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*Archaeological Evaluation at Land Adjacent to
Farnham House, Church Street, Broadway,
Worcestershire*



*An Archaeological Evaluation
at Land Adjacent to Farnham
House, Church Street,
Broadway, Worcestershire*

A Report for Mr & Mrs Thorneywork

Paul Williams

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Project: PJ 137

WSM 34360

***Mercian Archaeology** undertake archaeological projects across much of the West Midlands and the Welsh Marches. **We specialise in Historic Building Recording and Analysis.** We also undertake archaeological watching-briefs, evaluation and excavation, desk-based assessment, historic landscape assessment and osteological analysis. We now also carry out historic reconstruction and can produce illustrations for publication, website or interpretative panels.*

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1. Project Background

1.1. Location of the Site

Broadway is perhaps one of the most picturesque and most photographed villages of England. It lies in the Vale of Evesham, around 8 kilometres to the south-east of the market town of Evesham, on the southern extremity of the County of Worcestershire (NGR SP 9343 7540), bordering the Cotswolds.

The development site lies to the rear of Farnham House on land adjacent to the southern side of the B4632 (Figure 1).

1.2. Project Details

A planning application was presented to Wychavon District Council for the erection of a detached dwelling with garage and ancillary works (WH/05/0295). The planning process determined that the proposed development site lies within an archaeologically sensitive area, which may contain remains relating to the medieval development of Broadway, with specific reference to the monastic aspect associated with the focus on The Grange, a former holding of Pershore Abbey, which stood adjacent to the south of Farnham House. As a result, the Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, placed an 'archaeological evaluation' planning condition on the application, for which a brief of work was written (WAS 2005).

1.3. Reasons for the Project

The archaeological evaluation was suggested as the appropriate response to the threat posed to the potential archaeological site by the development process. This would involve the excavation of foundation and service trenches for the proposed development.

An archaeological evaluation is defined as:

'A limited programme of non-intrusive and / or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present, fieldwork should determine their character, extent, quality, preservation and their worth at a local, national or international level as appropriate' (IFA 2001).

The evaluation was proposed in order that an assessment could be made of the survival, condition and extent of any archaeological deposits or features within the development site and placed into context using our current archaeological knowledge of the area.

2. Methods and Process

2.1. Project Specification

- ❑ The project fieldwork conforms to the Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation (IFA 2001).
- ❑ The archive conforms to the standards and guidelines established by the Archaeological Data Service.
- ❑ The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (WHEAS, 2005) and for which a project proposal and detailed specification was produced (Mercian Archaeology (2005).
- ❑ Worcestershire County Council requirements and guidelines for archaeological projects in the county.
- ❑ The record archive will be offered to the appropriate museum after discussion with the curator.
- ❑ The Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1997)
- ❑ The Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, Institute of Field Archaeologists (1997)
- ❑ Guidelines for Finds Work, Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999)
- ❑ Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (DoE, PPG 16 1990).
- ❑ Institute of Field Archaeologists ‘Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
- ❑ Guidelines for the Preparation of Archives for Long-Term Storage (Walker 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections, Museum and Galleries Commission (1992)
- ❑ Conservation Guidelines No 2, United Kingdom Institute of Conservation.
- ❑ Management of Archaeological Projects, English Heritage 1991
- ❑ Environmental Archaeology and Archaeological Evaluations: Recommendation Regarding the Environmental Archaeology Component of Archaeological Evaluations in England, Association for Environmental Archaeology Working Paper Number 2 (1995)

- Mercian Archaeology adhere to the service practice and health and safety policy as contained within the Mercian Archaeology Service Manual (Williams 2003)

2.2. Aims of the Project

The archaeological project aimed to:

- Use the results of the archaeological work to produce a report highlighting: -
 1. The survival, condition, form, extent and location of any archaeological deposits.
 2. Make an analysis and interpretation of all identified natural and cultural deposits
- Based on the above, establish the significance, survival, condition and period of any archaeological remains and place them within context at local, regional or national level where relevant.

3. The Documentary Background

The earliest recorded place name for Broadway was the Braden Wege, literally meaning ‘a roadway, or broad road’ (Hooke 1990,229). Broadway has its roots in the Anglo Saxon period. The church of St Eadburg, which stands to the south of the current town, is an Anglo-Saxon foundation, although the earliest remaining fabric appears to date from the Norman period (Miller et al, 2000).

