

Fig. 2. Three-dimensional representation of earthwork survey results

Hellifield Peel And Homestead
Hellifield
North Yorkshire

5. Archaeological Trial Trenching

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation within the D-shaped enclosure west of Hellifield Peel revealed structural features, identified as part of a Victorian sunken glasshouse, although all above ground levels relating to the Victorian kitchen garden have been destroyed. In addition, evidence from ceramic finds suggests Early Medieval activity may survive on the site.

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Fig. 1. Trenches 1 and 2: plans and section

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS was commissioned by Dodd Frankland Stocks Partnership on behalf of their client Mr N. Hargreave to carry out an archaeological evaluation in response to the proposed modifications of the Homestead at Hellifield Peel. The work, involving two trial trenches, was carried out between 13th and 19th March 2003.
- 1.2 The area of archaeological investigation is located west of Hellifield Peel and south of the Homestead range of buildings on a former lorry park. The current ground surface, which is generally flat, is a mixture of tarmac and granite chippings overgrown with grass and moss. This layer, which measures in depth between 0.2 to 0.3 metres, covers a layer of dark silty clay identified as a modern deposit.

2. Aims and Methods

- 2.1 The aims of the evaluation were to establish the presence/absence, condition, character and, if possible, date and importance of any archaeological remains within the proposed area of development.
- 2.2 Two trenches were positioned in order to investigate the nature of any buried archaeological remains (see Part 4, Fig 1). The potential remains were targeted using the OS 1909 25 inch to 1 mile (1:2500) map. The area immediately south of the Homestead was avoided because of its proximity to horses housed in the stables and the logistics of reinstating the concrete stable access area. The area adjacent to the garden wall was also discounted to avoid a modern drain running north-south approximately 8 m east of the wall. Trench 1 was positioned to pick up the southern end of a large glasshouse shown on the 1909 map with the intention of extending the trench to the west to establish the survival of garden paths and borders. The results of Trench 1 were to decide the location of Trench 2.
- 2.3 Trench 1 measured 13 m by 2 m and Trench 2 was a small sondage measuring 2m by 2m. In both trenches the topsoil/tarmac and modern deposit were stripped under direct archaeological supervision using a JCB mechanical excavator with toothless bucket. The trench limits were surveyed using a 600 series Geotronics Geodimeter total station theodilite and fixed in relation to nearby permanent structures and to the Ordnance Survey national grid.
- 2.4 All archaeological and potentially archaeological features were investigated. An appropriate written, drawn and photographic record was made of all of the features and trenches, in accordance with the Archaeological Services WYAS standard method (ASWYAS 2001).
- 2.5 An environmental sampling programme was included in the event that environmental assessment may be required at some future date. Soil samples of up to 10 litres were taken from what is thought to be an Early Medieval deposit and are stored in environmentally stable conditions in the Archaeological Services' laboratory.

3. Results

3.1 Summary

3.1.1 The trial trenching revealed the structural remains of a Victorian glasshouse, with related drains, all cutting a contemporary redeposited brown silty clay layer. In addition, evidence of Early Medieval activity was found in the area, which may be related to occupation of the Peel.

3.1.2 The upper surface was a layer of tarmac and granite chippings, on average 0.25 m in depth, consisting of very compact small angular gravely material. The layer beneath this was a dark brown clay-silt material with an average depth of 0.20 m and with debris from the 1970s and later as inclusion; interpreted as a possible levelling deposit.

3.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 1)

3.2.1 Trench 1 was orientated east to west, located c.15 m south of the stables, 20 m east of the boundary wall and c.40 m west of the Peel. The removal of the surface layer of tarmac and chippings revealed a modern deposit (context 114) and the southern elevation of a Victorian glasshouse (context 107) with related drainage system.

3.2.2 The glasshouse was a rectangular brick structure, exposed for 2.20 m of its length, and measuring 1.0 m in height. The structure had an internal width 2.70 m and an external width of 3.30 m. The construction cut for the foundation of the greenhouse (context 105) was cutting a redeposited clay-silt layer 104. The walls of the glasshouse consisted of a double course of bricks, each brick measuring 0.23 m by 0.11 m by 0.08 m. At a depth of 1.0 m a layer of grey mortar formed a concrete floor (context 112) on top of which drains running east-west and north-south were laid.

3.2.3 The east-west drain (context 115) seems to have carried water through the glasshouse via the external drains (contexts 108 and 123) and the internal north-south drain (context 119). The drains are formed by two courses of bricks laid 0.11 m apart and each brick measuring 0.08 m in height and width, being covered by slate, which measured c.0.29 m by 0.60 m by 0.02 m. A stone and gravel deposit (context 111) lay on top of the concrete floor.

