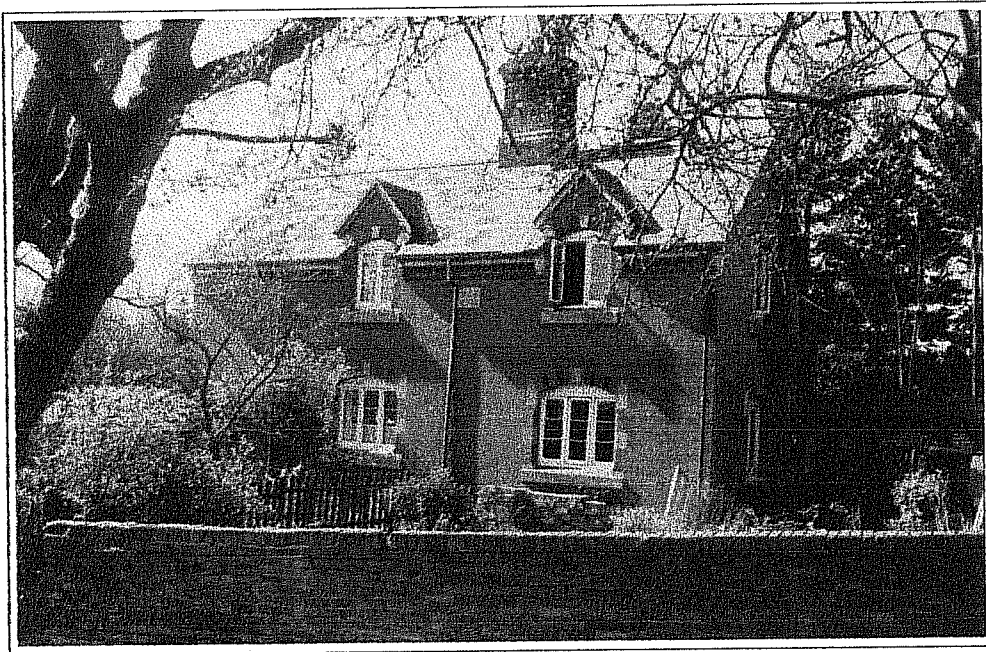


**Church Steps Cottage
MARTLEY
Worcestershire**

Watching Brief



April 2002

Hereford Archaeology Series 525

Church Steps Cottage
MARTLEY
Worcestershire

Watching Brief

WSM31624

Text, site work and illustrations

A. Boucher BSc

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Sites and Monuments information**

April 2002

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Church Steps Cottage

MARTLEY

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Watching Brief

1. Summary

Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Peter Griffiths, on behalf of the land owner (Mr Howard), to undertake an scheme of monitoring of ground breaking activity on the above site. The fieldwork took place on the 27th March 2002.

The site lies on the southern edge of the village of Martley, is centred on SO 75595 59800 and lies at a height of approximately 65 – 66m OD. The geology is Mercia Mudstone or Sherwood Sandstone.

The scope of the work encompassed monitoring of groundwork and a brief documentary study.

It can be demonstrated that the village of Martley dates back to the earliest part of the medieval period on the basis of the architecture of its church, St Peters. A plaque on the cottage itself dates its construction to 1868. It is therefore not surprising that it appears on the 1st edition (1887) and subsequent Ordnance Survey maps. The area of the site appears to have remained relatively unaltered since the 1st edition was produced.

Observations were undertaken in two areas of the site. The first of these was located to the north of the house and comprised a hole excavated for the insertion of a fuel tank, next to the church yard boundary. The second was an area immediately adjoining the north side of the cottage in an area where foundations were being excavated.

Two potential archaeological features were recorded, and these were only seen in section. They both appear to be ditches or gullies and they run at right angles to one another. It can be seen that their orientation matches that of the church (which is interestingly aligned slightly off east-west). The compactness and slightly leached colour of the fills might also imply some antiquity to these features. This evidence might indicate a medieval date for the features – however, any dating is conjectural.

Thanks are due to land owner for allowing access, Peter Griffiths for arranging contractual details, the main contractor for their assistance on site and Worcestershire Sites and Monuments Record for the information they provided.

2. Introduction

Archaeological Investigations Ltd was commissioned by Peter Griffiths, on behalf of the land owner (Mr Howard), to undertake an scheme of monitoring of ground breaking activity on the above site. The fieldwork took place on the 27th March 2002.

The site lies on the southern edge of the village of Martley, west of and immediately adjacent to St Peter's Church. It occupies an area of approximately 800m², is centred on SO 75595 59800 and lies at a height of approximately 65 – 66m OD. A semi-detached cottage occupies the southern end of the land with gardens forming a wedge-shaped plan to its north (Fig. 1).

Planning permission was granted by Worcestershire County Council to refurbish and extend the existing house and construct associated services. However, because it was believed that the proposed works might affect a site of archaeological significance, in line with Planning Policy Guidelines Note 16, section 30 the Planning Authority was advised that a program of archaeological work was required, taking the form of archaeological monitoring and recording of groundworks.

Prior to the work commencing it was suspected that the site lay in a sensitive position with respect to the medieval core of the village. Its situation adjacent to the church supported this.

The scope of the work encompassed monitoring of groundwork and a brief documentary study.

