aeon archaeology

Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA10 5BE.

October 2019
V 3.0

Archaeological Strip, Map & Sample
Project Code: A0230.1
Report no. 0221

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Archaeological Strip, Map & Sample

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Project Code: A0230.1
Date: 28/10/2019
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REGISTERED ORGANISATION CIfA

Project Code: A0230.1
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1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by BTP Architects to carry out an archaeological strip, map & sample on an area of land in advance of the construction of 40 residential units at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 5BE.

The archaeological work identified in-situ archaeological remains that corresponded to a former 18th century farmstead depicted on the 1st edition 25" OS map of 1893 and known as Brooklands Farm. The archaeological remains consisted of a northwest – southeast aligned wall constructed from sandstone blocks and handmade red bricks, a small red brick surface, a small area of cobbles and a sunken tank feature – most likely a cesspit. Furthermore, there was a small assemblage of post medieval ceramic recovered that widely corresponded with dates spanning from the late 18th – early 20th century.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by BTP Architects, hereafter the Client, to carry out an archaeological strip, map & sample on an area of land in advance of the construction of 40 residential units at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 5BE, (**centred on NGR SJ 48074 95540**).

In advance of planning application, the following development management advice concerning archaeology was provided by the Development Management Archaeologist (DMA) at Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) (**PRE/2019/0179/PREC**):

7. *There is a single non-designated heritage asset recorded on the Merseyside Historic Environment Record within the proposed development, MME7228, the site of Brooklands Farm, an 18th century property.*

8. *There is a potential for archaeological remains or artefact assemblages to be encountered by the proposed development. Any surviving below-ground archaeological deposits would only be considered likely to be of local or regional significance, which could be adequately dealt with through preservation by record, i.e. archaeological excavation and recording.*

The work adhered to the guidelines specified in Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

3.0 SITE LOCATION

Eccleston is a civil parish within the Metropolitan Borough of St Helens, Merseyside and is situated to the west of St. Helens town centre and south of the A580. The site is located in an area of residential housing constructed around Mill Wood Avenue and Bobbies Lane and is located to the south of the junction of these roads (centre point **NGR SJ 48063 95544**), (Figures. 1-3). The site consisted of an area of gardens to the east of a block of council flats.

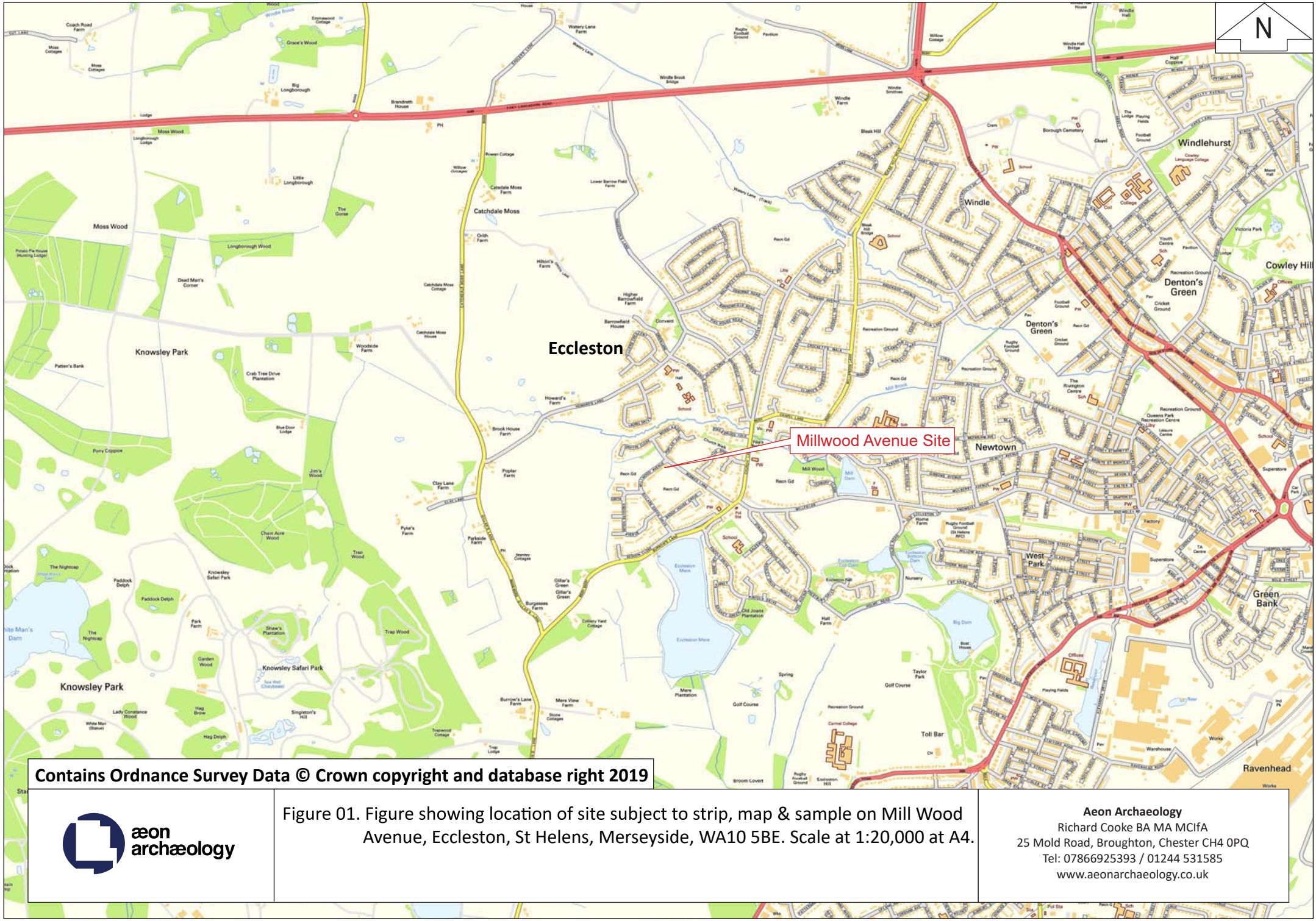

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Figure 01. Figure showing location of site subject to strip, map & sample on Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 5BE. Scale at 1:20,000 at A4.

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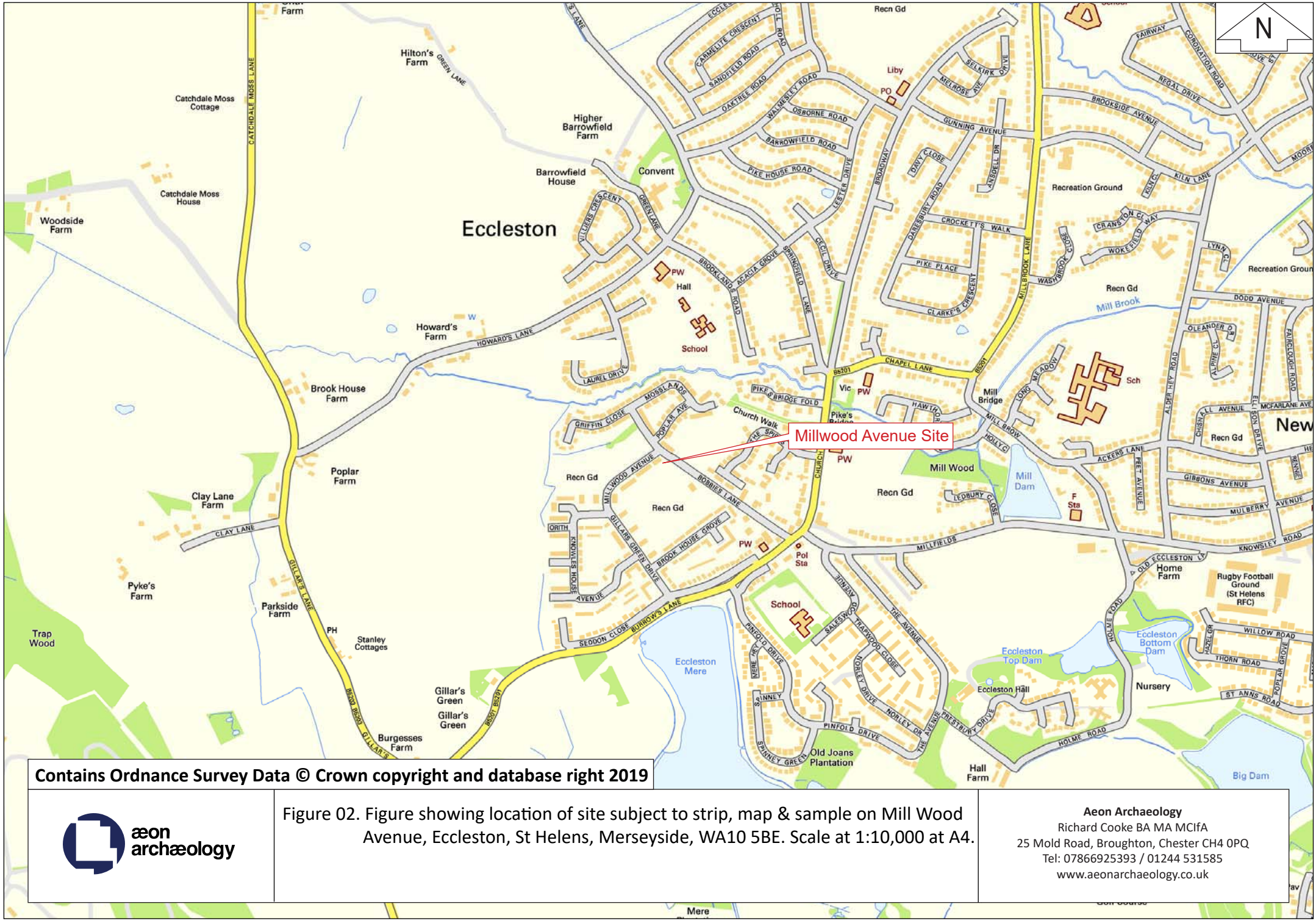

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Figure 02. Figure showing location of site subject to strip, map & sample on Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 5BE. Scale at 1:10,000 at A4.