3.2.4 At the base of the glasshouse walls the brickwork stepped out to form the wider foundations. Internally, traces of cement suggest the upper foundation level may have held a cast-iron grid as a walkway raised approximately 0.30 m above the concrete floor. The disuse of the glasshouse is characterised by the accumulation of several organic deposits (contexts 101, 102, 103 and 110) that contain modern material including items bearing pre-decimalisation (1971) prices.

3.2.5 The trench was extended to the west in order to reveal any garden features associated with the glasshouse. In the south-western corner of the trench a modern (post-war) soil pipe was encountered. Context 124 was a shallow deposit of stones and clay and may be the foundation of a truncated garden path. Deposit 104 was a clean clay deposit into which the glasshouse foundation was cut that had every appearance of being natural, except that it lay on top of 118. To the western end of Trench 1 the equivalent deposit, 116,

was removed to reveal further archaeological deposits (context 117) comprising a clean grey clay silt material with iron pan staining, possibly formed due to water table activity. Beneath 117 there was an organic silt layer (context 133) measuring approximately 0.07 m in depth and containing two sherds of pottery identified as 12th to 14th-century Northern Gritty Ware. Both 117 and 133 seemed to have been within a cobbled concave depression (context 135). The deposit may have been natural river gravels or glacial material but this could not be explored further without exceeding the maximum safe trench depth.

3.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 1)

- 3.3.1 Because there was no evidence of garden paths or borders within Trench 1 a small 2 m by 2 m sondage was located c.5m further south in an area that should have picked up the main east-west garden path as shown on earlier OS maps. The removal of the tarmac layer revealed the presence of a dark brown silty clay layer (context 136) that contained modern material and appeared to have been heavily disturbed by tree roots. This deposit has been equated to the deposit 104 in Trench 1.
- 3.3.2 Two linear features (context 128 and 130) running in a north south direction were observed below context 136. Both features contained relatively modern pottery and are cut into a deposit (contexts 125 and 126) that is similar to context 114 in Trench 1. The two linear features are thought to belong to garden features possibly in phase with the glasshouse.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The evaluation trenching located the southern aspect of a large Victorian sunken glasshouse, as depicted on the 1909 OS 1:2500 map. The extant walls do not appear to have been truncated but mark the interface of archaeological and modern levelling deposits and would probably have supported a cast-iron glasshouse framework. Above ground features and Victorian garden deposits contemporary with the glasshouse were not found and seem to have been purposefully removed from the site. The rich organic garden soil may have been removed and sold before the construction of the lorry park.
- 4.2 Evidence of Early Medieval activity on the site survived in a silty deposit below a depth of clean clay, which may have been water deposited. Little can be said about this deposit without further trenching but it is possible that Trench 1 was located above the original Peel moat.

References

Archaeological Services WYAS, 2001, *Archaeological Recording Manual*

Acknowledgements

Report:

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Figures:

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Fieldwork:

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Appendix I**Inventory of Primary Archive**

Record	Detail	Quantity
PRE-EXCAVATION	Risk assessment	1 report
	Specification	None
	Written scheme	1 report
WRITTEN RECORD	Context register	1 x A4
	Context sheets	35 x A4
	Trench sheet	2 x A4
DRAWN RECORD	Drawing register	1 x A4
	Plans and sections	5 x A4
PHOTOGRAPHS	Photographic register	4 x A4
	Colour prints	2 x A4
	Monochrome contact prints/negatives	2 x A4
SAMPLES	Environmental sample register	1x A4
	Environmental sample forms	
	Environmental laboratory record sheets	

Appendix II

Inventory of Contexts

Context	Trench	Description
100	1	Modern deposit
101	1	Peaty layer
102	1	Dark Brown deposit
103	1	Brown deposit
104	1	Clay deposit
105	1	Construction cut for the greenhouse
106	1	Backfill of 105
107	1	glasshouse brick walls
108	1	Cut of drain
109	1	Fill of 108
110	1	Grey Brown deposit
111	1	Rubble deposit
112	1	Concrete floor of greenhouse
113	1	Drain structure
114	1	Dark Brown deposit
115	1	Fill of drain 113
116	1	Same as 104
117	1	Silty-clay deposit same as 118
118	1	Same as 117
119	1	Drain structure
120	1	Fill of post hole 121
121	1	Modern Post hole
122	1	Fill of 123
123	1	Cut of drain
124	1	Garden path foundation?
125	2	Deposit same as 104 (not shown)
126	2	Deposit same as 125 (not shown)
127	2	Fill of 128
128	2	Cut of linear ditch
129	2	Fill of 130
130	2	Cut of possible furrow?
131	2	Deposit same as 132
132	2	Deposit same as 131
133	1	Silt deposit (Early Medieval?)
134	1	Deposit same as 114
135	1	Cobble / Natural deposit?
136	2	Deposit same as 114