The village of Martley is situated on a ridge between the valley of the River Teme to its west and another water course to its east. The site was located on a south facing slope within the valley of the latter water course. The underlying geology (BGS 1990) comprises Triassic deposits mapped as either Mercia Mudstone or Sherwood Sandstone. The mapped geological member is recorded as Reddish-brown sandstone (Bromsgrove/Helsby or Wildmoor/Wilmslow). However, site observations might suggest that the deposits on the site are more akin to the member that overlies this (Taporley Siltstone) which is described as a red and green, micaceous siltstone and sandstone. In either case the geology on the site was soft enough to cut with a spade. A geological fault (the north end of the East Malvern Fault) lies immediately to the east of the site and both the site and the church lie on the raised side of this with lower ground to its east. The church is built out of red sandstone.

3. Aims and objectives

At the outset it was thought that the project was likely to produce results that were of local archaeological importance.

The main aim of the project was to enable archaeological features to be adequately recorded in the areas affected by the proposal.

The main objectives of the work were to:

- Identify the date and nature of features being investigated;

- assess survival, quality, condition and relative significance of any archaeological features, deposits and structures within the study area;
- and produce a record of the features.

4. Method

There were three elements to the work. A rapid documentary assessment - the fieldwork itself - and the assessment, analysis and reporting of the results of that work.

4.1 Documentary

The following repositories were consulted sources are referred to throughout the report

- Sites and monuments record
- Miscellaneous documents and publications held by Archaeological Investigations Ltd

4.2 General archaeological method

The archaeological work started after ground works on the site had commenced. Prior to arriving on site the topsoil had been stripped across the area of the extension and a pit had been excavated for a new fuel system. These areas were open and accessible on visiting the site. The site archaeologist either subsequently monitored the excavation of foundation trenches or cleaned and investigated areas prior to groundworks taking place (thus establishing that there was no impact on archaeological features or deposits).

The areas of ground disturbance were tied into the buttresses of the church and edges of Church Steps Cottage. All levels were related to the nearest surviving Ordnance Datum located on the north-west corner of the church at 68.58m OD.

Observations were undertaken within areas of ground disturbance amounting to approximately 15m².

No archaeological features were recorded in plan on site because non were exposed in this manner. However, following cleaning, sections were drawn and photographed.

A system of context records was kept and is included in the appendix. No finds were recovered and no environmental or any other samples collected on site.

5. Results

The following section starts with the results of the rapid documentary study followed by observations on site and an assessment.

5.1 Documentary

It can be demonstrated that the village of Martley dates back to the earliest part of the medieval period on the basis of the architecture of its church. St Peters (WSM 03369) has a nave and chancel of Norman origin due to its flat buttresses and more definitively its north and south doors which Pevsner (1997) dates to around 1150 AD. The Sites and Monuments Record provides a date for the Vicarage (WSM06702) of between 1066-1539 AD, its surviving architecture dates back to the 14th century AD (Pevsner 1997).

On the west side of the site lies an area known as the Pound, and this has been recorded as originating in the Post-medieval period (WSM07148).

A plaque on the cottage itself dates its construction to 1868. It is therefore not surprising that it appears on the 1st edition (1887) and subsequent Ordnance Survey maps. The area of the site appears to have remained relatively unaltered since the 1st edition was produced.

The Sites and Monuments search is included in Appendix 1 for information.

5.2 Archaeological monitoring

Observations were undertaken in two areas of the site. The first of these was located to the north of the house and comprised a hole excavated for the insertion of a fuel tank, next to the church yard boundary. The second was an area immediately adjoining the north side of the cottage in an area where foundations were being excavated.

Fuel tank pit

The following sequence of deposits was recorded in this area:

- 001 A 0.3m deep layer of dark grey-brown loam (topsoil), containing frequent flecks of coal and interpreted as having been imported because it lay above 002.
- 002 The original topsoil for the site which was a mid-brown clayey-silt 0.25m in depth. This appears to overlie the natural bed rock.

Bed rock

The bed rock itself comprised bands of reddish marl and grey/green rock (Plate 1). There was no discernible sub-soil horizon between the topsoil and the bedrock, although the upper, clayey part of the bed rock might be confused as a sub-soil where it had weathered.

Two features were identified and recorded in the sections of the area of ground disturbance:

- Cut 003** In the southern section of the excavated area a flat-bottomed, steep-sided cut measuring 0.3m in depth and 0.4m in width was observed cut into the bedrock (plate 2). This was filled with 004. The feature was apparently orientated north-south. However, only a very short length could be investigated into the face of the section.
- 004 A mid-brown silt with no noticeable inclusions and indications of root disturbance.
- Cut 005** An east-west orientated linear feature about 2.8m long within the area of observation, probably about 0.7m wide and 0.25m deep (Plate 3). It was U-shaped in profile and

the majority of its southern side had been removed prior to observations being made. It appeared to form a butt end at its east end. It was filled with 006.

006 The fill was indistinguishable in description from 004. Both fills were compared with one another on site.

Foundation trenches (Plates 4 and 5)

The topsoil had been removed from this area prior to observations being made on site. The surface thus exposed comprised bed-rock. No features were identified in the area of the foundation trenches except for a very modern post hole containing wood. Otherwise the excavation of the trenches simply revealed bedrock similar in nature to that observed in the fuel tank hole. A photographic record was made of the foundation trenches.

5.3 Assessment

Features of an archaeological nature were observed in the hole excavated for a fuel tank to the north of the cottage. No dating evidence or inclusions were recovered or observed. Therefore, further analysis of material from these features is not likely to provide meaningful information about the site.