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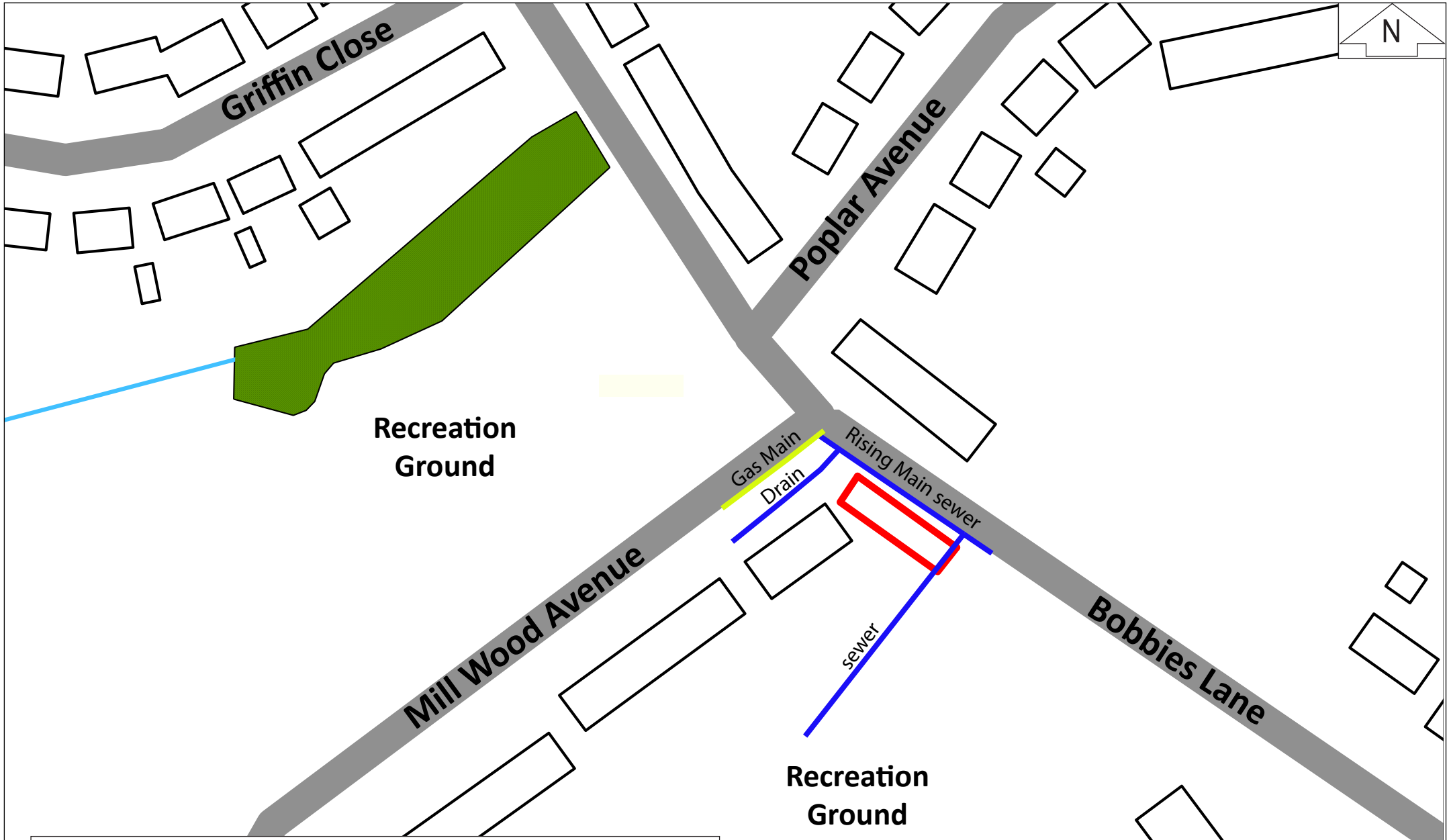

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Figure 03. Figure showing boundary (shown in Red) of site subject to strip, map & sample (see figure 8. for natonal grid reference points for excavation) on Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside, WA10 5BE.
Scale at 1:1,000 at A4.

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4.0 HISTORY OF THE SITE

There is very limited evidence for settlement in Eccleston during the Prehistoric and Roman periods. There is reference to two burial mounds in the vicinity of Burying Hill, near Eccleston Hall – these mounds were possible mid-late prehistoric burial mounds, although no evidence of these mounds exists today due to modern development in the area.

The following has been reproduced from the St Helens Historic Settlement Survey (2011) PDF available at (https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/mol/archaeology/historic-characterisation-project/St-Helens-Part-6.pdf) Accessed September 2019:

No major industry developed in Eccleston during the medieval period, instead the agricultural economy provided for local needs until the mid-19th century when a number of minor industries became established. These include a colliery at Gillar's Green, a pottery near Prescot, Copper smelting at Green Bank (1770 – 1815) and a cotton mill (also of Green Bank).

There is no evidence of a single nucleated settlement at Eccleston. Instead the area has several potential settlements that have grown and developed; the OS 6" map 1st edition map of 1850 shows (the hamlets of) Springfield, Mill Brook, Gillars Green, Portico, Thatto Heath and Cropper's Hill. The first Lord of Eccleston was Hugh de Eccleston a benefactor of Cockersand Abbey, around 1200 whose family continued to hold manors until the 18th century, before passing to the Scarisbrick family in 1742 and then to the Taylors of Moston in 1892.

The DMA at MEAS made the following comments which allude to specific historical information pertaining to the site at Millwood Avenue, Eccleston, St Helens:

With this site, the area of interest is restricted to the northernmost corner of the site, an area c.30m x 40m …see the 1st edition 25" OS map of 1893 for the extent of the farm that previously occupied the site… the interest in this site extends beyond the 18th century foundations to the possibly earlier features around the buildings, and these would best be investigated via a larger opened area (based upon a selection of 18th century farms we have had investigated in recent years elsewhere in Merseyside).

The farmstead is shown in detail on the six inch County Series Ordnance Survey map of 1850 as two, roughly rectangular buildings orientated northwest-southeast and located within an enclosed paddock or garden to the immediate southwest of Bobbies Lane. The westernmost of the two buildings is set back further from the Lane and is accessed via a short driveway suggesting that it is the main farmhouse. The second rectangular building, and the focus of this report, lies immediately adjacent to Bobbies Lane and is more likely to be a barn.

By the production of the 1893 25 inch Ordnance Survey map (figure 04) a third rectangular building had been constructed perpendicular to the westernmost building, creating an L-shaped range. To the east of the barn a smaller, rectangular outbuilding had also been constructed fronting on to Bobbies Lane.

The 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1908 (figure 05) depicts the farmstead in greater detail, with the site being shown as predominantly three rectangular structures with associated outbuildings and situated with an enclosed paddock. By the production of the 1927 Ordnance Survey 25 inch map (figure 06) a large rectangular outbuilding, probably a sty or stables, had been constructed at the northwest end of the enclosure. In addition a small rectangular building orientated northeast-southwest had been constructed southwest of the barn that is the focus of this report. The map shows the barn and outbuilding connected by a line which most likely depicts a drain, and it is likely that the outbuilding is in fact a soakaway tank or cesspit.

The farmstead is again shown in detail on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1937 (figure 07). Although the rectangular sty / stables are no longer present the site otherwise appears unchanged.

