



THE ARCHAEOLOGY CO.

Mill Cottage, Mellor Brook

Watching Brief

September 2021

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was a requirement of condition Condition 12 of planning permission application 3/2019/0190 to be carried out during the groundworks for the erection of three houses. Foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of c. 1m, revealing 20th century deposits. However, a deeper trench revealed a flagstone surface at a depth of c. 2.3m, likely relating to a basement of the former mill building, and a wall relating to the southern end of the mill cottage. No artefacts were recovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Steven Price of The Archaeology Co. has been commissioned to carry out a watching brief during the groundworks proposed at Mill Cottage, Mellor Brook, for the “demolition of Mill Cottage and outbuilding and erection of three dwelling houses”. Condition 12 of planning permission application 3/2019/0190 states:

No development, site clearance/preparation, or demolition shall commence until the applicant or their agent or successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

This scheme shall comprise a formal archaeological watching brief during all groundworks associated with the development, including site clearance and levelling works, the lifting of extant floor slabs and grubbing up of foundations as well as the excavation of new foundations, road bases and landscaping works. A formal report on the works undertaken and their results should be created and submitted to the planning authority and the Lancashire Historic Environment Record. These works shall be undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced professional archaeological contractor and comply with the standards and guidance set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The development shall be carried out in accordance with these agreed details.

Reason: To ensure and safeguard the investigation of matters of archaeological or historical importance associated with the development.

2. SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site lies to the east side of Mellor Brook and to the south of Mellor Brow. The site is accessed via Victoria Terrace, which runs to the south. The site was occupied by Mill Cottage and lies to the north of the former Mellor Brook Mill. The National Grid Reference is SD 64193 31072.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The purpose of a watching brief, as stated by the ClfA is:

- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, their presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- 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 treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard" (ClfA 2014).

3.2 The results of a watching brief are used to produce a record of the location, nature and date of any archaeological remains encountered on the site. It also adds to the knowledge about the previous history of activity on the current site and its surroundings as well as providing information to influence future planning decisions in the area.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The project was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of The Management of Archaeological Projects 2nd ed. 1991 and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct.
- 4.2 Photographs were taken using an Olympus E600 DSLR (10 Megapixel). Where possible and safe, a 1 or 2m scale was used in the photographs.
- 4.3 The groundworks associated with the development were carried out on two separate days; 23rd August and 6th September. The attending archaeologist was Steven Price. Ground excavation was carried out with a toothless ditching bucket in level spits, with opportunities for archaeological observation. The attending archaeologist was able to direct the machine to stop to allow inspection, excavation and recording of potential archaeological features. Two sets of foundation trenches were dug, 0.6m wide and around 0.75m – 1m depth with the exception of one trench which reached a depth of c. 2.3m. This latter trench was very unstable, with both sides of the trench collapsing. Close inspection was deemed to be unsafe.
- 4.5 The assessment was carried out in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs.

5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Yates's map of Lancashire from 1786 shows Mellor at this time, with the brook running north to south. No buildings are shown however. The mill was erected by 1835, and was ran by William and John Statter. Thomas Turner Wilkinson F.R.A.S worked as a book keeper at this time. He records that "an agreement stated that I should enter the firm, on certain conditions, after a service of seven years. This introduced me to cottons pinning calculations, at which I was soon an adept. At one time I had calculated every speed and draught in the mill from the fly-wheel to the spindles. My services were also required by other firms when difficulties arose. However, the Messrs. Statter became bankrupts, in 1837-8, and thus my cotton spinning hopes were blighted" (Abram 1875, 84).
- 5.2 The First edition 1848 OS map shows the site in more detail. A rectangular building, aligned roughly north - south lies at the north end of the site, and labelled as 'Terrace'. South of this is a long sprawling building, getting wider to the south, labelled as 'Cotton Factory'. A gasometer is shown to the south, although outside of the site boundary.
- 5.3 The Methodists first held services in Mellor during the latter part of the 18th century, although a second Methodist society was founded in 1847. The services for the latter were held in a room at Mellor Brook Mill until 1852, when the present Mellor Brook Wesleyan Chapel was erected (Farrer & Brownbill 1911). Mellor Brook Mill is recorded in Williams's Manufacturers Directory of 1864 as being ran by Eccles and Co., and using Tomlinson's Patent Conical Tubes.
- 5.4 The 1891 cotton Mills of Blackburn (Graces Guide) records John Walker as the mill owner at this time. It is listed as "Mellor Brook; 21,240 spindles, 308428 weft only. Pay day Wednesday after the 15th". The 1892 OS map shows the site in more detail again. Here the individual six terrace buildings are shown, with additional buildings attached to the south. These are shown as a part of the cotton factory on the 1848 map. The southern end of these buildings is Mill Cottage. It is shown as a rectangular building aligned north - south, with an addition to the southern end, extending slightly east. A further out building lies to the west, at the edge of the site and the



mill lies to the south, separate from the rest of the buildings. It is named as Mellor Brook Mill (cotton). The site shows no changes by the time of the 1910 OS map.