6. Discussion

Two potential archaeological features were recorded, and these were only seen in section. They both appear to be ditches or gullies and they run at right angles to one another. On the plan in Figure 4 it can be seen that their orientation matches that of the church (which is interestingly aligned slightly off east-west). The compactness and slightly leached colour of the fills might also imply some antiquity to these features. This evidence might indicate a medieval date for the features – however, any dating is conjectural.

7. Bibliography

BGS, 1990, *Mid Wales and Marches, Sheet 52°N 04°W, Solid edition @ 1:250,000* British Geological Survey

Pevsner, N., 1997, *The buildings of England: Worcestershire* Penguin

8. Archive

6 context sheets
1 context register
1 drawing register
1 photo register
1 sheet of permatrace with drawings
1 35mm colour film (part thereof)

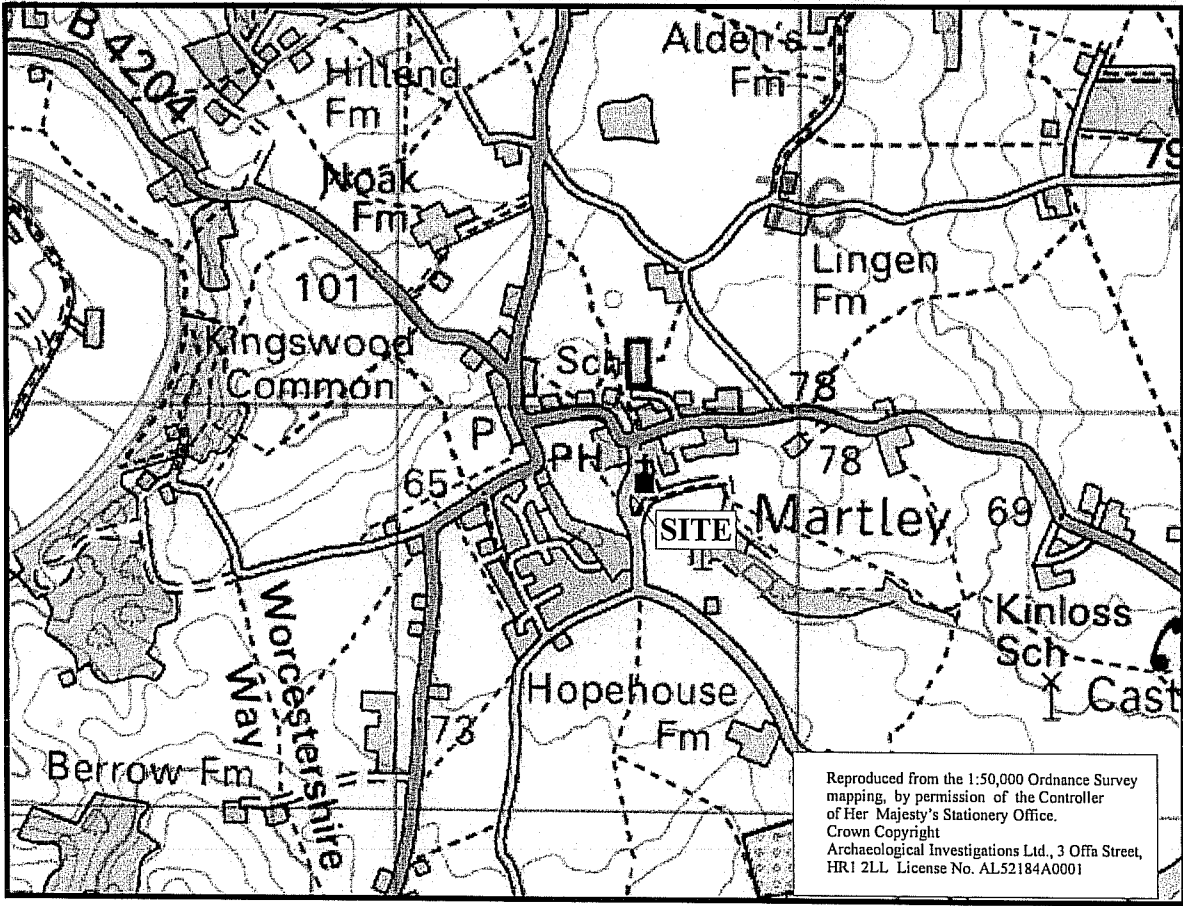
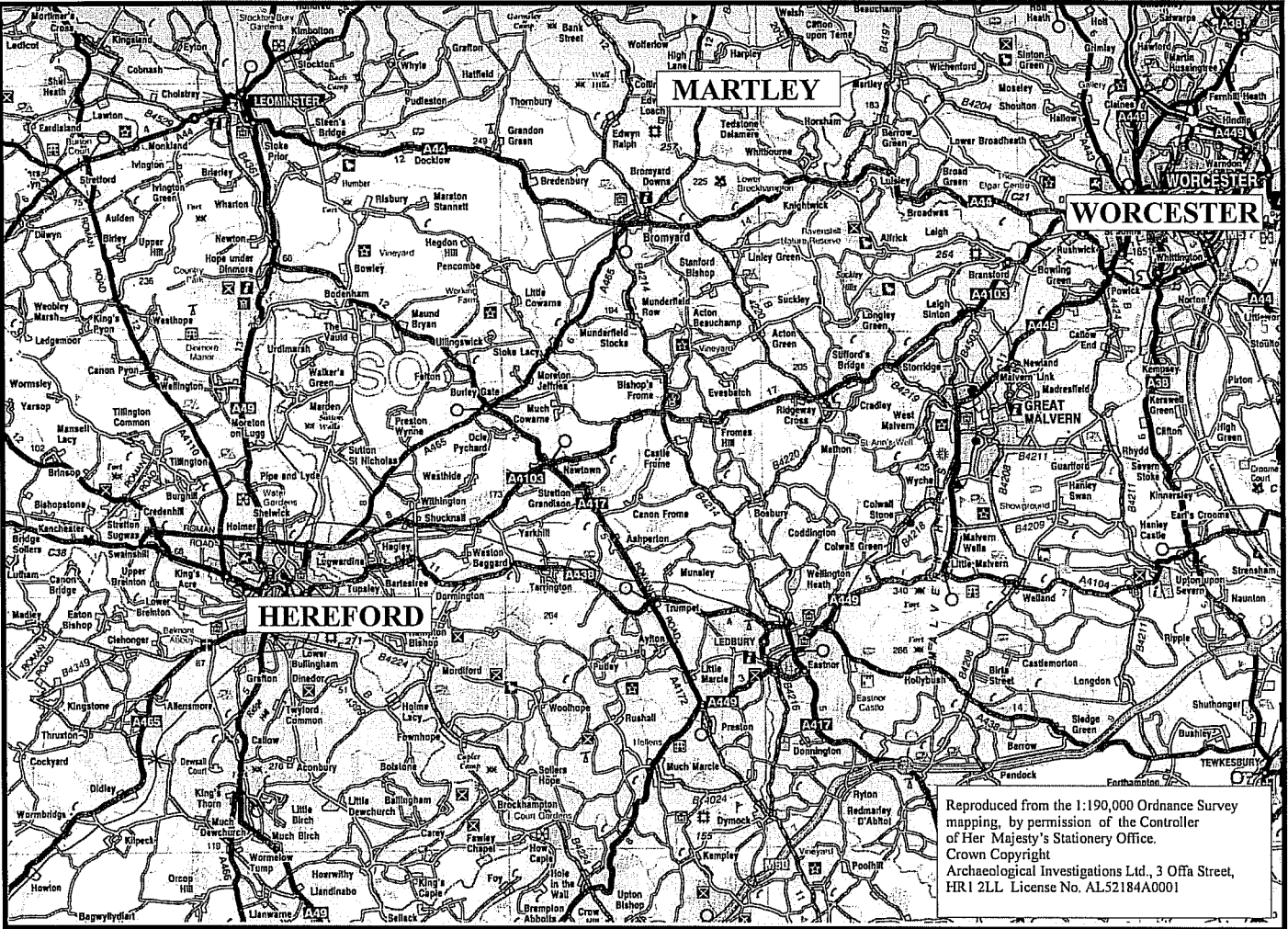


