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Shellden

**Land Adjacent to Sheldon
(Sunset Cottage)
Main Street
Thixendale
North Yorkshire
SE 8400 6110**

Archaeological Watching Brief
03/01310/REM

N.Y.C.C. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	
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Ans'd.

**MAP
March 2004**

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Thixendale
North Yorkshire
SE 8400 6110**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Archaeological Watching Brief

Non Technical Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief undertaken on land adjacent to Sheldon in February, 2004 revealed the remnants of a stone constructed building which originally had extended in to the natural slope of land to the rear of a modern bungalow (Sheldon). No finds were recovered from the excavations of two interceptor tanks and the footings for one residential dwelling and garage.

1. Introduction

The site is located 110m to the north-west of the village church of St Mary's, on the south side of the village's main street on land used until recently as gardens associated with a modern bungalow known as 'Sheldon' (SE 8400 6110: Figs. 1 & 4). The site is bordered by the main village street to the north, the Painsthorpe, Millington, and Pocklington road to the south, and recent residential development to the east and west.

The Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd on the 6th and 12th of February, 2004.

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2. Topography and Geology

The site is situated on soils of the Andover 1 Association, shallow well drained calcareous silty soils over chalk on slopes and crests, deep calcareous and non calcareous fine silty soils in valley bottoms over a solid geology of chalk (SSEW 1983).

The development plot stands at approximately 127.4m AOD on street frontage rising to 135m at the rear of the site (Fig. 1).

3. Methods

The work comprised of the removal of topsoil and the excavation of the foundations for a single dwelling and two interceptor tanks (Fig. 3). Due to ground conditions, a mechanical excavator using both toothed and untoothed buckets was required to excavate the pits for the interceptor tanks. Some topsoil removal had been undertaken prior to the arrival of the archaeologist, this had involved the remodelling of the terraced slope to the rear of the new build (Pls. 1 - 4). All other work was carried out under archaeological supervision.

4. Results

Observation of the excavations for the cutting back of the plot frontage in to the natural slope, interceptor pits, and the footings for the house was undertaken (Fig. 4).

Remediation Works

Prior to the excavation of the interceptor pits and the footings the natural slope on the site was taken back to create a larger area for the house footings. To facilitate this work the natural slope was altered providing a section through the deposits at the northern end of the site. The exposed section showed no sign of disturbance with the topsoil sealing a relatively thick deposit of subsoil over frost-fractured chalk (Pls. 3 & 4).

Groundworks on the land to the rear of the plot, and within the land belonging to Sheldon, exposed the remnants of the corner of a stone constructed building (Structure 1).

Structure 1

The only surviving element of this feature consisted of a section of walling, measuring 1.10m by 1.06m, which formed the south-east corner of a stone building (Pls. 5 & 6). Further cutting back of the terrace revealed that it survived to a height of 0.75m, with nine courses of unbonded cut chalk blocks (Pl. 7). No foundation cut was visible suggesting that the wall had been constructed against the edge of a terrace cut into the natural slope. Deposits of chalk and dark grey silty sand butting up to the wall represent material (probably re-deposited topsoil) used as packing behind a breeze block retaining wall constructed c. 1998.

It was apparent that this structure continued into the garden of Sheldon and this was confirmed by discussions with the land owner who was able to provide a photograph of the building, when it was revealed during extension works to Sheldon approximately 6 years ago (Mr D Hepton pers com : Pl. 8). Recording of the feature, was apparently undertaken by archaeologists associated with the Wharram Percy Project, however it has not been possible to trace any report of their findings.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 2) and the 1910 Edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 3) show no development on the site, thus suggesting that Structure 1 is of pre 19th century construction.

Interceptor Pits

Two Interceptor Pits were excavated, one in the entrance to the site along the western boundary and the second in the south-western corner of the land belonging to Sheldon (Pl. 9). Both pits were approximately 2m² and over 3m deep. The soil profile exposed showed totally undisturbed deposits consisting of topsoil, subsoil, and frost-fractured chalk on to solid chalk.