- 5.5 The 1915 the Brook Mill Co. is listed at the mill, recorded as having “14,500 mule and 5,500 ring spindles 16”/28” weft” (Lancashire Textile Industry 1915). By the time of the 1931 OS mapping the mill had been demolished.

6. RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The foundation trenches were dug over two separate days. The first set of trenches lay to the north end of the site. The consisted of a series of 6 trenches in a grid formation. Excavated to a depth of 0.75m, these showed the same stratigraphy throughout. At the base of the trench was a mixed dark brown redeposited clay (03) containing a large amount of broken sandstone fragments, brick fragments, stones, 20th century pottery and concrete. This was up to 0.35m deep, above which was a black sandy clay rubble layer (02), containing brick fragments, concrete pieces, stones and modern plastic. This varied in thickness, being up to 0.40m to the south and west although completely absent to the north and east. Above this was a crushed overburden layer (01) of a mixed grey and brown stone. This formed the top surface and was c. 0.3m in depth.
- 6.2 The second set of foundations consisted of a similar layout. Here the trenches were excavated to a depth of c. 1 m and showed a similar stratigraphy. At the base of the trenches was the mixed dark brown redeposited clay (03), up to 0.5m thick, above which was the black sandy clay (02) to the east side, followed by the crushed overburden (01).
- 6.3 The exception to this was the central trench in the second foundations. This was excavated to a depth of c. 2.3m. The sides were very fragile and collapsed, creating a wide hole. At the base flagstones (05) were found, c.2.3m below the surface. Above this was a wet and sticky grey clay (04) containing large stones and sandstone fragments, around 0.6m in depth. Above this was the redeposited clay (03) shown to be around c. 1.0m thick. Following the collapse of the trench edge a wall (06) was revealed in the northern section. The base appeared to lie just above the level of the grey clay (04), and the top just below the level of the black sandy clay (02). It appeared to be constructed of brick to the west and sandstone to the east. Due to the fragile nature of the trench sides and the depth of the trench, cleaning was deemed unsafe. At the far southern end of the foundations, the top of grey clay (04) was visible at the base of the trench, c. 1.0 m deep.



- 6.4 On the whole, the watching brief revealed that the upper stratigraphy of the site contained 20th century material, to a depth of c. 1m. The wall (06) however, was the exception. Although its date is unknown it lies approximately on the line of the southern wall of the building shown on the 1892 OS map (figure 8). The wall was unable to be cleaned but appeared to reach a depth of around 2m and was constructed of brick and sandstone. To the south of this wall, at a depth of c. 2.3m was the flagstone floor. The 1848 OS map shows a continuous mill building running through to the houses to the north. This may suggest that the flagged surface (05) and wall (06) were related to the basement of the early – mid 19th century mill building, showing on the 1848 OS map.

7. ARCHIVE

- 7.1 The results of the archaeological investigation form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current Historic England guidelines (“The Management of Archaeological Projects”, 2nd edition, 1991), the “Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage” (UKIC 1990), and current ClfA “standards and guidance for the creation, compilation, transportation and deposition of archaeological archive” (published October 2009). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the ClfA in that organisation’s code of conduct.
- 7.2 The written, drawn and photographic archive will be placed with Lancashire Archive (with reference DDX 3172) within a reasonable time of completion of the project. A digital copy of the report and photographs shall be deposited with ADS through the OASIS database. A copy of the final report will also be deposited with the Lancashire Historic Environment Record.

8. COPYRIGHT

- 8.1 Full copyright of this commissioned report and other project documents shall be retained by the author of the report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

CIfA	Chartered Institute for archaeologists
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OS	Ordnance Survey

Literature

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Farrer, W. and Brownbill, J. (eds.) 1911 'Townships: Mellor', in "A History of the County of Lancaster": Volume 6, pp. 260-263. British History Online
<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/lancs/vol6/pp260-263> [accessed 21 September 2021].

"Lancashire textile Industry" 1915

NPPF (2012) "National Planning Policy Framework"

UKIC 1990 "Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage"

Williams, J 1864 "Williams's Manufacturers Directory"