Figure 1 Site location

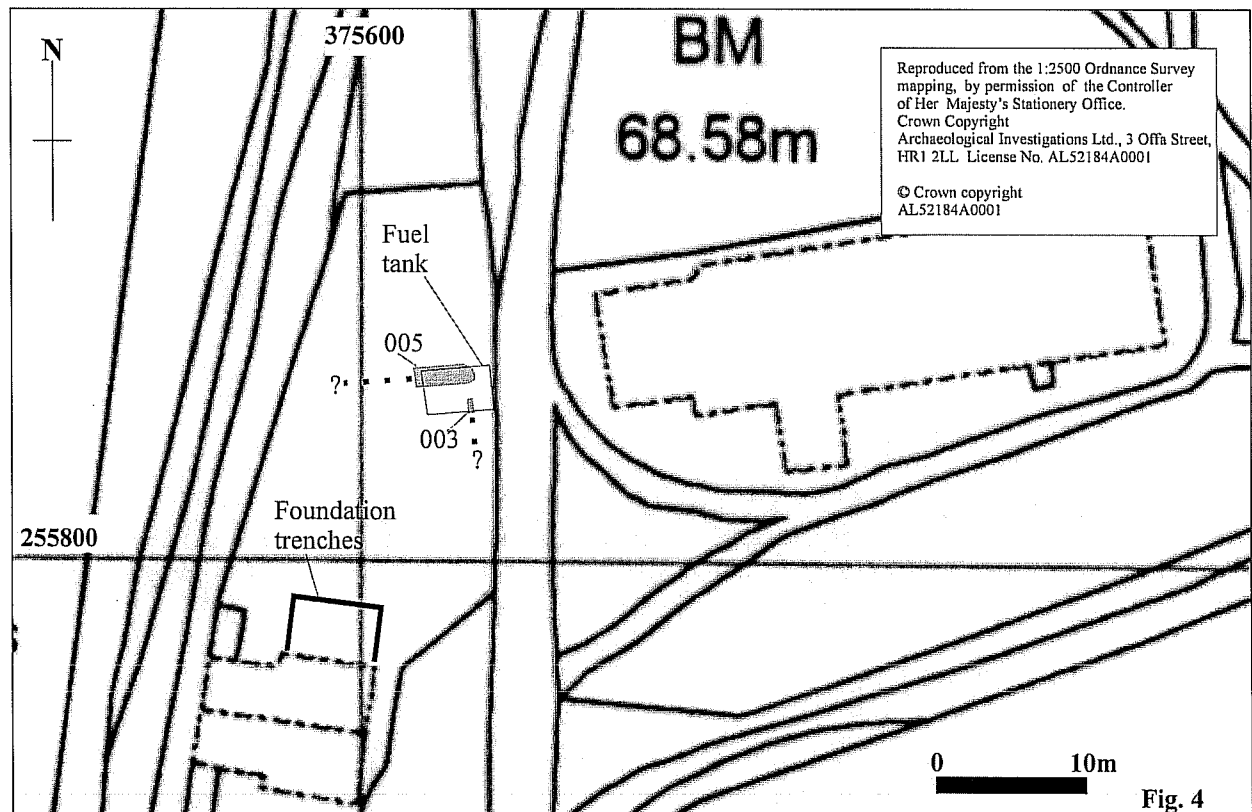
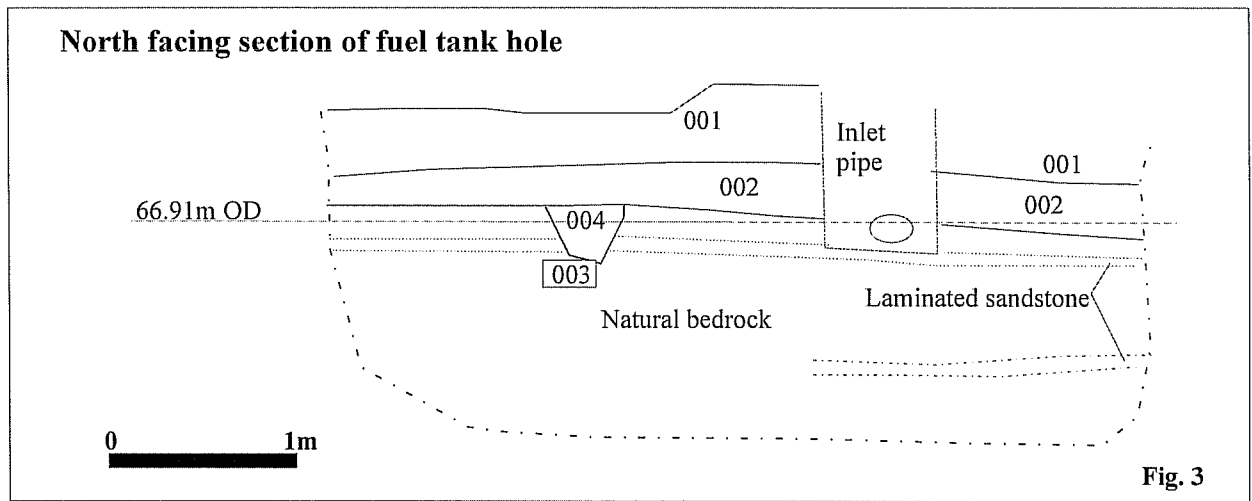
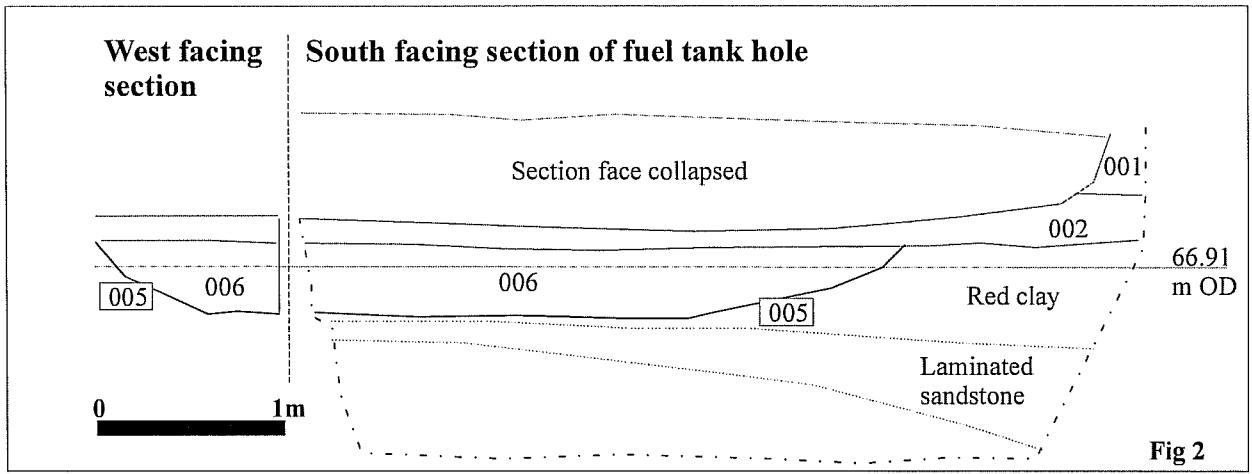