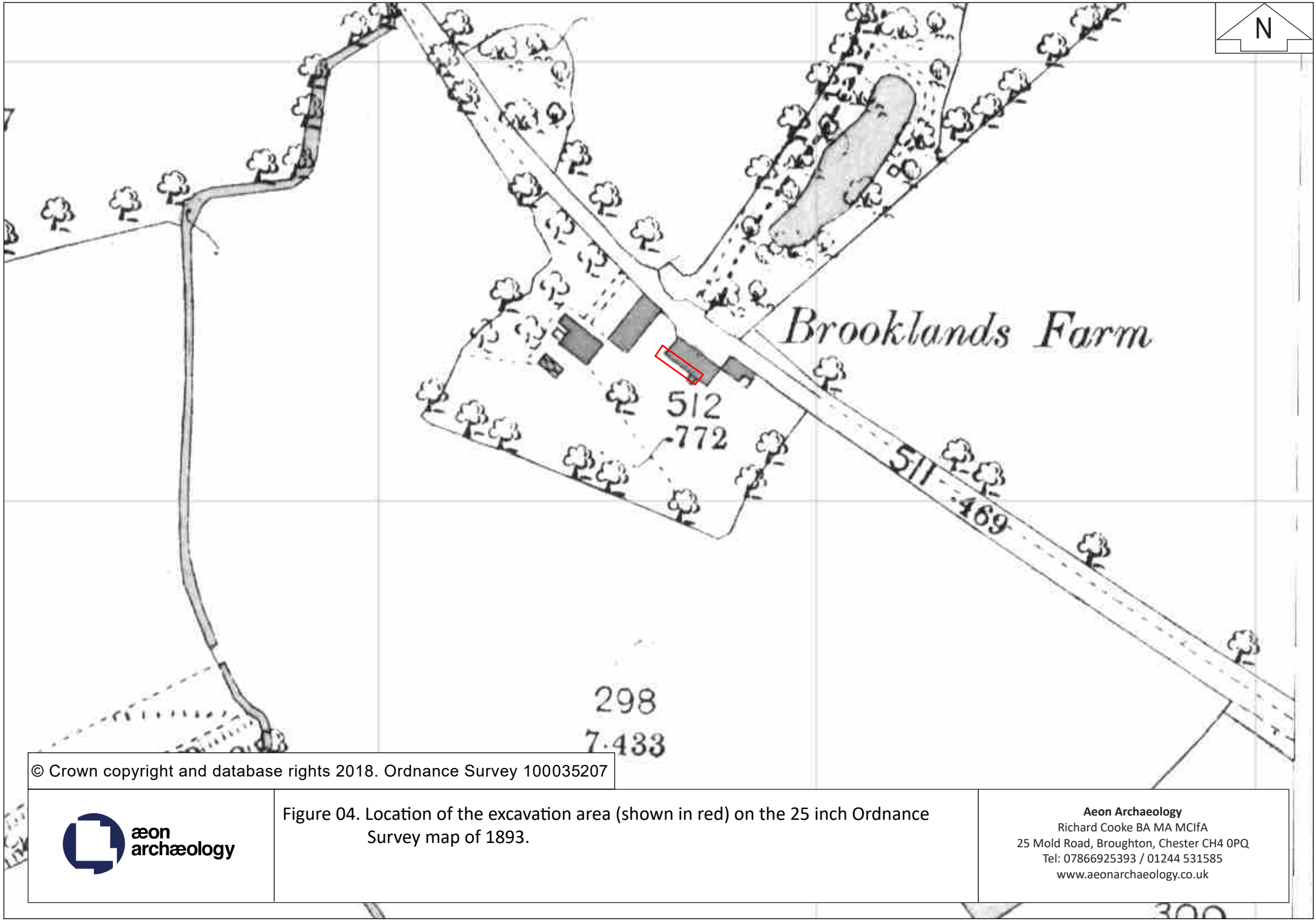

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Figure 04. Location of the excavation area (shown in red) on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1893.

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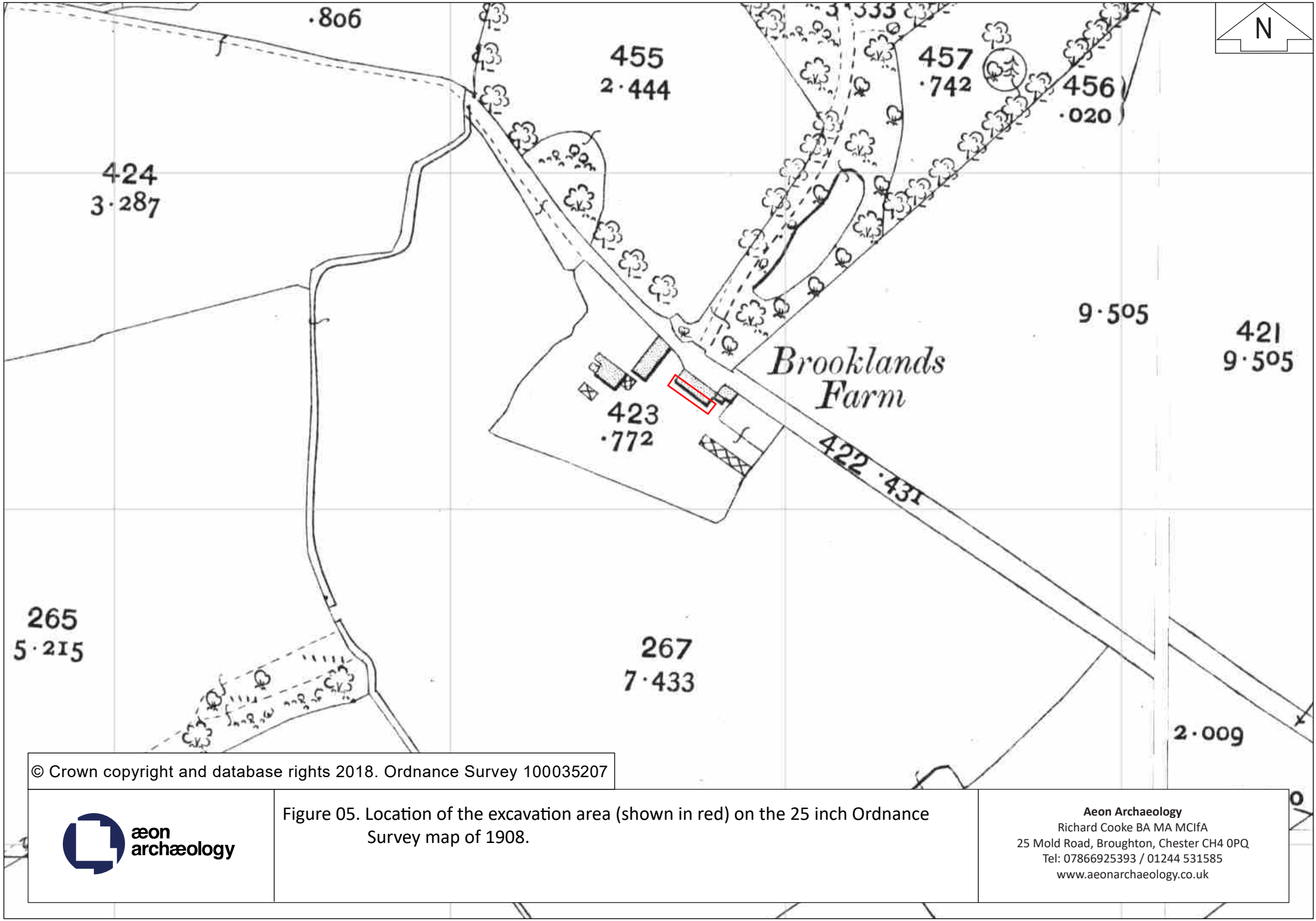

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Figure 05. Location of the excavation area (shown in red) on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1908.