Maps

Yates' Map of Lancashire 1786

1848 OS map 6" Lancashire Sheet LXII

1892 OS map Lancashire sheet LXII.6

1910 OS map Lancashire sheet LXII.6

1931 OS map Lancashire sheet LXII.6

Appendix 1: Figures

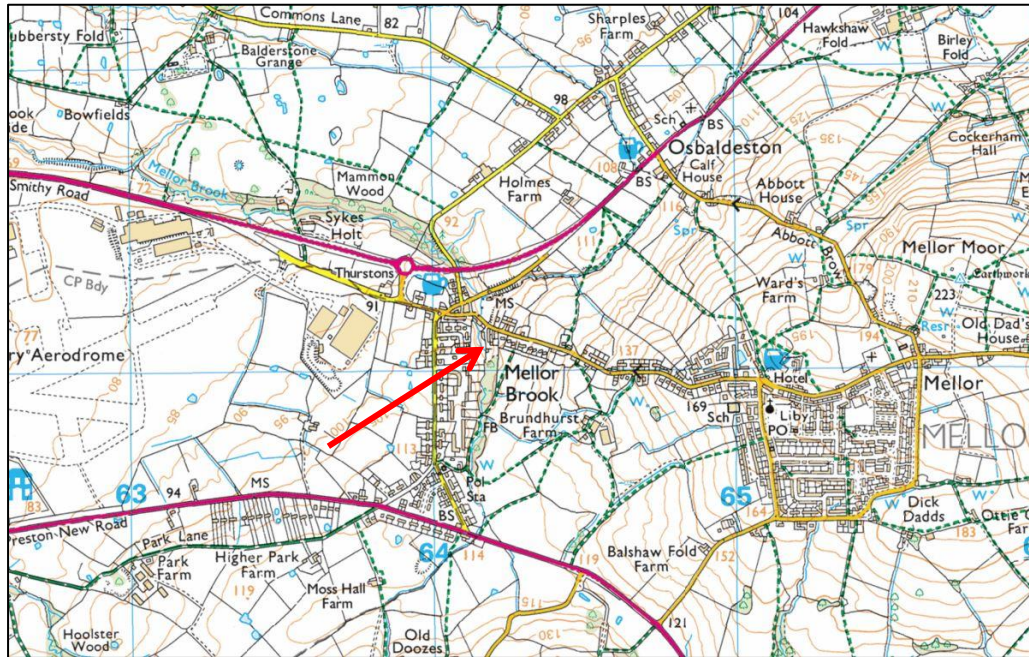


Figure 1: Location Plan (OS Licence Number: 100057911)

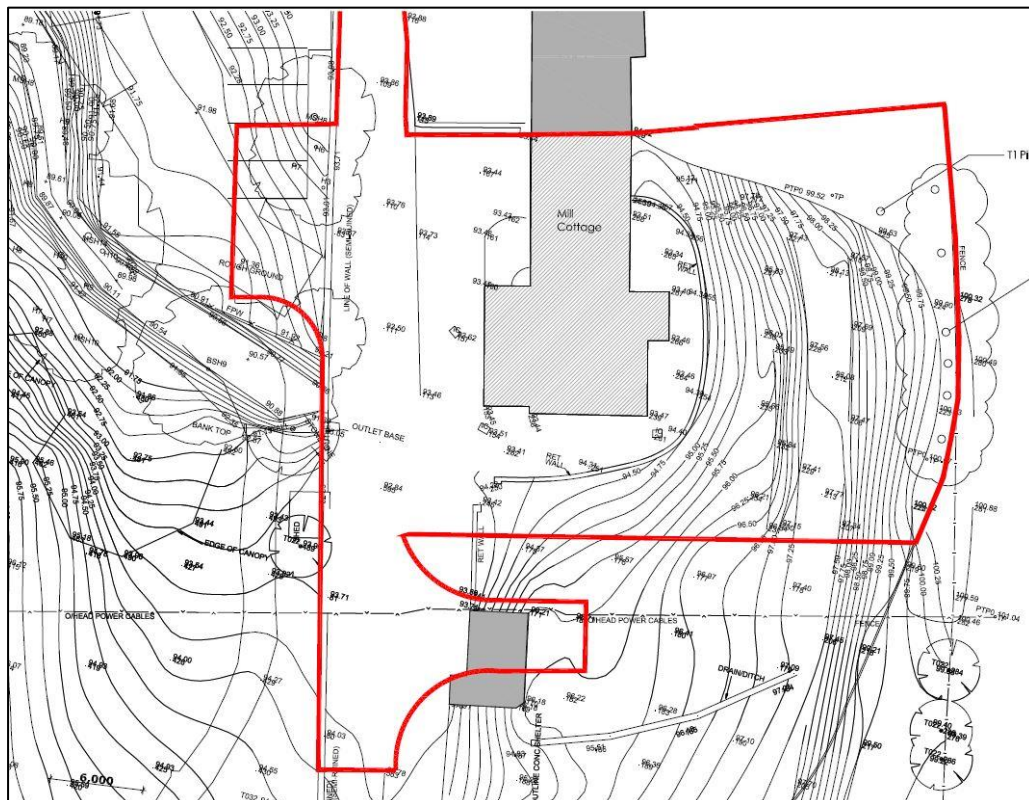


Figure 2: Site plan



Figure 3: Yates' Map of Lancashire 1786 (courtesy of Lancashire Archives)