Plate 1
Showing natural deposits in west facing section of the tank trench

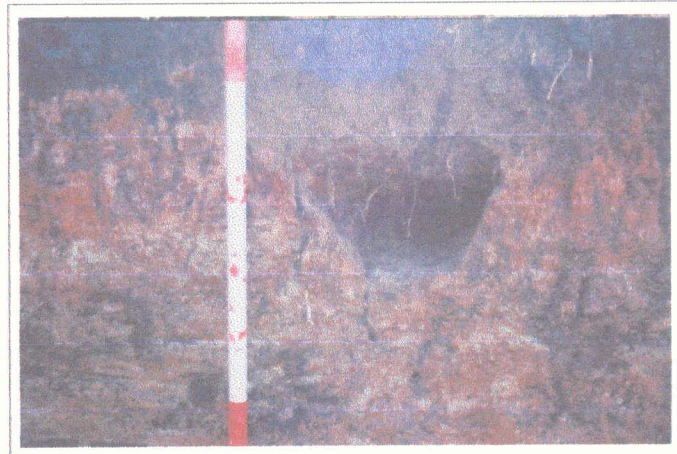


Plate 2
Showing feature 003 in the north facing section

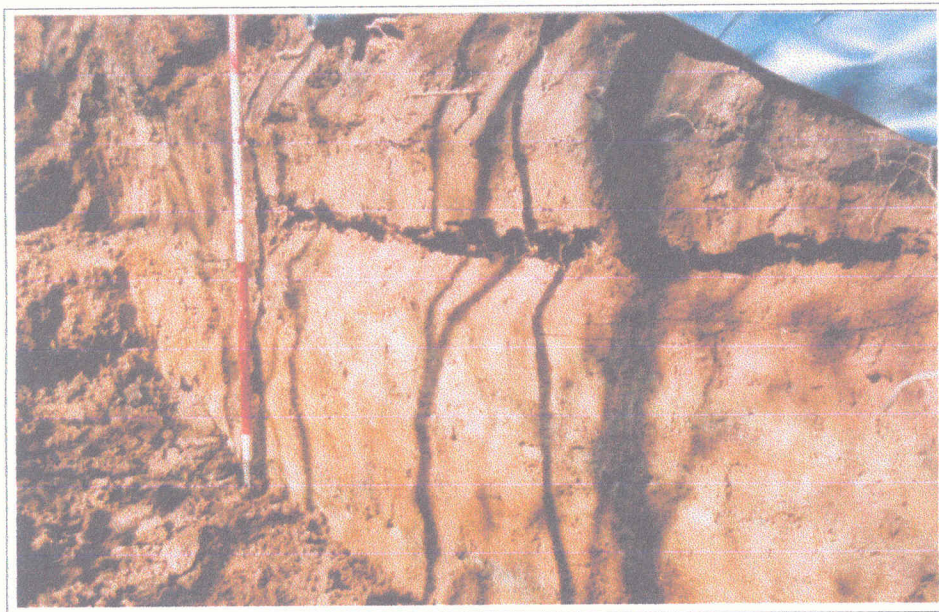


Plate 3
Feature 005 in the south facing section following investigation. The feature appears to butt end in the foreground and there is no sign of it in the east facing section (Plate 1).



Plate 4
Showing area of excavation for foundations



Plate 5
Showing natural bedrock

Appendix 1

Sites and Monuments Record information

SMR Ref	Site Name	Monument Types	NGR
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Activity

WSM27249	Watching brief at Chantry High School, Martley, Worcestershire	FIELD	Post Medieval to Modern - 1890 AD? to 1960 AD? SO75756006
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WSM29797	Watching brief at the church of St Peter, Martley	(NEGATIVE RESULT)	- to SO75615981
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WSM31624	Watching brief at Church Steps Cottage, Martley		SO75595979
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Building

WSM03369	St Peter, Martley	CHURCH WALL PAINTING	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD Medieval - 1200 AD to 1299 AD SO75635981
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WSM06720	Rectory, Martley	VICARAGE	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD SO75695987
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Monument

WSM07148	Pound, opp church, Martley	POUND	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD SO75575984
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SMR Ref	Site Name	Monument Types	NGR
WSM08209	Ewks, W of court Farm, Martley	BANK (EARTHWORK) - to	SO75505980
WSM08214	Ewks, S of Church, Martley	UNASSIGNED - to	SO75705960
WSM09580	Barbers Farm, Martley	DWELLING Post Medieval - 1700 AD to 1799 AD	SO76005994
WSM09581	Court Farm, Martley	DWELLING Post Medieval - 1700 AD to 1799 AD	SO75555995
WSM09592	The Smithy, Martley	DWELLING Post Medieval - 1700 AD to 1799 AD	SO75426000
WSM22947	Old Clay Pits, Martley	CLAY PIT Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD	SO76046006
WSM28774	Number Withdrawn		SO75826010

Historic Park or Garden

WSM28805	Garden Building at Barber's Farmhouse	GARDEN BUILDING Post Medieval - 1700 AD to 1899 AD	SO76005996
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Church Steps Cottage