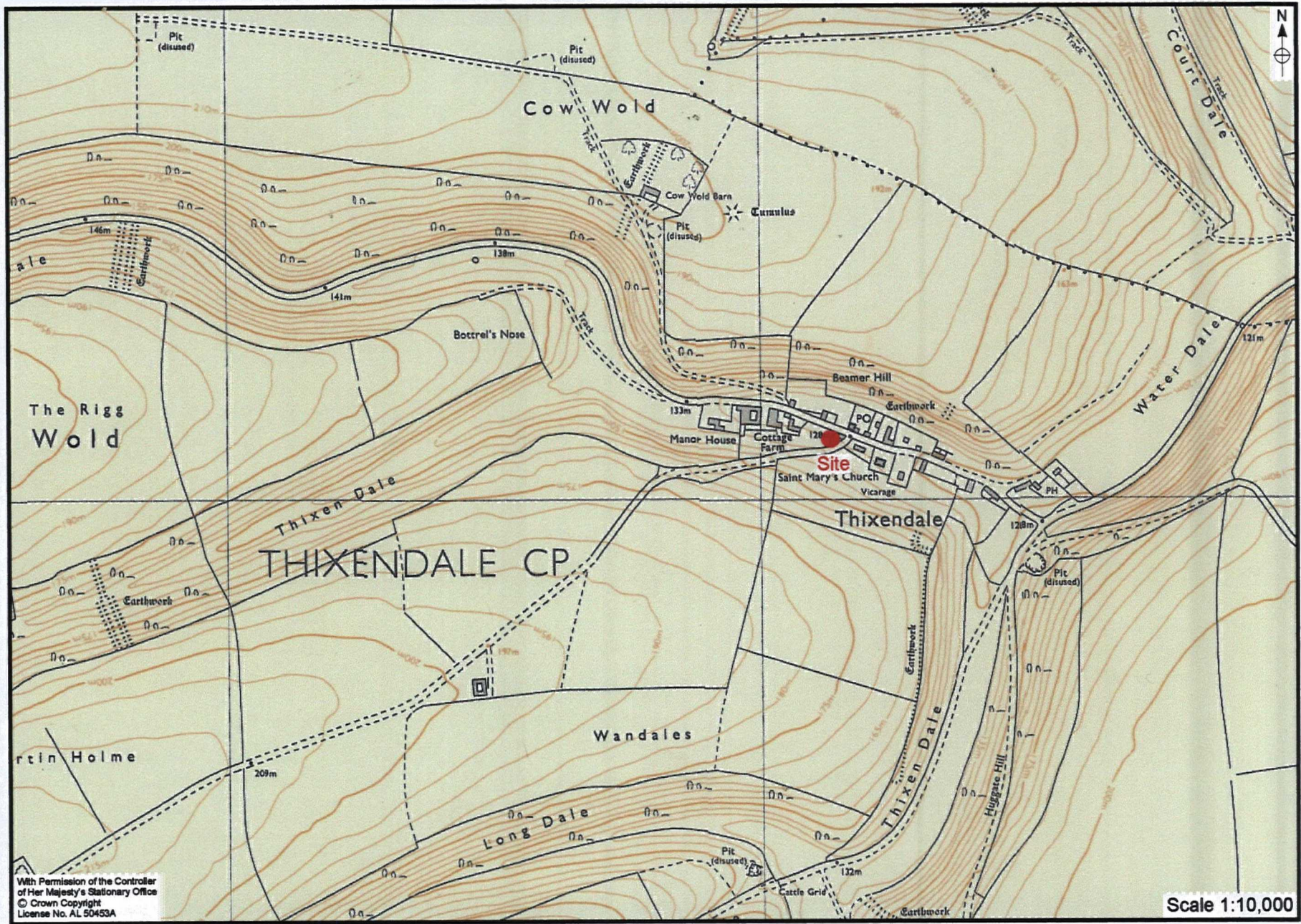
House & Garage Footings

The footings measured 0.7m in width and were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m. The footings along the south boundary of the house footing excavation were much deeper than along the northern edge; this is accounted for by the remediation works (Pls. 10 & 11).