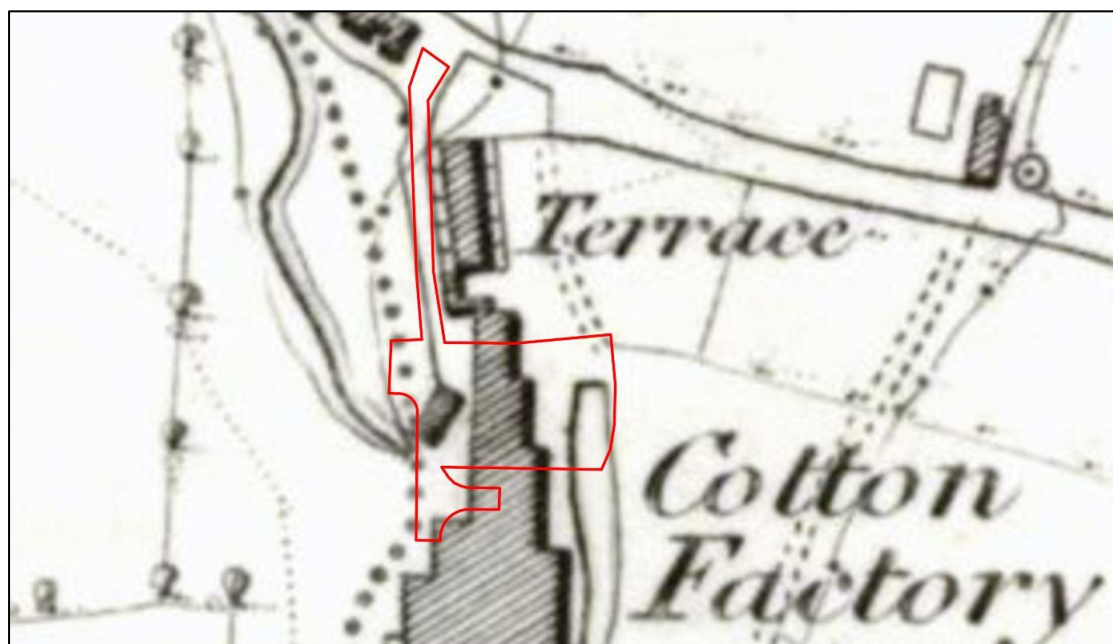


Figure 4: 1848 OS map 6" Lancashire Sheet LXII (courtesy of Lancashire Archives)

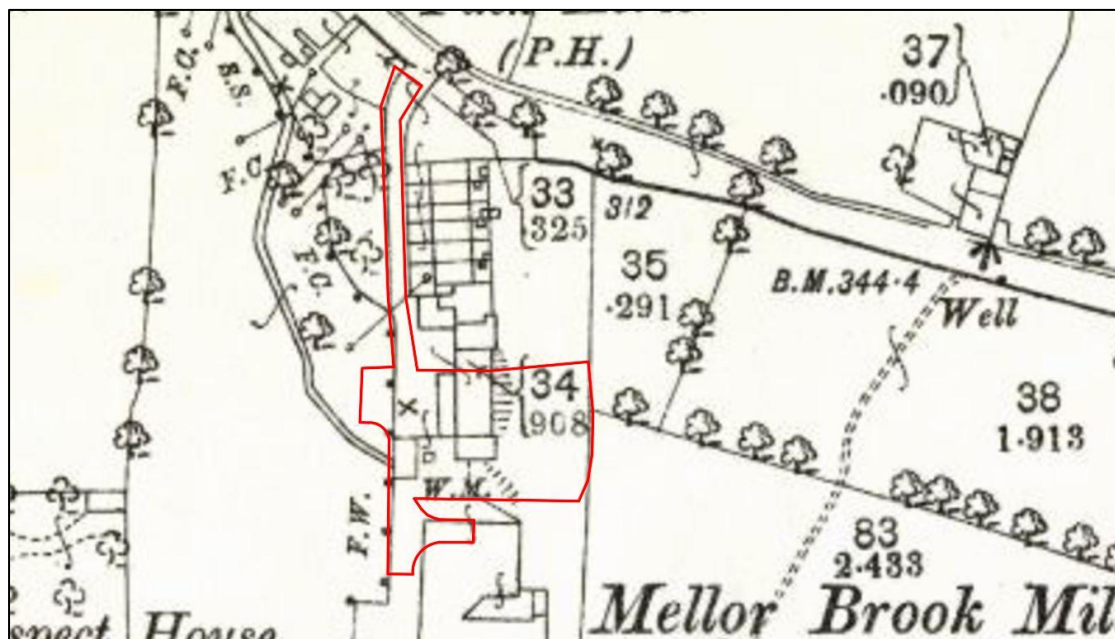


Figure 5: 1892 OS map Lancashire sheet LXII.6 (courtesy of Lancashire Archives)