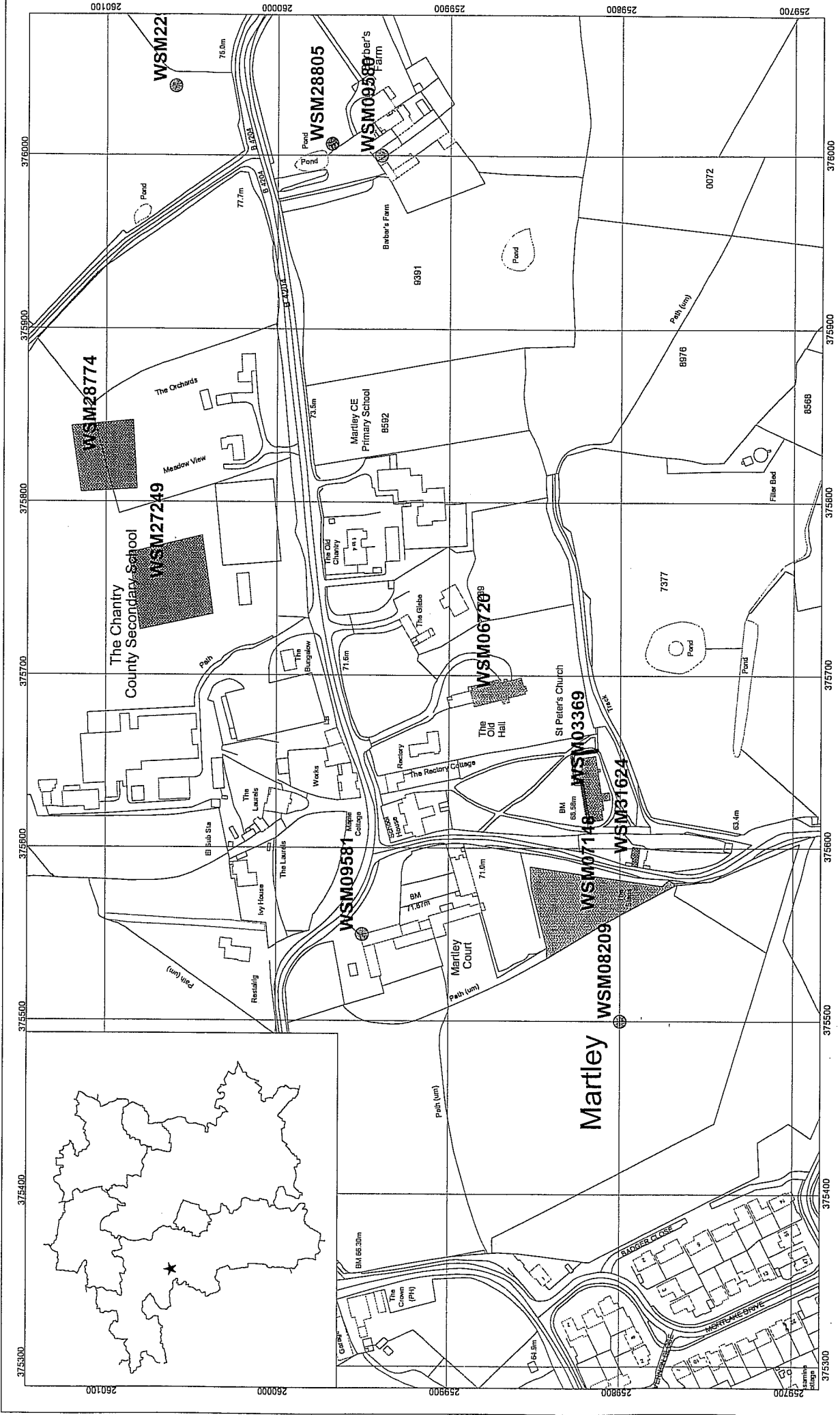
SMR search: 500m radius

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Scale 1:3000



Church Steps Cottage