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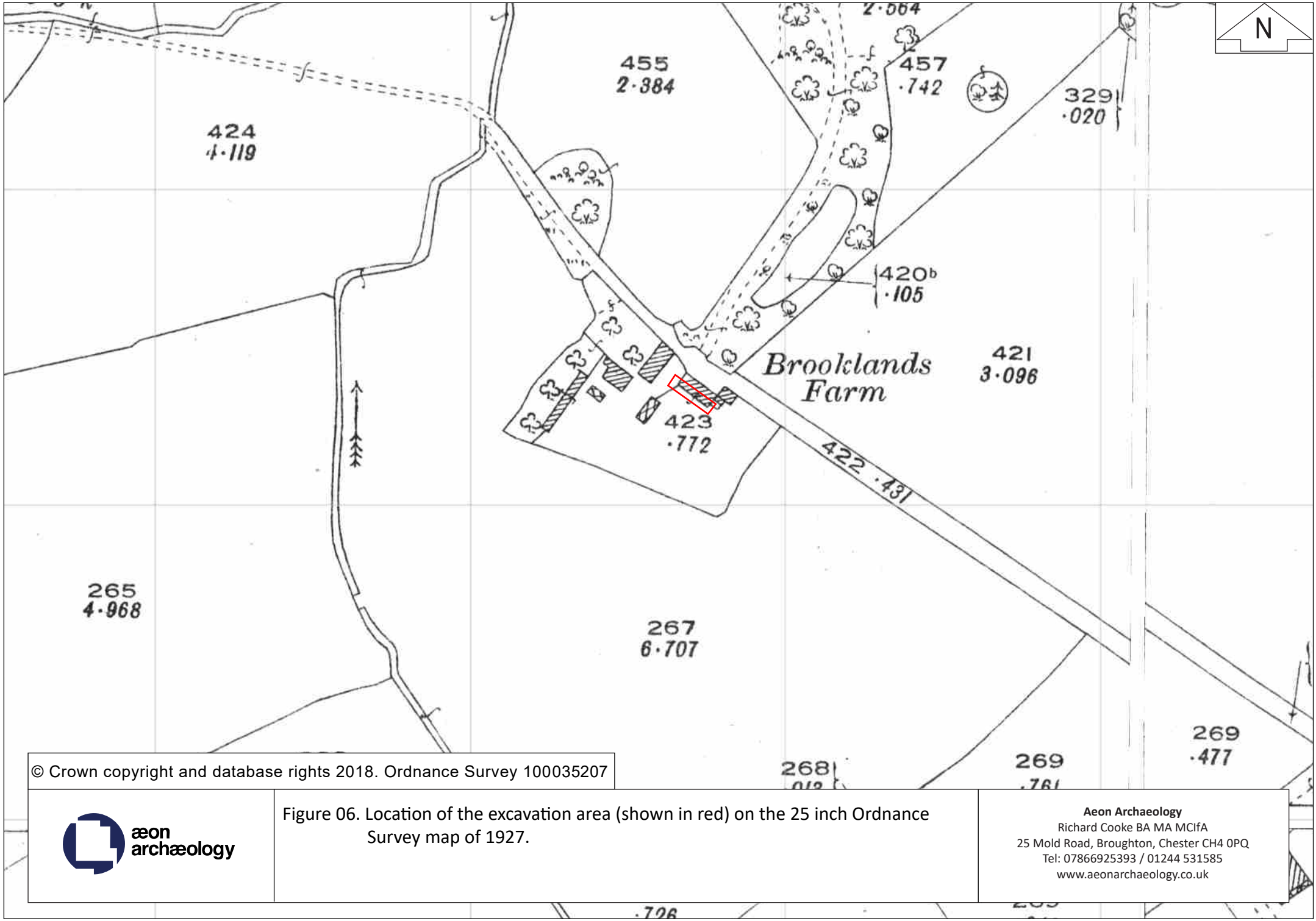

Figure 06. Location of the excavation area (shown in red) on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1927.

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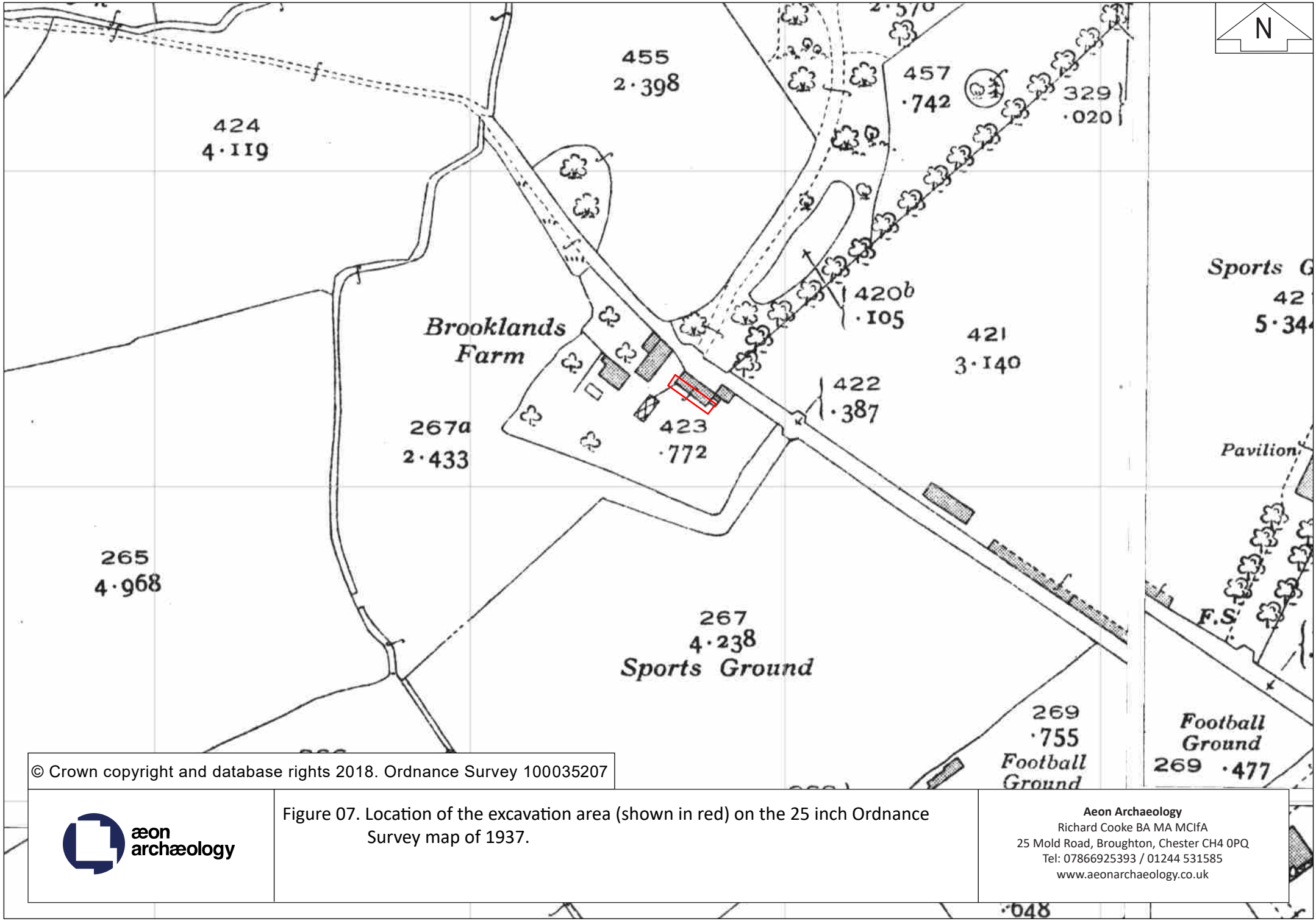

Figure 07. Location of the excavation area (shown in red) on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1937.

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5.0 PROJECT AIMS

Before the strip, map & sample (excavation) was to commence an agreed programme of excavation timing, siting, duration, surface re-instatement and health and safety protection measures were to be agreed with the Client and the Development Management Archaeologist at Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS). The above representative was also invited to attend a site meeting during the archaeological works in order to review the programme, submitted method statement and arrangements that were established for archaeological mitigation.

The size, location and orientation of the excavation area were agreed in advance so as to best target areas that may contain archaeological features within the development footprint.

The broad aims of the archaeological excavation were:

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains on the site, the integrity of which may be threatened by development at the site.

- To establish the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion to sub-surface deposits and, where the data allows, assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits of archaeological significance.

- To enable the client to establish a schedule for archaeological risks.

- To allow the Development Management Archaeologist at Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) to make an informed decision on the need for and scope of further evaluative and/or mitigatory archaeological works at the site.

The detailed objectives of the archaeological excavation were:

- Insofar as possible within methodological constraints, to explain any temporal, spatial or functional relationships between the structures/remains identified, and any relationships between these and the archaeological and historic elements of the wider landscape.

- Where the data allows, identify the research implications of the site with reference to the regional research agenda and recent work in St. Helens.

The archaeological strip, map & sample targeted the following area (**Figure 03**):

1. *An area near the northernmost corner of the site targeting the site of the former farmstead known as Brooklands Farm*.

Upon discussions with the DMA at MEAS it was agreed that the excavation area would target the three main rectangular structures of the former farm, with the excavation area measuring c30m x c40m. Upon arrival on site on the 21st October 2019 (see Section 8.1 for dates of attendance) it became evident that due to the close proximity of a medium pressure gas main to the immediate northwest, rising main sewer to the northeast, and a public sewer to the southeast, as well as a drain

running across the north-western part of the excavation area, that the area of excavation would need to be considerably reduced in order to meet legal stand-off requirements for major utilities. As such the excavation area was reduced to 17.0m in length x 4.6m in width and targeted the northwest-southeast aligned farm building depicted on the six inch map of 1850 fronting on to Bobbies Lane.

6.0 METHODOLOGY

All archaeological deposits identified were manually cleaned, excavated and recorded to determine extent, function, date and relationship to adjacent features.

Contingency provision was to be made for the following:

- Additional excavation of up to 100% of any given feature should the excavated sample prove to be insufficient to provide information on the character and date of the feature.