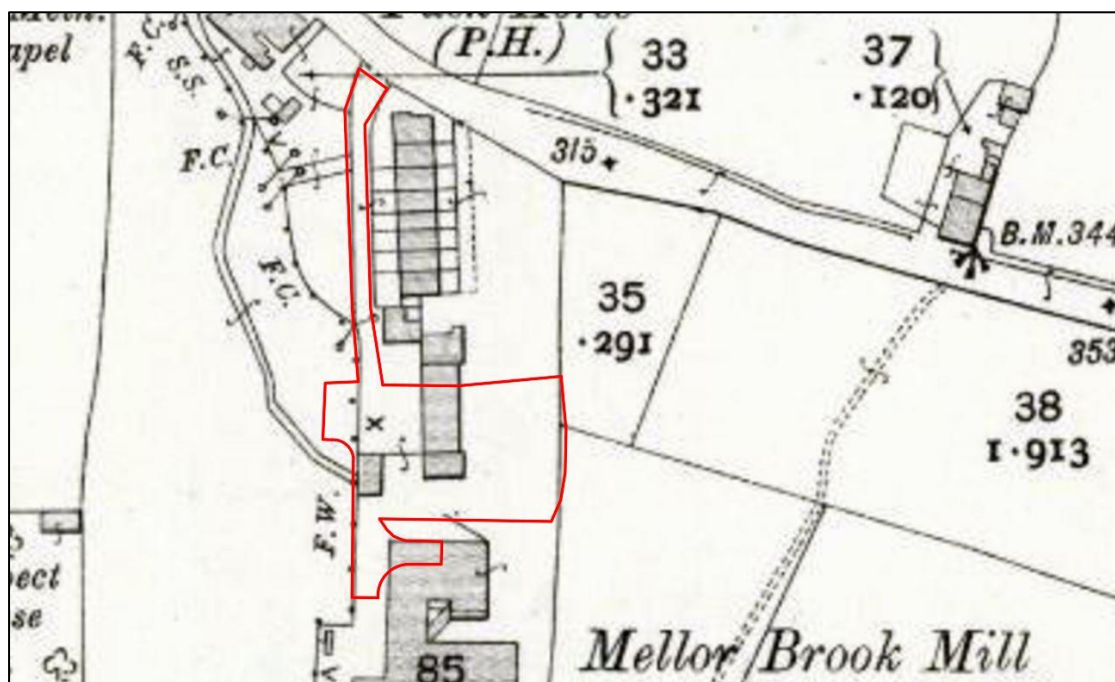


Figure 6: 1910 OS map Lancashire sheet LXII.6 (courtesy of Lancashire Archives)

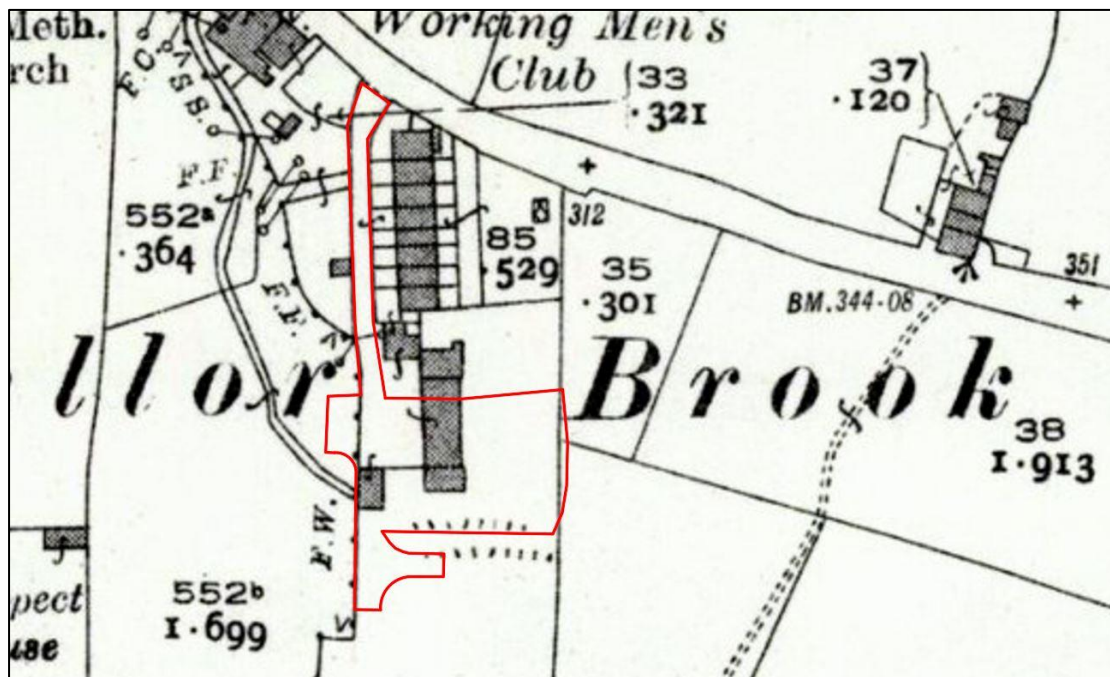


Figure 7: 1931 OS map Lancashire sheet LXII.6 (courtesy of Lancashire Archives)