Trench 1

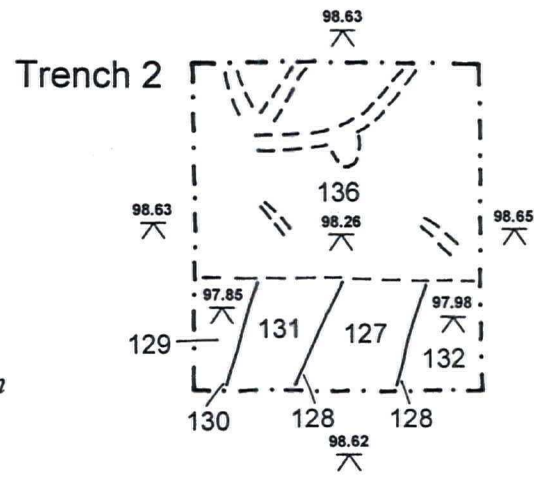
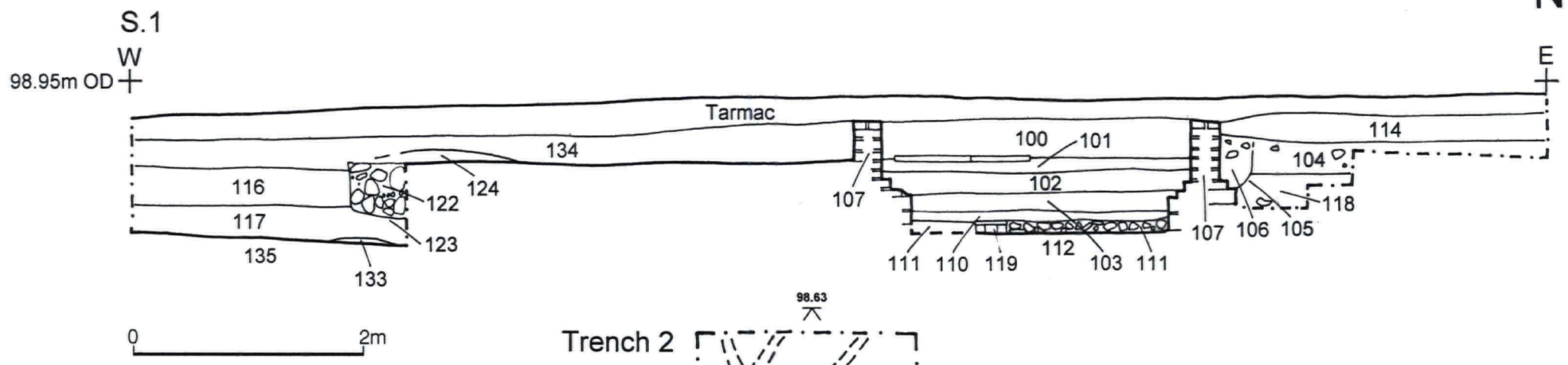
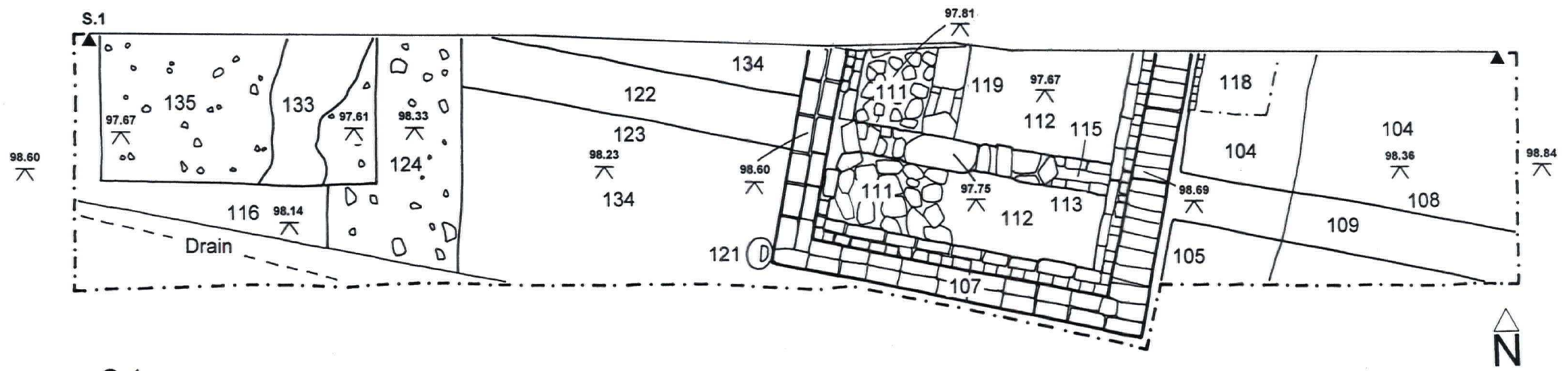