- Expansion of excavation trench limits, to clarify the extent of features equivalent to an additional 20% of the core trench area.

The archaeological works were surveyed with respect to the nearest Ordnance Survey datum point and with reference to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The excavation area, deposits, features and structures within them were accurately located on a site plan prepared at most appropriate and largest scale.

A written record of the trench content and all identified features were completed via Aeon Archaeology pro-formas.

Any subsurface remains were recorded photographically, with detailed notations, measured drawings, and a measured survey. The photographic record was maintained using a digital SLR camera (Canon 600D) set to maximum resolution (72dpi) with photographs taken in RAW format and later converted to TIFF format for long-term storage and JPEG format for presentation and inclusion in the archive.

The excavation area was opened with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

The excavation area and spoil heaps were routinely investigated through the use of a metal detector and any finds/artefacts collected and processed as outlined in section 11.0.

To prevent any potential health and safety risk to the public and staff the excavation area was secured with heras fencing.

All excavations were backfilled by the contractor with the material excavated and upon departure Aeon Archaeology left the site in a safe and tidy condition. Aeon Archaeology was not requested to re-lay turf/lawn surface nor reinstate hard standing surfaces as found.

7.0 QUANTIFICATION OF RESULTS

7.1 The Documentary Archive

The following documentary records were created during the archaeological excavation:

Digital photographs	50
Context Sheets	13
Drawings	2 on 1 sheets

7.2 Environmental Samples

No environmental samples were taken as all revealed contexts produced dateable artefacts

7.3 Artefacts

The Ceramic and Glass finds from an Archaeological Strip, Map & Sample at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside.

Summary

This report summarises the pottery sherd and glass finds recovered from the works undertaken at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside. The finds were recovered from a single trench and were unstratified.

The pottery was quantified by sherd count, weight, and maximum number of vessels (MNV), according to ware names commonly in use by archaeological ceramic specialists across the North West and West Midlands regions. Codes shown thus: (STRSB) relate to the identification system used for medieval and post-medieval ceramics used by The Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA).

1. *The Post-Medieval Pottery*

The strip, map & sample produced a total of 18 sherds of post-medieval pottery with a combined weight of 1.15kg, representing 16 individual vessels. The pottery spans the period from the mid-17th century through to the late 19th/early 20th century. The pottery was in good condition overall although fragmented, with most sherds representing a single vessel. The pottery is in a stable condition and requires no long-term storage requirements.

Wares and Forms

Staffordshire/ North-western Blackware - Mid-to-late 18th century.
Five sherds of blackware (STBL) weighing 239g were recovered from the excavation representing 4 MNV. The sherds are most likely examples from the kilns at Buckley, the glossy, metallic black lead glaze visible on these examples was introduced in the *mid-to-late 18th century*.

Staffordshire/glazed red ware (Astbury type) - Mid-to-late 18th century.
Ten sherds of glazed red ware (STGR) weighing 950g were recovered from the excavation representing 10 MNV. These were large vessels similar to those used in the dairy industry as Pancheons; this name is used on many pottery forms, which includes pancheons used in the dairy industry but these also had a domestic use and were found in the pantry and in order to prove bread

(Brears 1971). A red slip is visible under the lead glaze on the body sherds, which can also allude to larger vessels (Philpott 1985a)

Annular Ware – C.1840 – 20th century
A single sherd of Banded Annular Ware (ANNULAR) weighing 45g was recovered from the excavation representing 1 MNV. Banded annular ware was part of a factory-made Slipware group of refined earthenware ceramics decorated with applied slip decoration. These were produced in great quantity during the last quarter of the eighteenth century through the nineteenth century in England and the United States. After 1840 annular wares became available only in the blue banded variety and its use continued into the 20th century (Sussman 1997); which is the variety found in this assemblage.

Transfer Printed ware – 19th century - 20th century
Four sherds of transfer printed ware weighing 63g were recovered from the excavation representing 4 MNV. These consisted of a single sherd of green and white transfer printed ware (BONE TR4), a single sherd of blue and white transfer printed ware (BONE TR6) and two sherds of refined blue and white transfer printed ware (TPW). Most early uses of transfer prints were on expensive porcelain wares, in contrast to the 19th century, when it was much more commonly used on earthenware's. Initially, all pieces were overglaze printed (Godden 1992).

Brown Betty – Teapot – 19th century – 20th century
A single fragment of a brown betty Teapot spout weighing 45g were recovered from the excavation representing 4 MNV. The original teapots came from a red clay that was discovered in the Stoke-on-Trent area of Staffordshire, in 1695. These early pots were tall and shaped more like coffee pots. In the *nineteenth century* the pots began to take on the more rounded shape (found in this example) of the modern Brown Betty. The Rockingham Glaze was brushed on the pot and allowed to run down the sides, creating a streaky finish as it was fired.

Clay tobacco pipe bowl – 1860 – 1900
A single clay tobacco pipe bowl weighing 28g was recovered from the excavation representing 1 MNV. This pipe possesses a relief stamp on the bowl facing the smoker with a crown above the letter 'L' furthermore it possesses a milled rim around the bowl, a thick bodied rim and has no spur. This is most likely an example of an Irish style pipe.

(The following is reproduced verbatim from Higgins (2002) see bibliography for full reference)

"…Irish migrants had long worked as labourers in England but, following the Great Famine of the 1840s, even more Irish families settled in Britain. Irish style pipes became very popular and were not only imported from Ireland but also made in identical styles by many of the British manufacturers. Irish style pipes are characterised by various combinations of thick-walled bowls; patriotic decoration or slogans; Irish pattern names and marks containing Irish names or places, many of which were quite spurious and nothing to do with where the pipes were actually made. Late 19th-century trade catalogues from pipe manufacturers in Scotland or north-west England show a variety of Irish patterns with marks such as 'O'Brien' or 'Dublin' on them.

Irish style pipes were particularly popular at this period and stamps such as the crowned L or 'CORK' were added to certain of these styles, regardless of who made them. Many of the pipe manufacturers in north-west England and Scotland produced these Irish style pipes while others,

such as the J Leamy pipe from Waterford, are actual Irish imports. This makes it hard to source individual examples that just have generic Irish style motifs on them."

2. The Glassware

NB. The majority of the information presented here is taken from the Society for Historical Archaeology website (Lindsey 2019) *please see the **10.0 Sources** section for a full reference.*

Glass containers are engineered along very specific design principles. Container size, orifice diameter, neck length, and other attributes as well as the ratios between such morphological characteristics are determined largely by such basic principles as frequency of access, amount of contents removed with each access, and the type of content (bulk solid, liquid, semi-liquid, etc.). The following section will proved a brief description of the type of glass vessels that were recovered; the context in which they were found and provide a small description of the manufacturing process and/or use of such glassware (Lindsey 2019).

The glassware found during the archaeological work at **Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St Helens, Merseyside,** was limited to a single type with two forms, chemists' bottles; one square and a small round medicinal phial.

Medicinal/Chemist

A single square shouldered chemists' bottle and a small slender phial or tincture bottle were recovered from the trench in the area of the brick floor (105).

(Following is taken from Lindsey 2019) Probably the largest and most diverse group of bottles produced through the 19th - mid 20th centuries. Mid-19th century medicine bottles seem to possess a general shape (rectangular with indented panels) which was used for tens of thousands of different medicinal products from the mid-19th century. Most medicinal bottles also had a narrow neck and mouth (aka bore or throat) since this configuration was most useful for pouring out the typically liquid contents. A narrow neck and bore also likely limited evaporation through or around the cork also (Fike 1987).

8.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

The strip, map & sample (excavation) was designed to assess and characterise the known, or potential, archaeological remains. The location of the excavation can be found on figures 1-3. Where relevant context numbers have been assigned and are shown enclosed within brackets.

8.1 The Excavation

The site was attended by Aeon Archaeology between 21-23rd of October 2019. Following a visual assessment of the area prior to the commencement of the excavation it was brought to the attention of the attending archaeologists that it would not be possible to excavate part of the originally agreed excavation area, this was due to the level of previous ground disturbance in the area and by the presence of established trees. The original area of excavation was to include a 20m long, northeast to southwest aligned trench which was located to the front of the existing council block, however this area had been previously excavated in order to facilitate the installation of a drain and furthermore a line of well-developed trees with large crowns were present in the area. Following a discussion with the DMA at MEAS it was agreed that this area would be excluded from the archaeological works due to previous heavy ground disturbance. Also, at the south eastern end of the remaining northwest to southeast aligned trench the final 6.00m of that trench had been almost entirely removed by a public sewer cut.