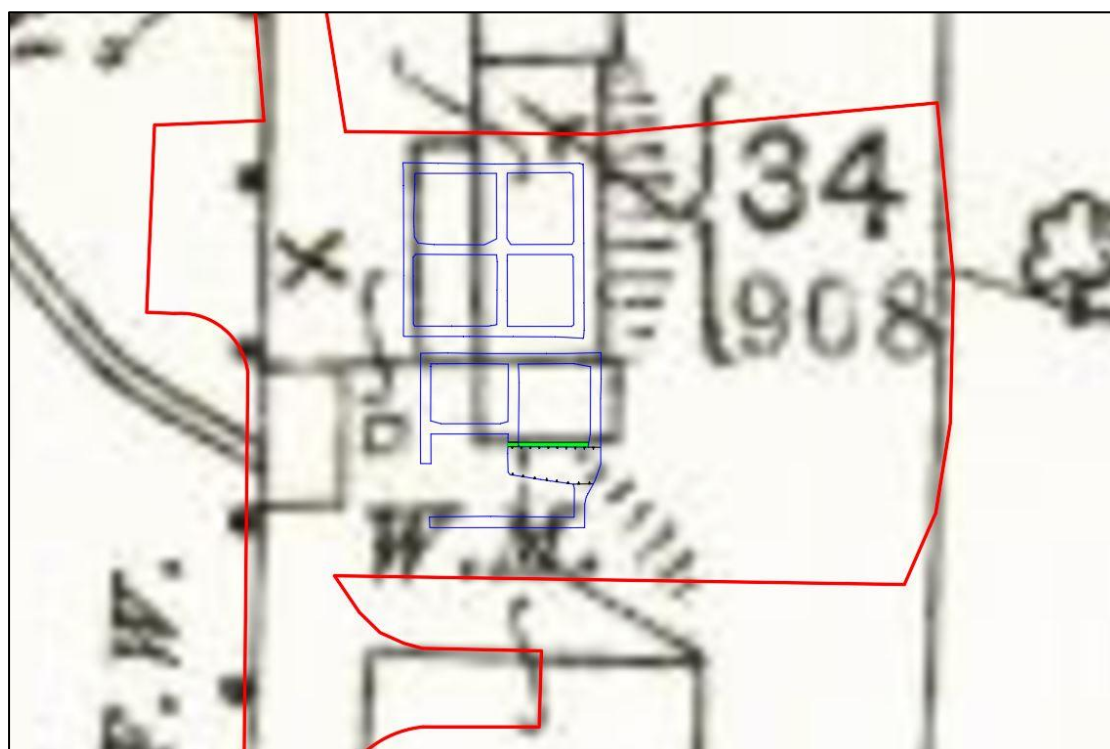


Figure 8: Overlay of trenches onto 1892 map showing location of wall (06) in green



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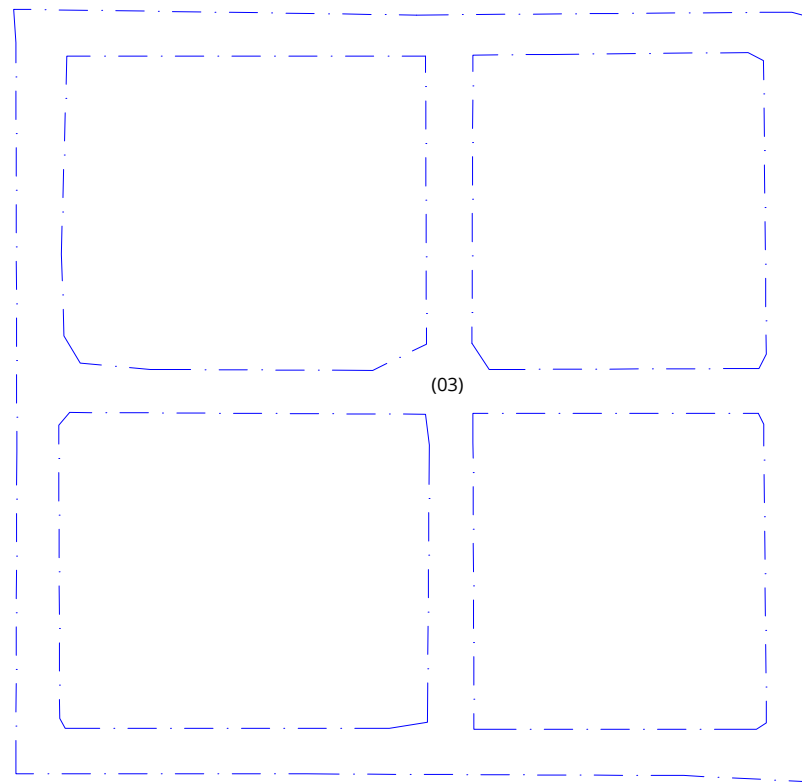
Mill Cottage, Mellor Brook

Figure 9: Trench Location Plan

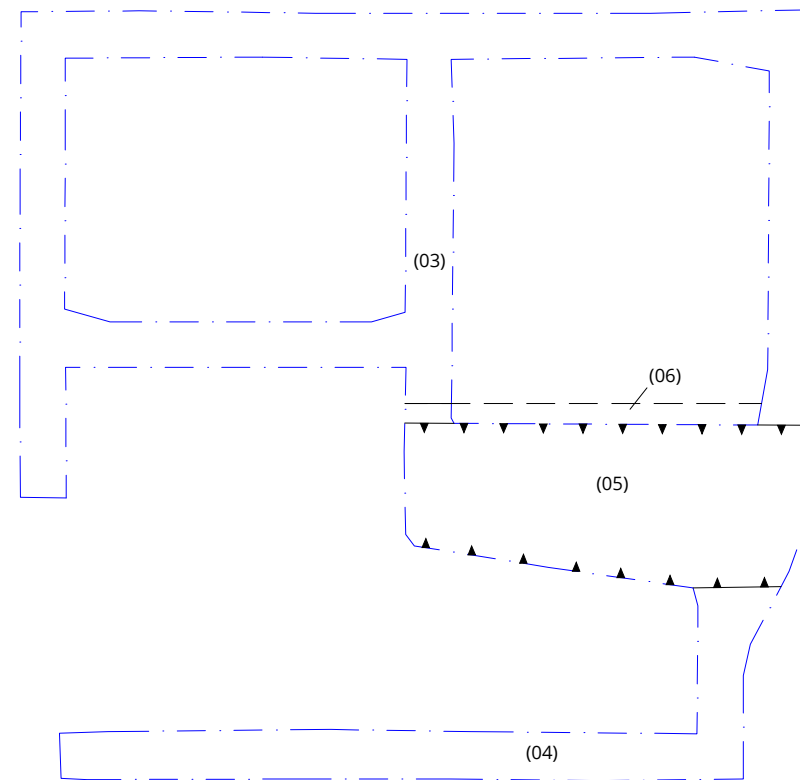
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Date: September 2021