Fig. 1. Trench 1 plan and section, Trench 2 plan

6. Conclusions

- 6.1. The documentary study revealed significant information relating to the occupiers of the Peel over a period of 800 years but limited detailed information about the development and modification of the Peel and Homestead. A lack of early cartographic evidence or documents describing the parkland has resulted in an inadequate understanding of the park prior to improvements of the late 18th century / early 19th century. Even at its high point, the parkland was never more than modest.
- 6.2. The Game Larder was described and recorded and the construction suggests a late 18th or early 19th-century date and is therefore contemporary with improvements to the Peel and park. A carved Latin inscription incorporated into the east face of the Keeper's Cottage is ecclesiastical in origin and probably dates from the 15th century, possibly originating from nearby Sawley Abbey.
- 6.3. Results of the earthwork survey have mapped those features visible within the south-west of the enclosure as well as identifying further sunken elements that may relate to the Victorian and/or Edwardian ornamental garden. Complete recording and interpretation of the layout and workings of this area of the site would require intrusive excavation, which should be considered at any point in the future if this area is to be developed or disturbed.
- 6.4. The archaeological evaluation trenches revealed the partial remains of a sunken glasshouse dating to the Victorian period and first shown on the 1909 Ordnance Survey map. All evidence of contemporary or later garden levels has been removed and the recent foundation or levelling layers of the lorry park overlies clean clay deposits, which in turn cover Early Medieval deposits that may be related to a moat. Foundation or service trenches excavated as part of the Homestead development may intrude on the northern end of the sunken glasshouse and the construction of a new drain to the existing culvert, depending on depth, may establish the extent of the clay (moat) deposit.

Bibliography

- Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, Sheet 1. Soils of Northern England, 1:250 000
- Stratton, H., 1998, *Hellifield Peel Tower and Homestead*. Building Conservation Assessment