The excavation area measured 17.00m in length by 4.60m in width and was 1.25m deep at its maximum depth, the trench was aligned northwest to southeast. The excavation area cut through a 0.20m of a soft, dark black-brown, silt-clay topsoil (110) with rare angular pebbles inclusions and sandstone and brick fragments. This topsoil layer overlaid all of the built archaeological remains which were focused near the northern end of the trench. However, at the southern end of the trench the topsoil (110) overlay 0.22m of very firm, mid white-grey, compacted stone (111), below this was 0.30m of a very hard, dark black-grey, cinder/asphalt (112) which lay above 0.40m of a quite firm, dark grey-brown (red/yellow mottled), mixed clay horizon (110) with patches of sand. Beneath this was > 0.18m of a very firm, mid yellow brown/blue-grey, clay natural (108).

8.2 The Archaeological Features

Cobbled Surface (101)

The cobbled surface (101) was overlain by the topsoil (110) and consisted of an area of 3.95m long by 1.47m wide and extended to a maximum depth of 0.18m: this area was orientated northeast to southwest. The cobbles were comprised from sandstone and had been laid vertically within a matrix of mid grey-brown, clay silt. The sizes of these cobbles varied, but were similar, with an average length of 12.5cm, width of 6cm and depth of 15cm. These cobbles abutted both the long sandstone/brick wall (102) and the wall of the sunken tank/cesspit (103) suggesting that it was possibly contemporary with these walls or at least built later than them. The surface most likely represents an area of external cobbling or yard located to the northwest of the main building.

Main Building Wall (102)

The L-shaped sandstone/brick wall (102) was overlain by the topsoil (110) and formed a long linear feature orientated northwest to southeast. It was >10.88m in length before turning on a right angle at its north western end and extending >2.10m northeast into the limit of the excavation. This wall had been entirely truncated by the sewer cut at its southeast end. The wall was 0.65m wide at its maximum width and extended 0.54m in height. This wall appeared to be multi-phase in construction with three courses of dressed sandstone forming the primary foundation phase, a single course of unfrogged red bricks (22cm by 7cm by 6cm) formed the next built phase and an area of later frogged bricks (24cm by 12cm by 7cm) formed the final repair phase, this had been conducted on the wall in isolated areas. Both the bricks and the sandstone blocks were bonded with lime mortar.

This wall abutted with the area of demolition (104), the brick surface (105), the sandstone wall (106) and the area of in-situ brick and stone (107) all to its southwest, suggesting these features were all later than the wall (102). The relationship it shared with the wall of the sunken tank/cess pit (103) was inconclusive, although it is suspected that they were contemporary to one another; the evidence of this relationship was insufficient due to demolition and poor survival of walls.

Sunken Tank/Cesspit (103)

The surviving L-shaped dressed sandstone/brick wall (103) was also overlain by the topsoil (110) and would have originally formed a rectilinear feature orientated northwest to southeast. It was 3.82m in length before turning on a right angle at its north western end and extending 2.90m northeast before abutting with/underlying wall (102). This wall had been entirely truncated at its southeast end. The wall was 0.67m wide at its maximum width and extended 0.84m in depth.

The full height construction of this wall was most evident with the surviving south western elevation; the wall had a single header course of unfrogged red bricks (22cm by 7cm by 6cm) at its base, with a further five courses of dressed sandstone blocks above, surmounting this wall was a further single header course of unfrogged red bricks (22cm by 7cm by 6cm). The north western wall of the tank (103) was lower with a single header course of unfrogged red bricks (22cm by 7cm by 6cm) at its base and a further three surviving courses (another course may have been removed during demolition) of dressed sandstone blocks above. All of these sandstone blocks and brick courses were bonded with lime mortar.

The western corner of the tank (103) was formed from a curve of at least seven courses of unfrogged red bricks with the base being narrow before tapering upwards into a wider wall. During excavation it appeared as if thin laminated sections of sandstone were attached to the face of the north western wall of the tank (103) forming some kind of liner or cladding and below this there was the limited remains of a slate base to the tank which had been cut into the natural (108) clay.

Interior Wall (106)

The linear sandstone wall (106) was overlain by the topsoil (110) and formed a short but substantial linear feature orientated northeast to southwest and was >1.60m in length, extending northeast into the limit of the excavation. The wall was 0.78m wide at its maximum and bonded by lime mortar.

This wall did not appear to be tied into the long wall (102) and therefore suggests that it is a later wall. The wall (106) also abutted with the brick surface (105) and the area of in-situ brick and stone

(107) to its southwest suggest these were both later than the wall. The overall substantive nature of the wall suggests that it was possibly load bearing; perhaps forming the gable of another building, but given its perpendicular position with wall (102) it is more likely that it represents an interior wall.

Brick Surface (105)

The red brick surface (105) was overlain by the topsoil (110) and consisted of an area of >1.75m long by 0.62m wide: this area was orientated northeast to southwest. The red bricks were handmade and unfrogged (22cm by 7cm by 6cm) and had been laid in a manner which was suggestive of it being located on the margin within a room or as a corridor or pathway. These bricks overlay the demolition layer (104) making them later than the demolition but also abutted the short/broad sandstone wall (106) and were later than that feature. The surface either represents an interior surface within an agricultural building or an external surface between a dwelling and the possible location of an outhouse; which could have once occupied the area where the demolition (104) now resides.

Demolition Layer (104)

This layer was overlain by the brick surface (105) and this deposit was a very firm, mid grey-brown, sand-clay-silt (110) with regular sub rounded pebble inclusions (<1%), sub angular sandstone fragments (<10%) and post medieval ceramic and glass. This area of demolition was confined to an area >1.79m long by 0.80m wide and orientated northeast to southwest. It abutted with the north eastern return of the main building wall (102).

In-situ brick and stone (107)

The in-situ brick and stone (107) was overlain by the topsoil (110) and consisted of an area of >1.75m long by 0.62m wide: this area was orientated northwest to southeast. The feature was an amalgam of materials including dressed sandstone, sub rounded cobbles and red bricks. The red bricks were handmade and unfrogged (22cm by 7cm by 6cm) and had been laid in a manner which was suggestive of a surface or wall. The feature abutted with walls (102) and (106).

The area was haphazard in appearance but also appeared to have been formally laid down: this was perhaps indicative of an in situ surface perhaps within a barn or represented a return for the wall (106) this was unclear due to the presence of a tree and also the south eastern extent of the feature having been presumably truncated by demolition.

Discussion

The presence and form of the archaeological features together with the post medieval ceramic assemblage indicate that this was presumably an agricultural building most likely erected during the latter part of the 18th century, with perhaps a later conversion/ change of use to a domestic dwelling during the latter part of the 19th – early 20th century; this interpretation is based on anecdotal evidence received from several members of the public who became interested in the site during the course of the archaeological works.

The long wall (>10.88m) (102) formed the northwest – southeast external elevation of the building which appears on the 6" OS map of 1850. Within the building there was a dividing wall (106) which either separated the internal space or formed the north western gable of the building; the north

eastern return of wall (102) could have been the wall of an outhouse or it could have been the north western gable of the building – due to the limited evidence this is unclear. The brick surface (105) could therefore be either internal or external. The demolition (104) and in-situ brick and stone (107) were both internal areas but in separate rooms.

To the southwest of the main elevation (102) at the north western end the sunken tank/cesspit (103) represents a well-constructed structure, it could be a cess-pit possibly dealing with effluent from an outhouse. This theory is supported by the presence of a ceramic drain inlet within the western corner of the tank (orientated northwest to southeast) suggesting that the outhouse was in fact further away to the northwest, possibly represented by one of the other buildings on the 1st edition OS map located in that area. The tank appears to have received a degree of design with rounded brick corners, a sandstone cladding and a possible slated floor. It is therefore possible that this was not a cesspit and was used for another agricultural process e.g. as a sheep dip or storage tank or for some unidentified cottage industry.

The area to the southeast was entirely truncated by a service cut for a public sewer and therefore the entirety of that end of the trench was removed prior to the commencement of these works. Furthermore, this event appeared to have truncated the wall (102) meaning that this feature was once longer than the remains uncovered during the archaeological works.