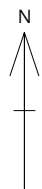
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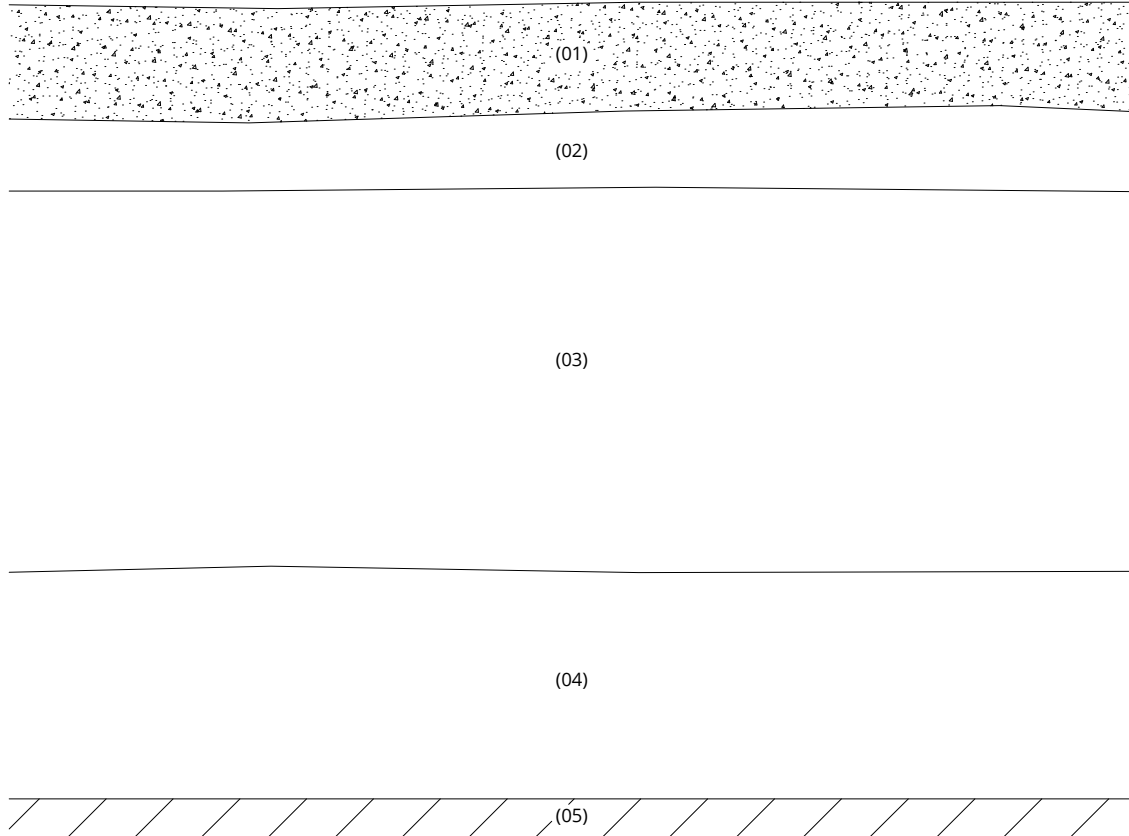