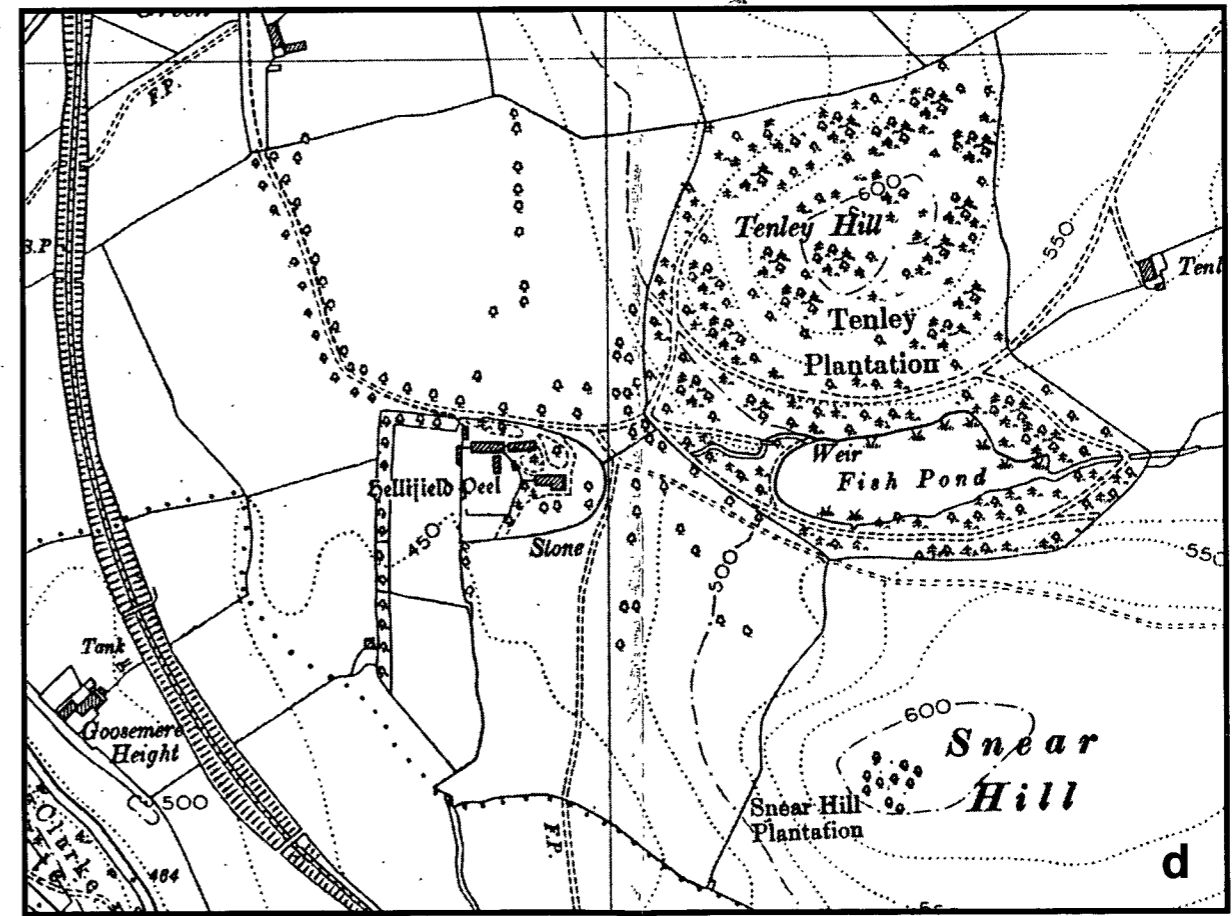
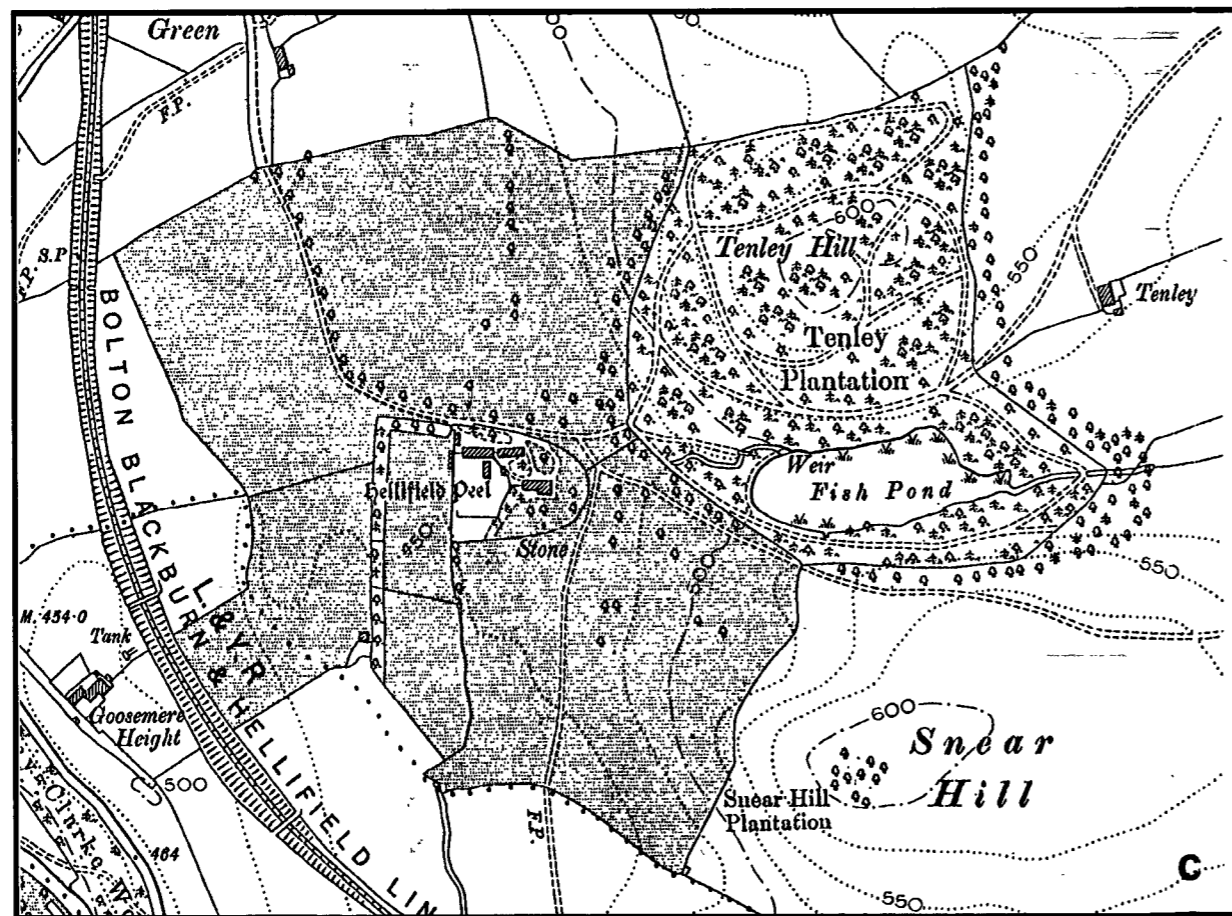