Plate 01: Pre excavation shot of trench at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the northwest - scale 1m

Plate 02: Pre excavation shot of trench at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the southeast - scale 1m

Plate 03: Post excavation shot of trench at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the northwest - scale 1m

Plate 04: Post excavation shot of trench at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the southeast - scale 1m

Plate 05: Generic section of trench at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the northeast - scale 1m

Plate 06: Cobbled surface (101) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the southwest - scale 1m

Plate 07: Long northwest to southeast wall (102) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the southeast - scale 1m

Plate 08: Long northwest to southeast wall (102) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the northwest - scale 1m

Plate 09: Oblique shot of wall (102) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the south - scale 0.50m

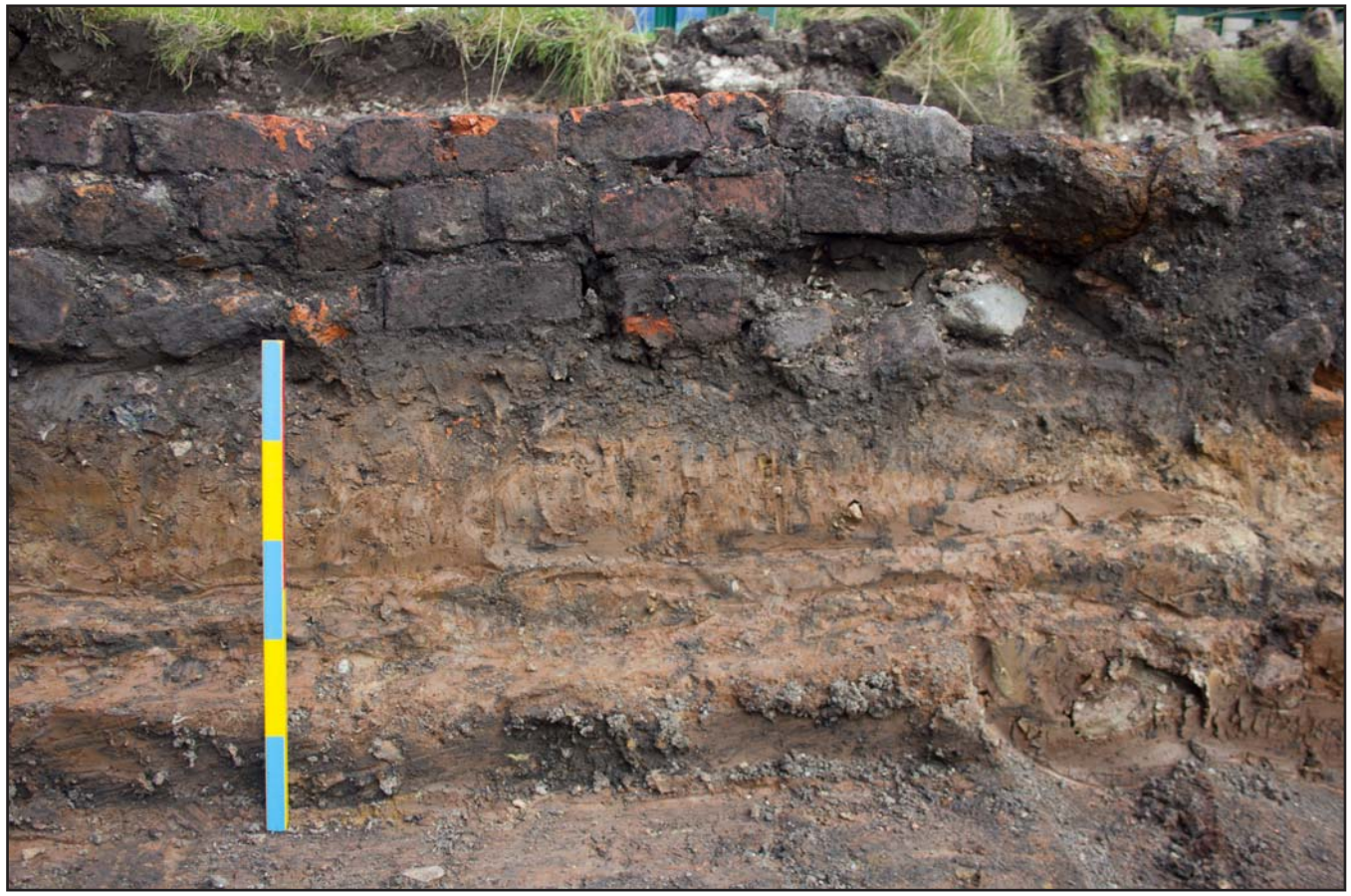


Plate 10: Elevation shot of wall (102) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the southwest - scale 0.50m

Plate 11: Elevation shot of wall (102) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the southwest - scale 0.50m

Plate 12: Wall (102) and (103) junction at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the south - scale 0.50m

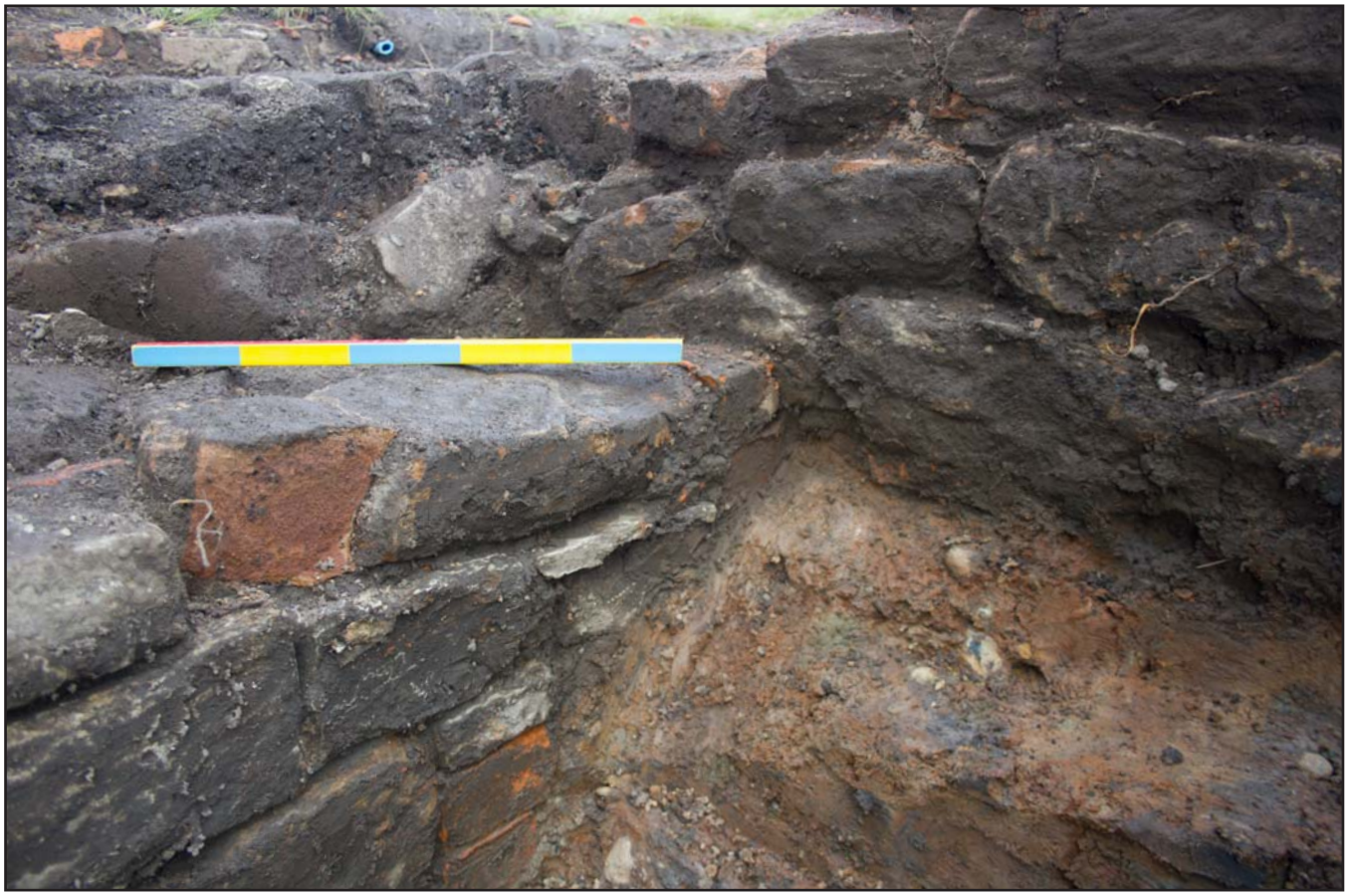


Plate 13: Focus on relationship between wall (102) and (103) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the south - scale 0.50m

Plate 14: North western return of wall (103) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the south - scale 0.50m

Plate 15: Elevation shot of wall (103) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the southeast - scale 0.50m

Plate 16: Rounded red brick corner of wall (103) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the southeast - scale 0.50m

Plate 17: South western return of wall (103) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the northeast- scale 1m

Plate 18: Wall (103) forming tank/cess pit at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the southeast - scale 1m

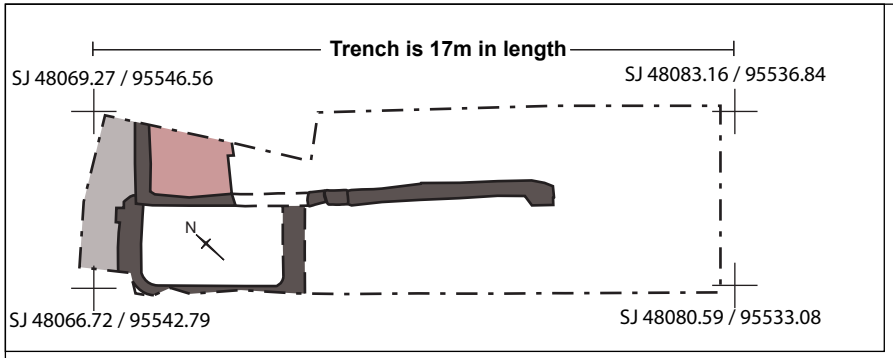
Plate 19: Area to the northeast of tank (103) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the west - 1m scale