Foundation set 1



Foundation set 2





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Mill Cottage, Mellor Brook

Figure 10: North facing
section across central trench

Scale: 1:20

Date: September 2021

(03) - Context Number

Figure 11: Photograph Register

Plate No.	Digital No.	Description	View to
1	P8230814	Site prior to excavation	N
2	P8230816	Initial opening of foundations	W
3	P8230817	South facing section at north end of site showing (01) above clay (03)	N
4	P8230820	Working shot looking west	W
5	P8230823	Working shot showing stratigraphy	E
6	P8230825	Shot of site looking southwest	SW
7	P8230826	Working shot looking south	S
8	P8230830	Stratigraphy in centre showing (01) over a thin layer of (02) above the clay (03)	N
9	P8230840	General shot of finished trenches looking northeast	NE
10	P8230843	As above looking northwest	NW
11	P8230844	Eastern trench looking north showing concrete near base	N
12	P8230849	Detail of stratigraphy at southern end showing (03) at base, below black band (02), below overburden (01)	S
13	P8230850	Western trench looking north	N
14	P9060852	Initial opening of trenches looking southwest	SW
15	P9060853	Working shot looking west	W
16	P9060855	Example stratigraphy at north end	N
17	P9060860	Initial opening of central trench looking west	W
18	P9060864	Central trench after digging deeper showing top of grey clay (04)	NW
19	P9060865	Central trench after collapse of northern side showing flags (05) at base below grey clay (04)	NW
20	P9060866	Detail of south facing section, showing wall (06) with bricks to the west (left) and stone to the east (right)	NW
21	P9060867	Detail of sandstone section of wall (06) above	N
22	P9060868	Detail of brick section of wall (06) above	NW
23	P9060869	General shot showing depth and width	NW
24	P9060871	Shot showing flags at base (05) after cleaning by machine	N
25	P9060872	Detail of base shown above	N
26	P9060874	Working shot looking south	S
27	P9060875	Working shot showing stratigraphy	NE
28	P9060877	General shot looking northwest	NW
29	P9060886	Western trench looking north	N
30	P9060883	Example section at southern end showing grey clay (04) coming through at base at trench	N

Appendix 2: Plates

Foundation set 1



Plate 1: Site prior to excavation



Plate 2: Initial opening of foundations



Plate 3: South facing section at north end of site showing (01) above clay (03)



Plate 4: Working shot looking west



Plate 5: Working shot showing stratigraphy



Plate 6: Shot of site looking southwest



Plate 7: Working shot looking south



Plate 8: Stratigraphy in centre showing (01) over a thin layer of (02) above the clay (03)



Plate 9: General shot of finished trenches looking northeast



Plate 10: As above looking northwest



Plate 11: Eastern trench looking north showing concrete near base



Plate 12: Detail of stratigraphy at southern end showing (03) at base, below black band (02), below overburden (01)



Plate 13: Western trench looking north

Foundation set 2

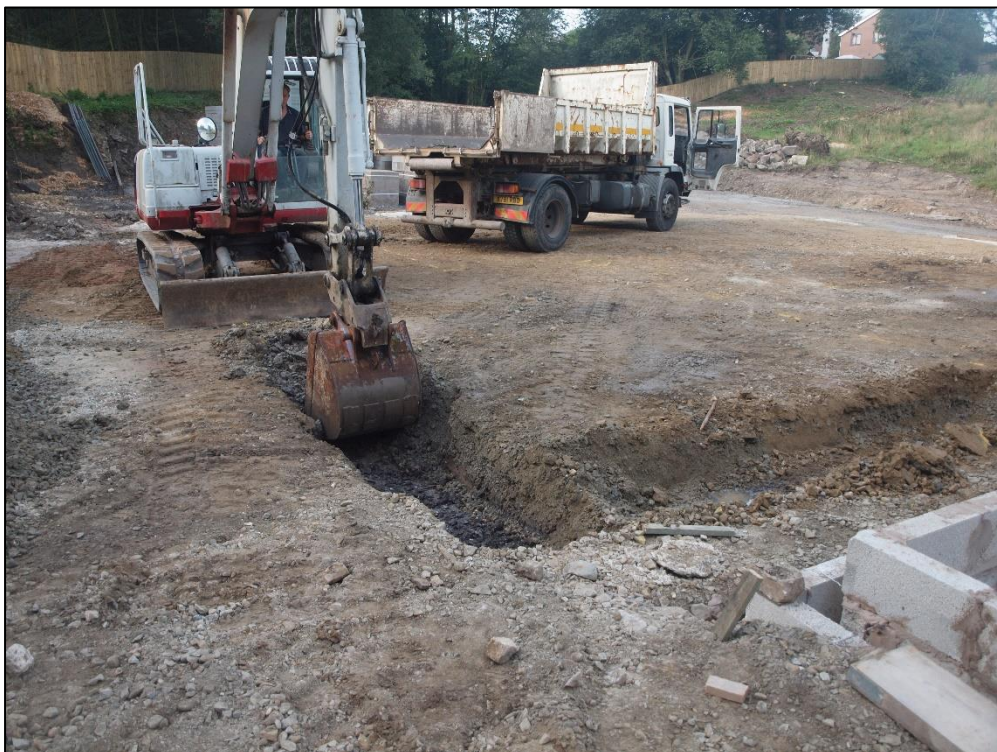


Plate 14: Initial opening of trenches looking southwest



Plate 15: Working shot looking west



Plate 16: Example stratigraphy at north end



Plate 17: Initial opening of central trench looking west



Plate 18: Central trench after digging deeper showing top of grey clay (04)



Plate 19: Central trench after collapse of northern side showing flags (05) at base below grey clay (04)



Plate 20: Detail of south facing section, showing wall (06) with bricks to the west (left) and stone to the east (right)



Plate 21: Detail of sandstone section of wall (06) above



Plate 22: Detail of brick section of wall (06) above



Plate 23: General shot showing depth and width



Plate 24: Shot showing flags at base (05) after cleaning by machine



Plate 25: Detail of base shown above



Plate 26: Working shot looking south



Plate 27: Working shot showing stratigraphy



Plate 28: General shot looking northwest



Plate 29: Western trench looking north



Plate 30: Example section at southern end showing grey clay (04) coming through at base at trench