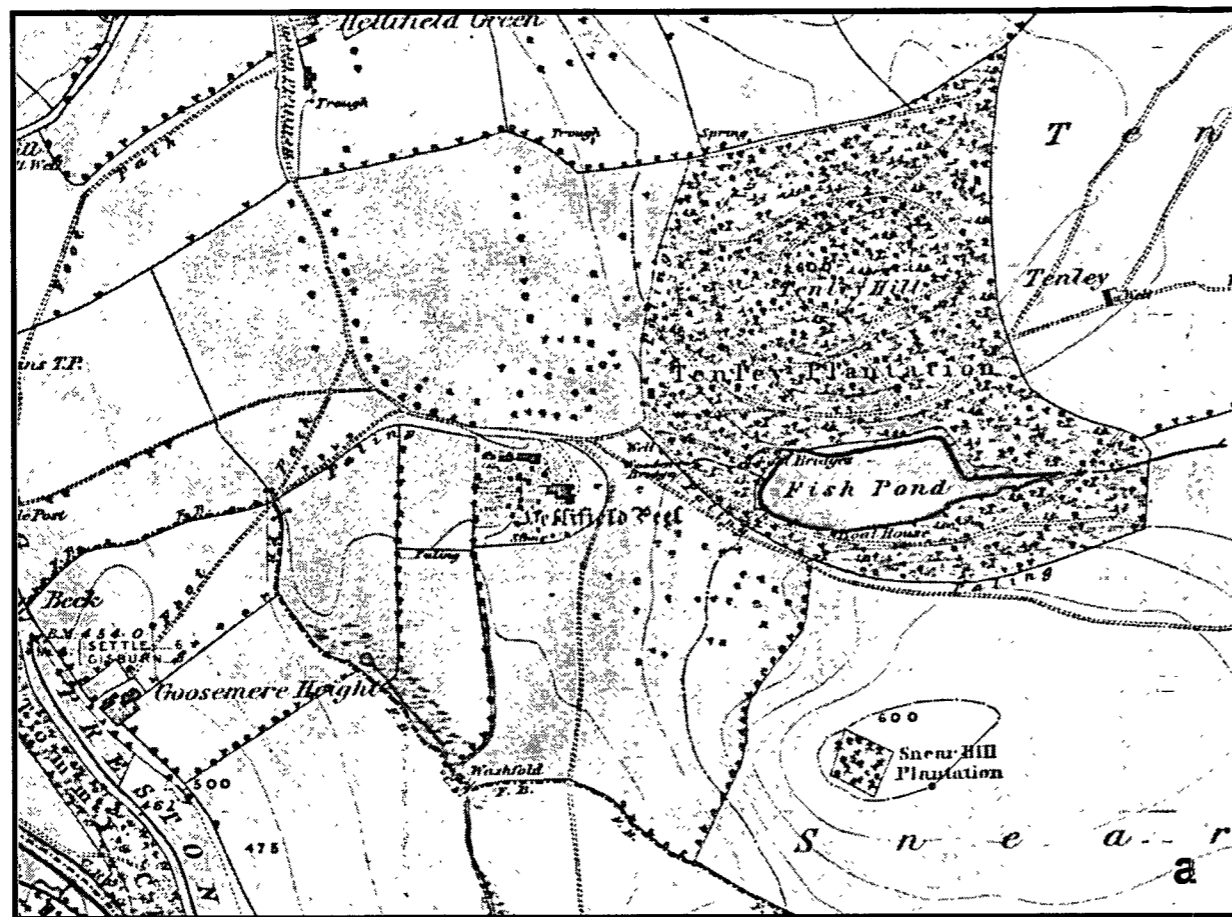
