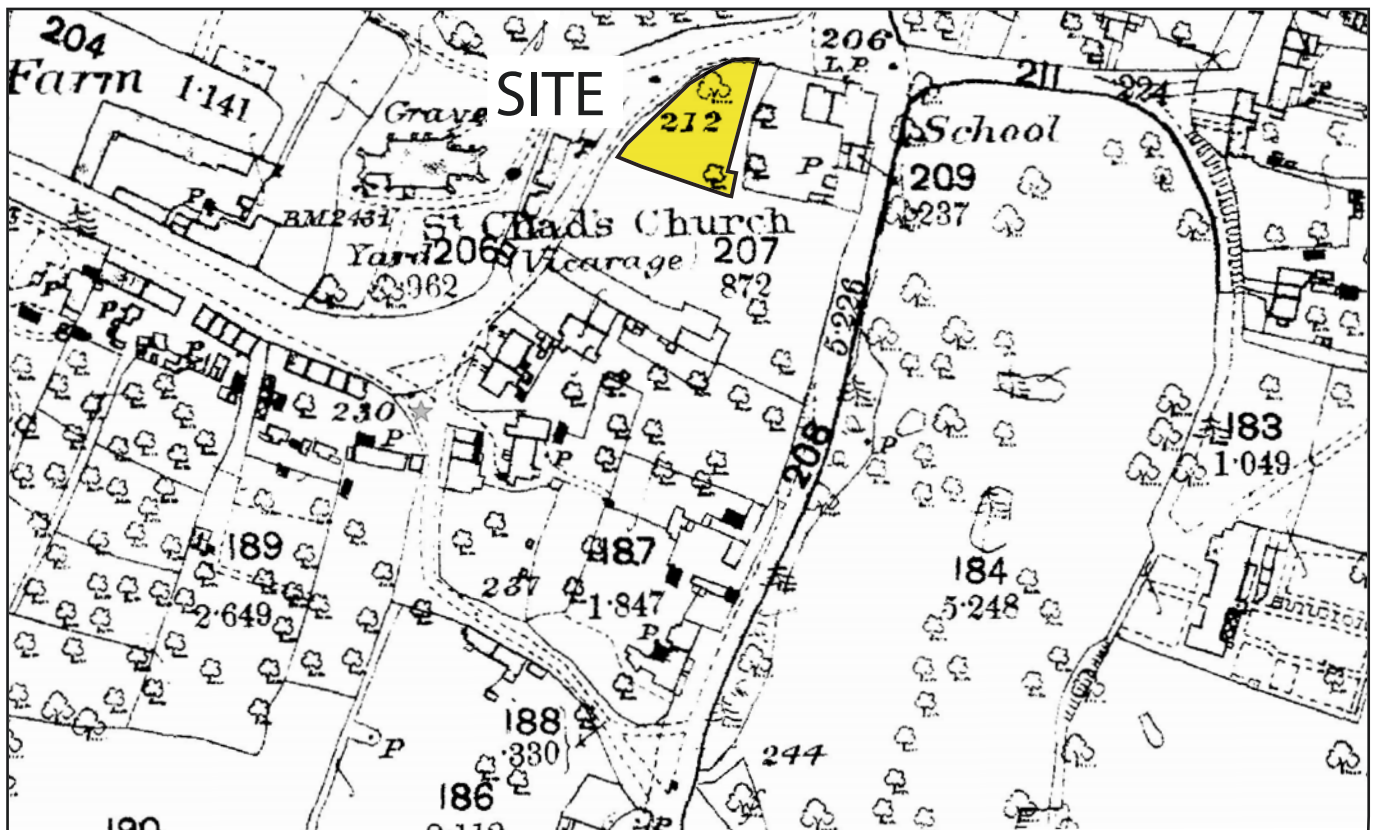


Fig 6: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

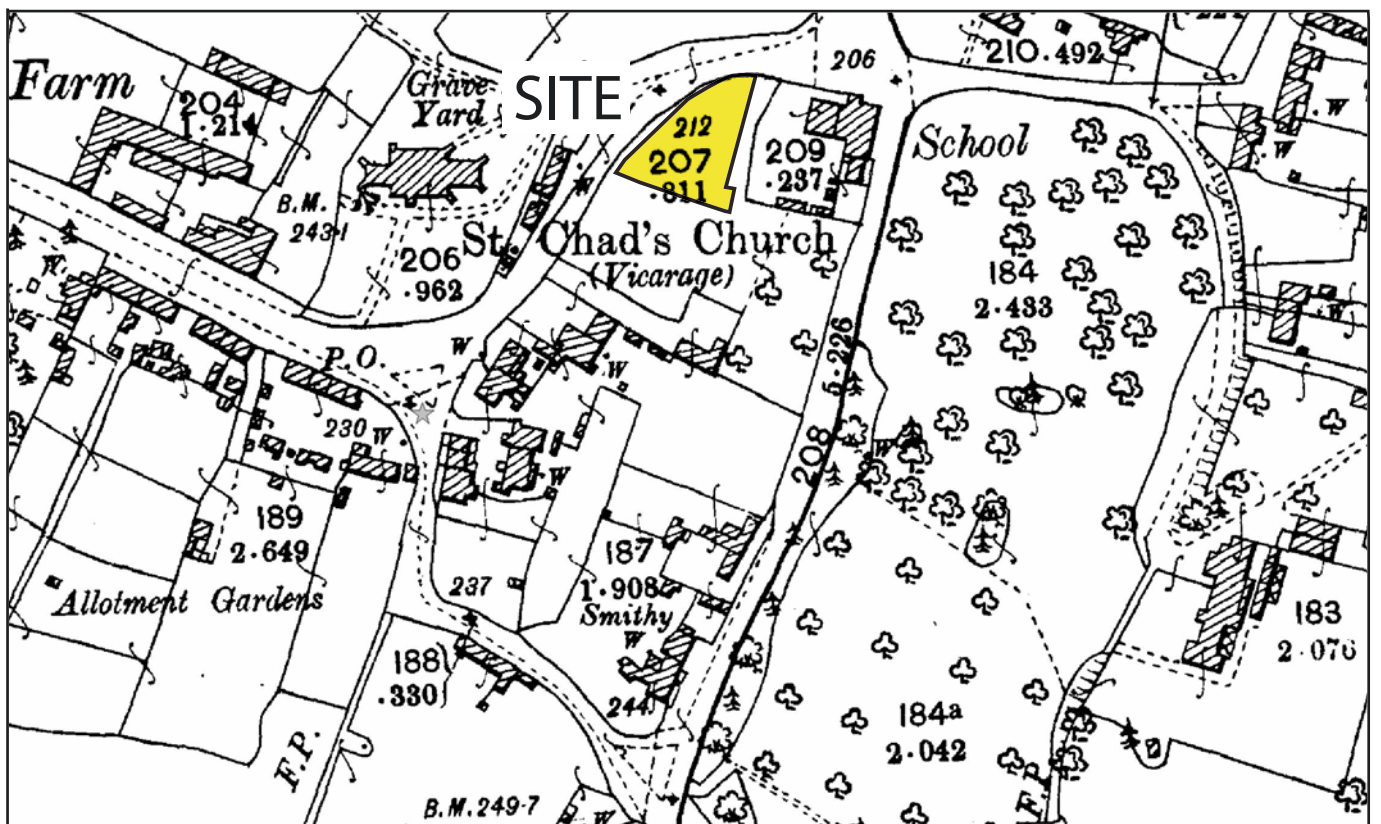