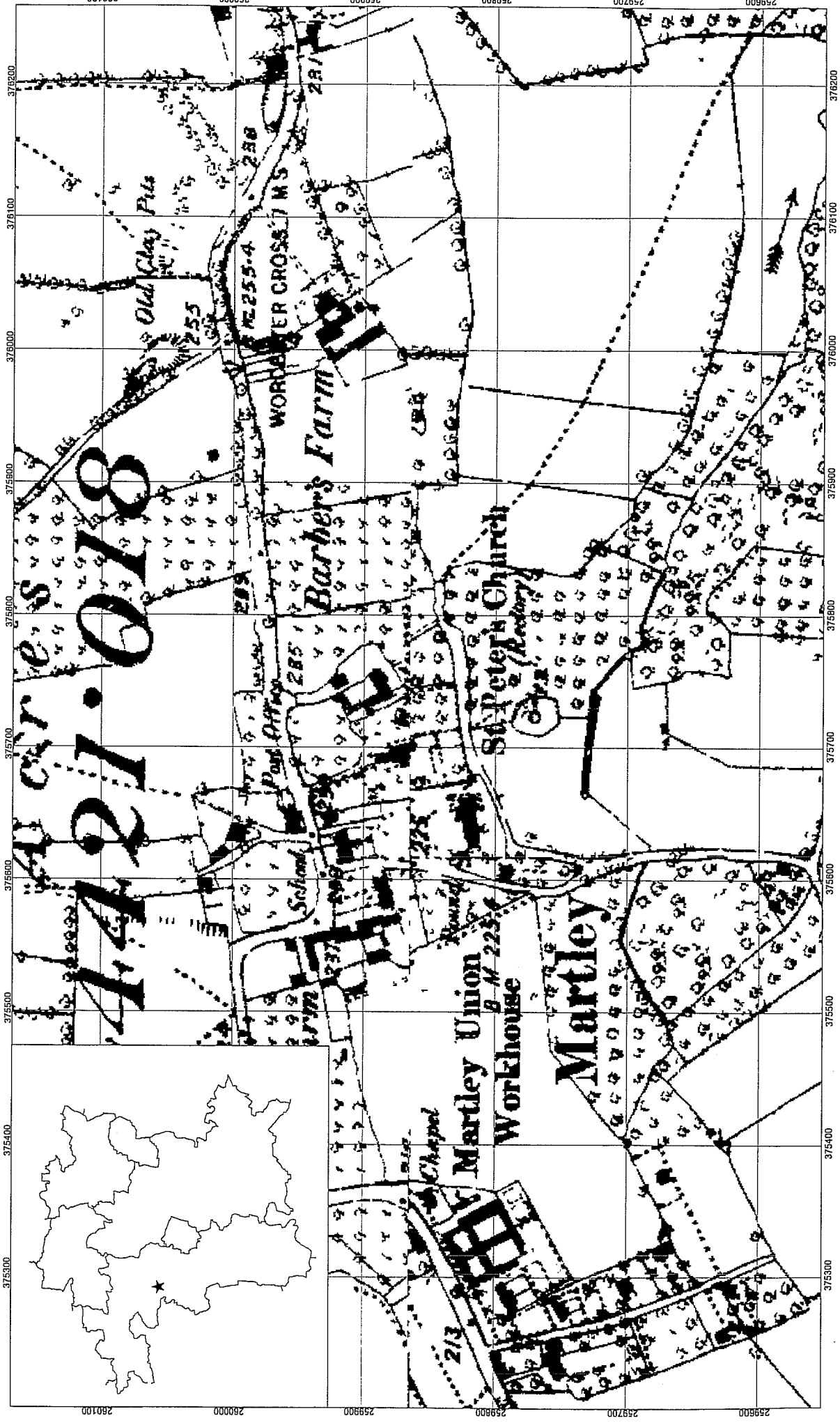
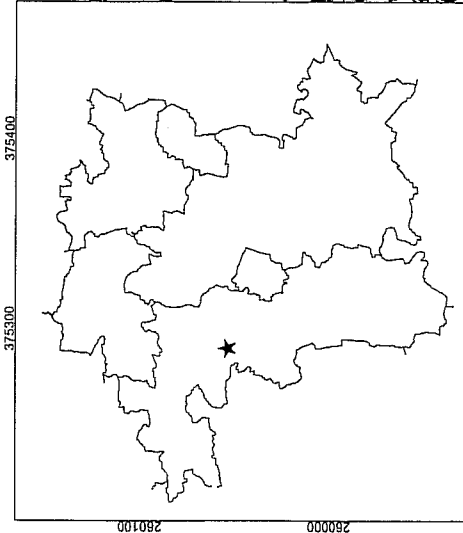
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Church Steps Cottage