Plate 20: Demolition deposit (104) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the northeast - 0.50m scale

Plate 21: Brick surface (105) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the northeast - 0.50m scale

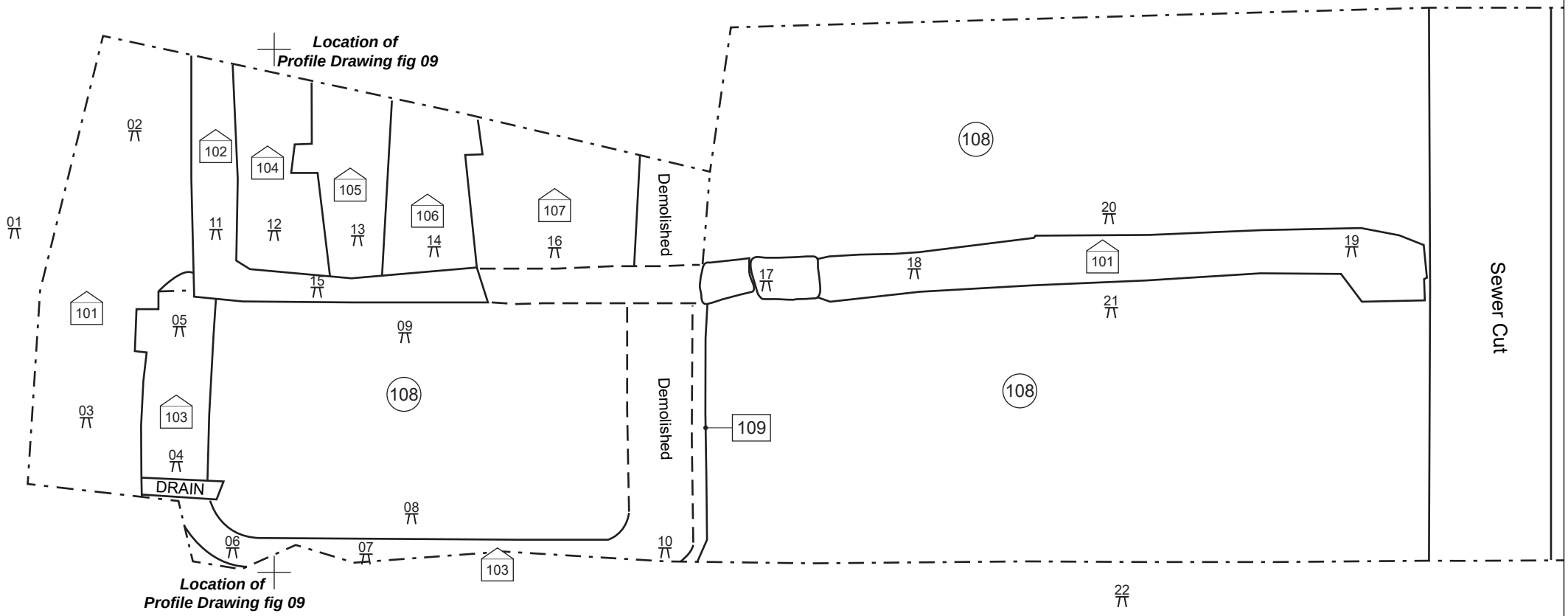
Plate 22: Wall (106) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the northeast - 0.50m scale

Plate 23: In-situ brick and stone (107) at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside - from the northwest - 0.50m scale



LEVELS OD (m)

TBM = 40.78	6 = 38.49	14 = 39.06	22 = 39.41
BS = 0.94	7 = 38.67	15 = 39.05	
IH = 41.72	8 = 38.07	16 = 39.04	
1 = 40.06	9 = 38.06	17 = 38.97	
2 = 38.94	10 = 38.57	18 = 39.00	
3 = 38.97	11 = 38.99	19 = 39.10	
4 = 38.61	12 = 38.93	20 = 38.65	
5 = 38.64	13 = 38.97	21 = 38.32	



1:50

0 5m

Figure 08. Plan of excavation area at Mill Wood Avenue, Eccleston, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA10 5BE. Scale at 1:50 at A4.

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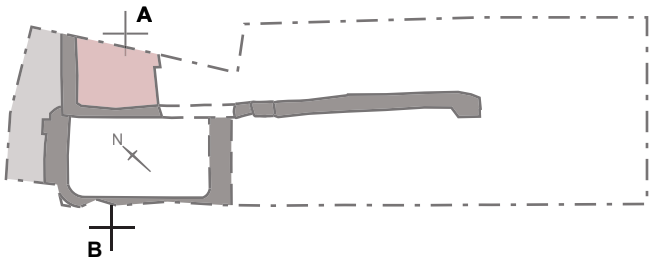
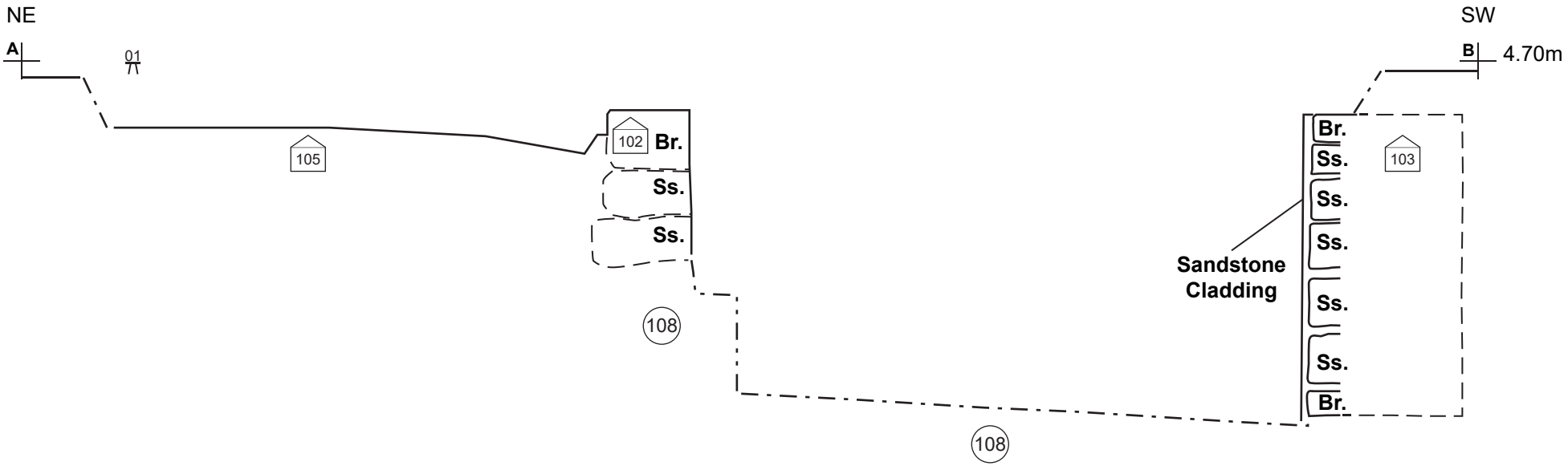


LEVELS OD (m)

TBM = 40.78
BS = 0.94
IH = 41.72
1 = 39.20

Key

Br. = Red Brick
Ss. = Sandstone



1:20

0 2m

Figure 09. Profile across brick surface (105), wall (102) and wall (103) illustrating the depth of the tank/cesspit. Scale at 1:20 at A4.

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9.0 CONCLUSION

The archaeological strip, map & sample (excavation) identified a series of features at the site; a long 'L-shaped' northwest – southeast aligned wall constructed from sandstone and handmade brick, a smaller internal sandstone wall, a red brick surface, a cobbled surface and a sunken tank/cesspit. Together these features represent a portion of the former Brooklands Farm. These features were anticipated utilising the historic mapping of the area which presented the potential for buried archaeological remains. According to the materials used in the construction of these features and the relative dates provided by analysis of the unstratified ceramic finds it is proposed that the building dates to somewhere between the late 18th century to the late 19th century. The occupation of this site continued through the early 20th century and into living memory with local inhabitants in the area remembering the house being occupied prior to its demolition in the 1960s.

The excavation was successfully undertaken by Aeon Archaeology. An appropriate line of communication was maintained between the Client and the Development Management Archaeologist at Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS), ensuring that the works advanced in compliance with the WSI. It is concluded that this investigation has been completed within expectations and in accordance with CIfA standards and guidance and the condition on the full planning permission can be said to have been satisfied.

10.0 SOURCES

OS Maps

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