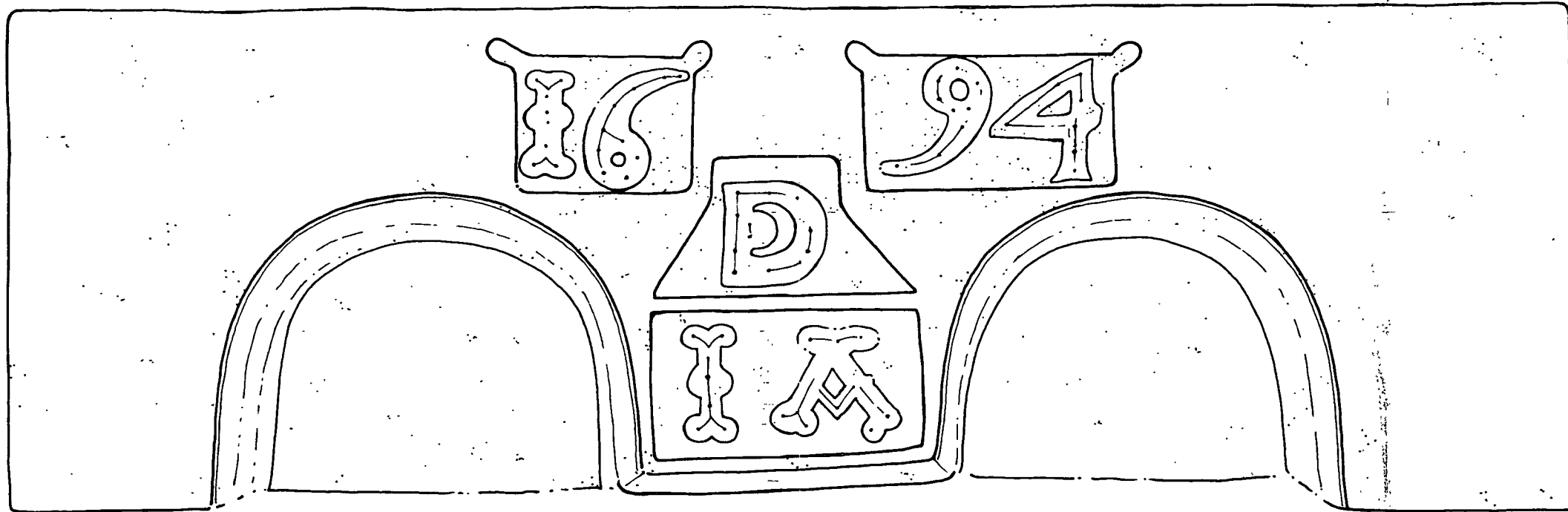
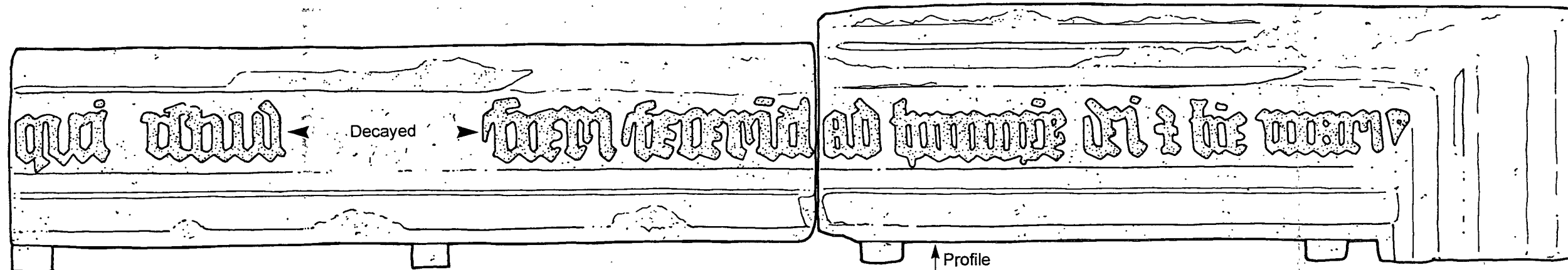