Excavations revealed a soil profile comprising a greyish black clay silt topsoil measuring up to 0.3m in depth, overlying a subsoil of silty clay (0.25m deep) and natural deposits of weathered chalk with occasional mid brown clay lenses and flint nodules. Recent disturbance to the area of the new house build was illustrated by a service trench running on an east west alignment, 0.40m in width, from Sheldon to a septic tank in the western external footing trench. A soakaway/rubbish pit was observed at the corner of the east and south external footing extending to a depth of c. 2m.

5. Conclusions

The complete lack of features and finds from the front of the development suggests that this area of the village was not utilized for settlement in the past. The re-discovery of the stone building, which is more likely to have had an agricultural function such as a barn, than represent a residential dwelling, indicated marginal past use of the site.



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Figure 1. Site Location

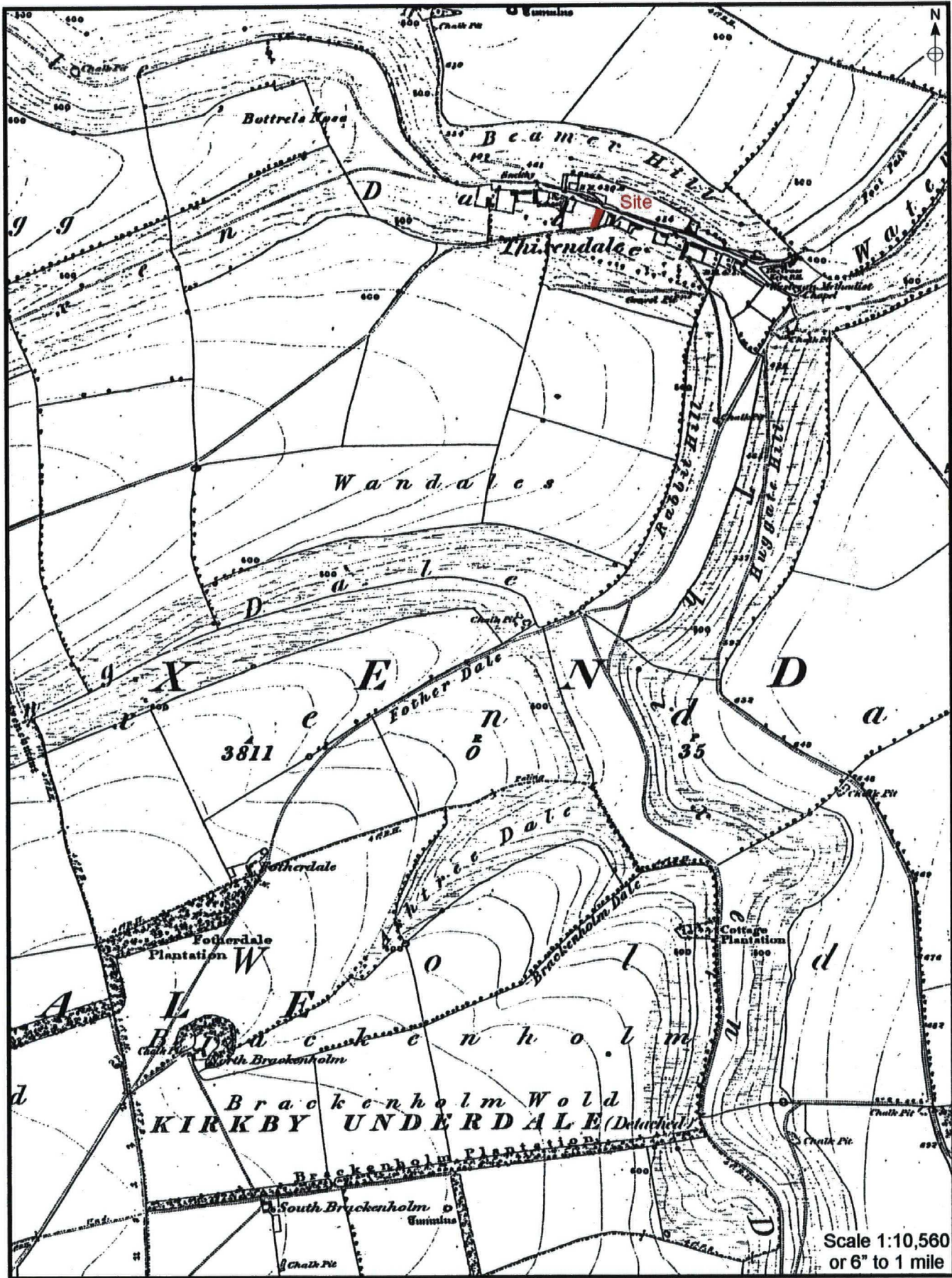


Figure 2. Extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1854

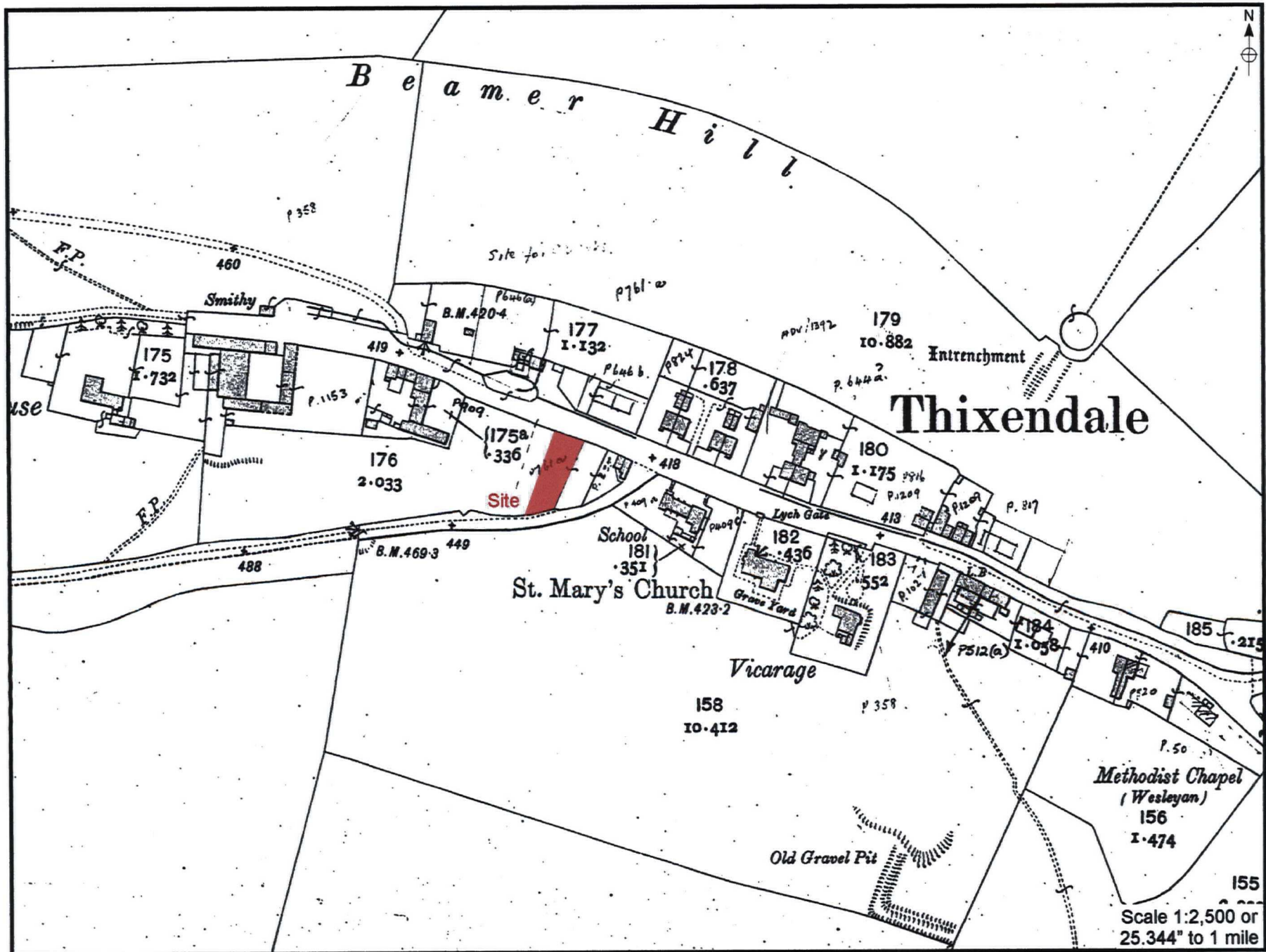


Figure 3. Extract from Ordnance Survey Map, 1910

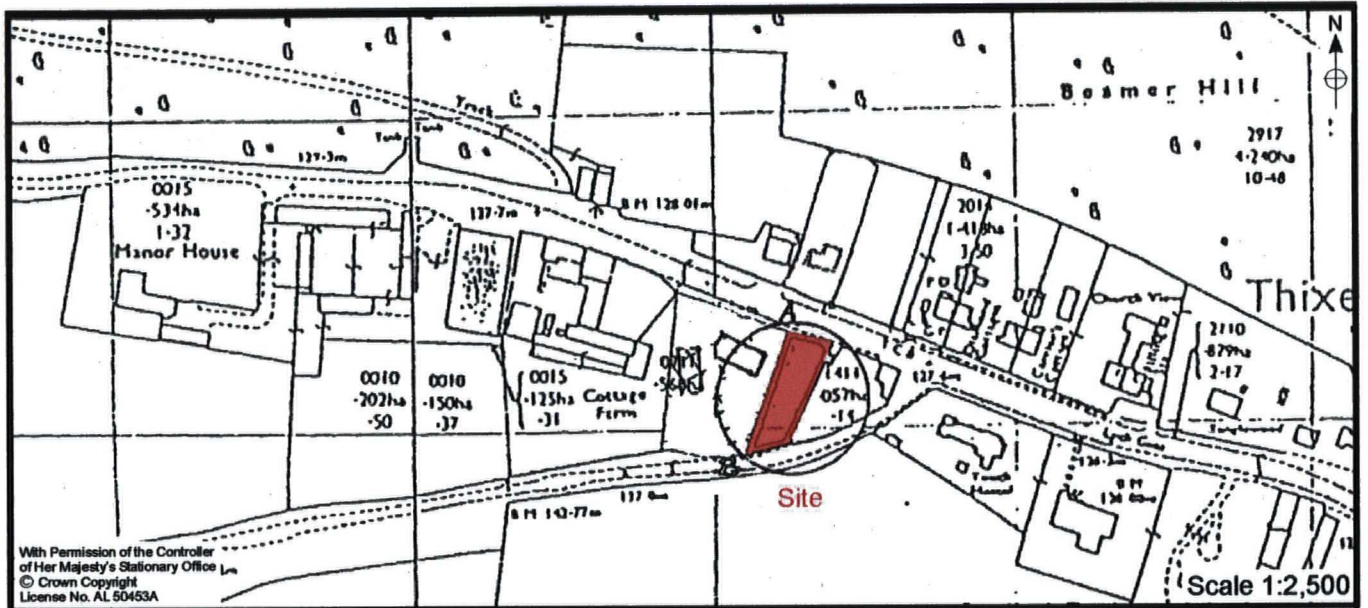


Figure 4. Area of Development and Watching Brief Area



Plate 1. View of Site. Facing south.



Plate 2. View of Site. Facing north.



Plate 3. Section through northern end of the development plot. Facing south.



Plate 4. Section through northern end of the development plot. Facing west.



Plate 5. Structure 1. Facing south.



Plate 6. Structure 1. Facing north.



Plate 7. Structure 1. West facing section. Facing west.



Plate 8. Structure 1. Previous excavation. Facing south.



Plate 9. View of site during on site works, showing location of interceptor tanks. Facing north.



Plate 10. View of excavated footings. Facing south-east.



Plate 11. View of excavated footings. Facing south.