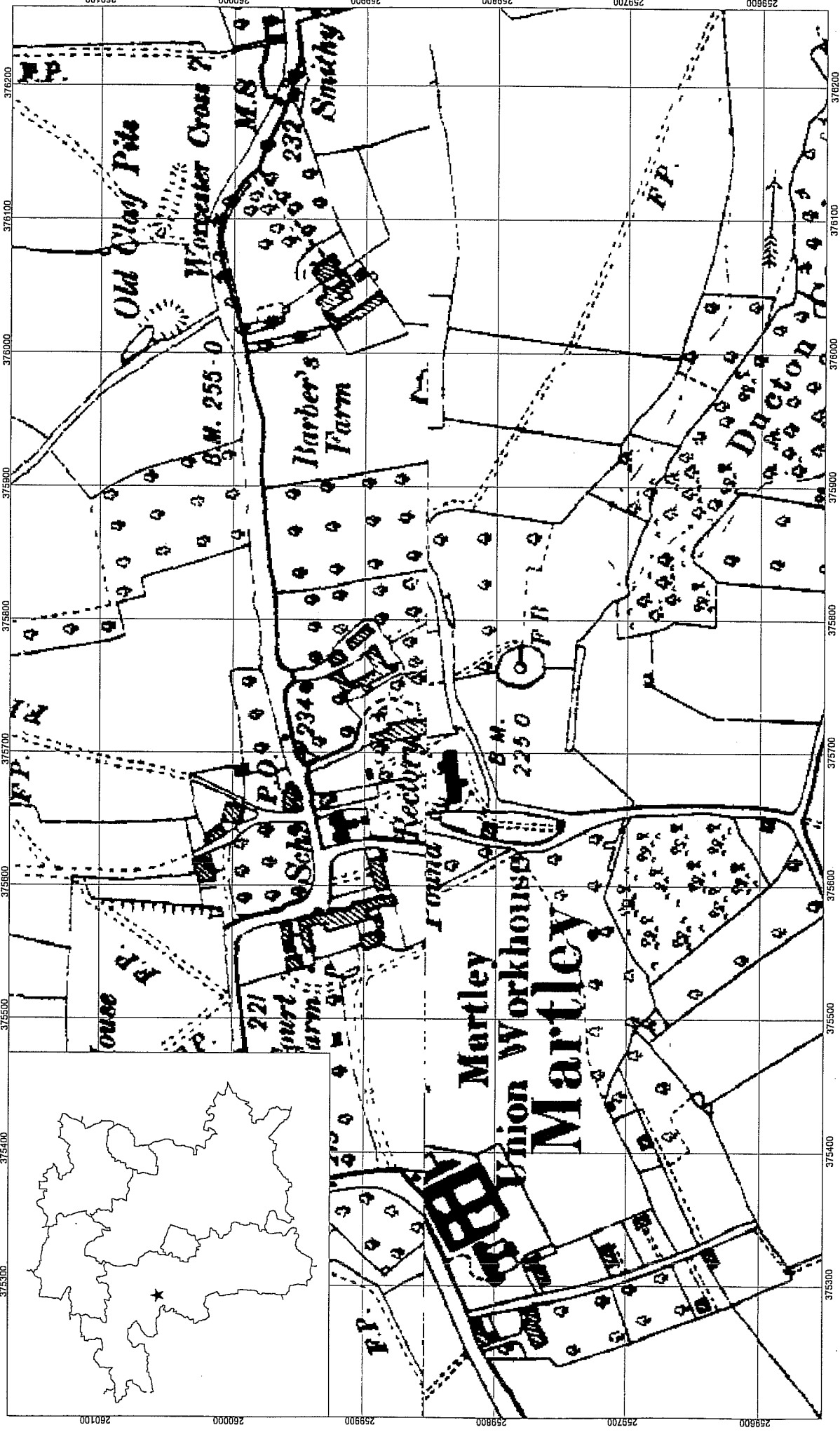
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