Fig. 8. Hellifield Peel and parkland map regression: a 1852, b 1894, c 1910 and d 1955 OS, Scale approx. 1:7500



1694 Door lintel

qui(-) ? fieri feceru(n)t ad honore(m) dei et b(eat)e mari(e)



Ecclesiastical inscription

they had made (i.e. had constructed) to the honour of God and the Blessed Mary

0 200mm

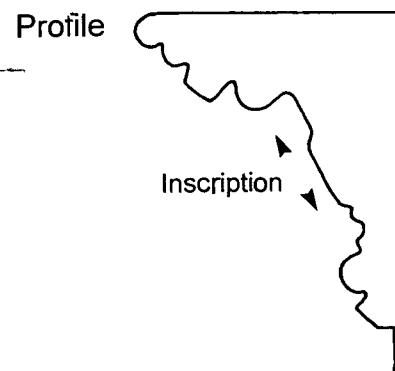


Fig. 2. Reused domestic door lintel and Ecclesiastical masonry

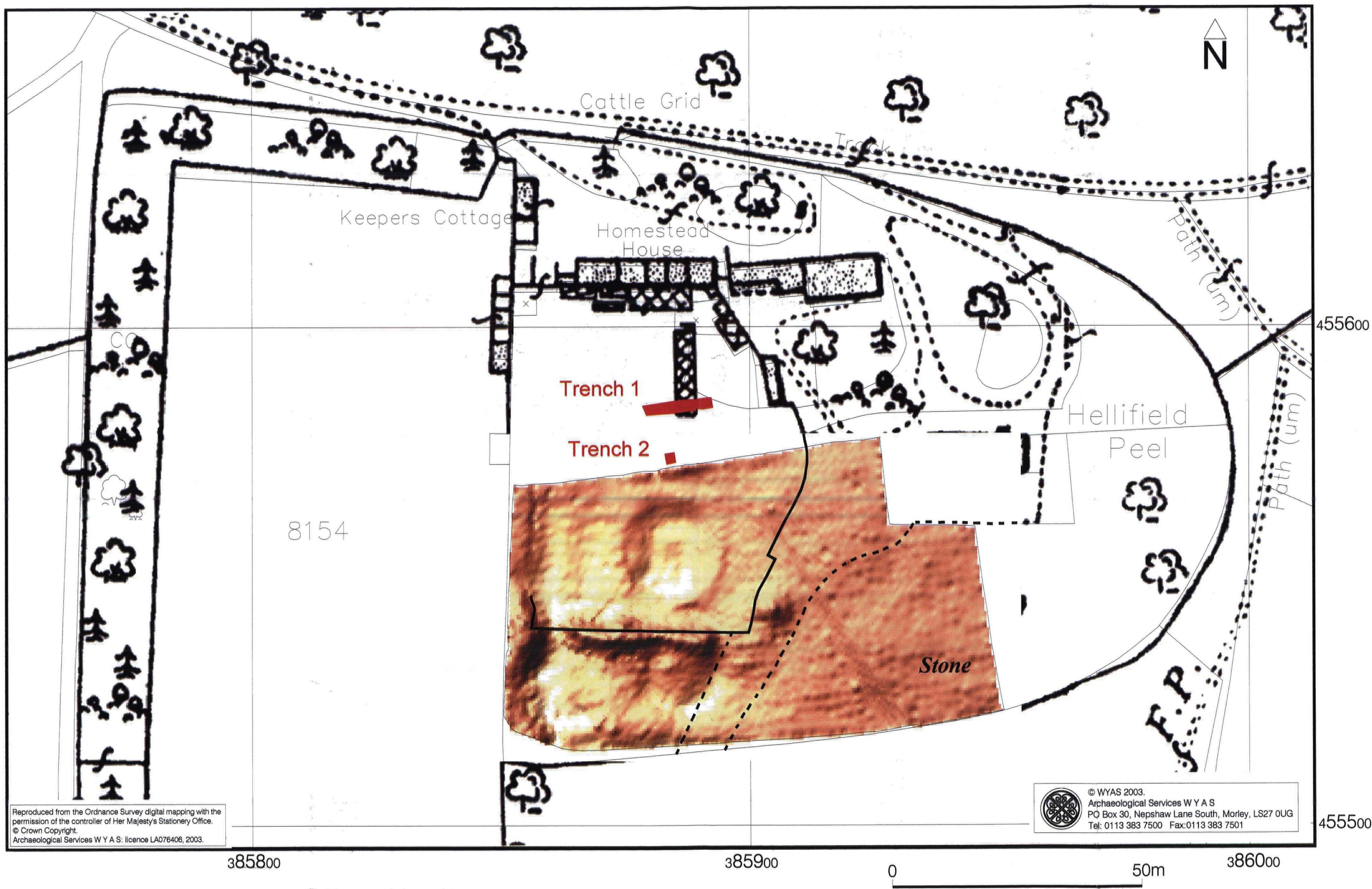


Fig. 1. Evaluation trench locations and earthwork survey results on modern OS digital map and 1909 1:2500. Scale 1:750