Fig 7: Detail from Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1905

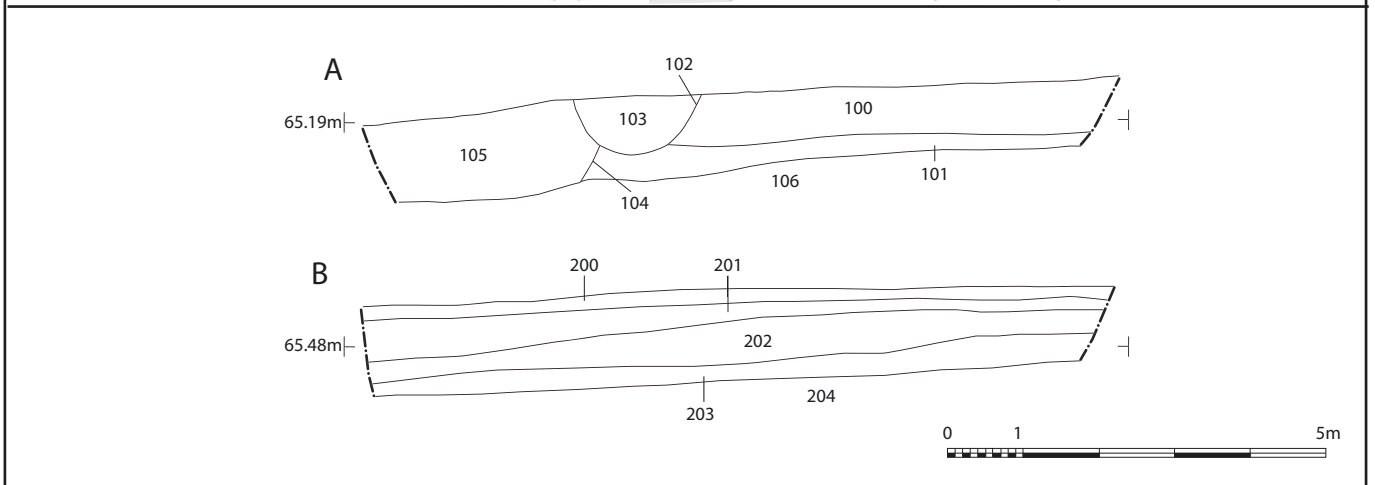


Fig 8: Trench locations and sections



Fig 9: Trench 1



Fig 10: Trench 2