The earliest settlement is likely to have been close to the church. Documents from the 10th century show that The Abbey of St Mary and St Eadburg held estate at Broadway (Griffin and Jones, 1999). It appears that the Abbey of Pershore laid out the burgage plots of the medieval town in the late 12th century. In 1196 a licence to hold a weekly Wednesday market and a three-day fair was granted to the town. A further licence to hold a weekly Tuesday market was granted to the town in 1251 and by the 13th or 14th century Broadway had reached its economic zenith (VCH IV, 1971). The town appears to have declined into the following centuries, eventually losing its urban status. There was a slight upturn in fortune during the late 17th century, when many houses, which still survive along the High Street, were built. The upturn coincides with the construction of the turnpike roads and Broadway seems to have become a thriving coaching centre (Miller 2000), being en-route from Gloucester to Worcester. There was also a small-scale glove making industry in the town into the 19th century (Miller 2000), which helped keep the town from decline.

The Central Marches Historic Town Survey analysed the street plan and urban form of the town and identified areas of medieval occupation based on upstanding fabric, recognition of typical medieval plot boundaries, archaeological and historic evidence. The focus of medieval activity was along High Street (Dalwood et al, 1982). It was concluded by the survey that ‘buried archaeological deposits have moderate potential’ (Dalwood et al 1982). There are

several listings on the Worcestershire Sites and Monuments Record for the area encompassing the. These are highlighted in the section below.

3.2. The Archaeological Background

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Abbot's Grange in 1990 (Edwards 1990; WSM 29557). Abbot's Grange shares the southern boundary of the development site and is listed on the Worcestershire Historic Environment record as a medieval grange of Pershore Abbey (WSM 01292). A 'grange' basically was an outlying farm of a monastic establishment, which was run along commercial lines. It was usual for several granges to be held by one monastic house. Parts of the present Abbot's Grange date from the 14th century, although much has been lost and there are many later additions. The evaluation located the remains of many limestone wall foundations and surfaces believing to belong to the original buildings of the monastic holding on the site, with a ceramic assemblage spanning the 13th to 16th centuries (Edwards and Woodiwiss 1990). The extent of the grange is still uncertain (Dalwood 1996).

A recent archaeological evaluation on the former site of the Gordon Russell Factory concluded that the historic land-use of this area of town was most likely as orchard (AIL 2004), and a further evaluation at The Rickground, Cheltenham Road located only post-medieval remains (Griffin and Jones 1999).

Watching briefs in High Street also revealed no evidence of the medieval development of the town (Topping 1995; Wychbold 1994; Topping 1996; Mercian Archaeology 2003)

There is little physical for pre-medieval settlement within the core of the town; a single sherd of Roman pottery was found during the excavations at the Abbot's Grange (WSM 29557) and a 'Roman vessel' was discovered by a local antiquarian (WSM 19370). Whilst, around the town there are many recorded prehistoric sites and findspots including prehistoric and Roman occupation sites to the west (WSM 10943, 10944, 10945), with further Roman activity to the north of the town (Dalwood 1996).

Farnham House is located on the western side of Church Street and is butted by slightly later stone former agricultural buildings. The house dates from the mid-17th century and is of local limestone and stone tile roof. The grounds are a combination of mature gardens and rough meadow area (the development site).

3.1. The Topography

Broadway lies at a height above Ordnance Datum of between 80m and 120m. The land slopes gently down from the Cotswold scarp to the east with watercourses generally flowing east to west.

The local soils are of brown calcareous earths (mid brown silty-clay) of the Badsey series (Beard *et al*, 1986), with underlying geology of Jurassic Marlstone Rockbed (British Geological Survey 1:250,000) with limestone river terrace gravel at shallow depth.

3.3. The Cartography

The earliest available map of the area was the 1771 inclosure map of Broadway (WRO: BA328 r264.72). However, this was of no use regarding the project, other than revealing the owner of the property at that time was one Richard Osborn.

There was no mid-19th century title apportionment map of the area available at Worcestershire Records Office.

The 25” to 1 mile 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 shows Farnham House and its ancillary buildings in some detail, although the plot boundaries relay no useful information. It appears that at this time the grounds were mainly laid to orchard, in common with much of the land surrounding the town (Figure 2).

Cartographic Sources Consulted

Source	Reference Number
Inclosure Map of Broadway (1771)	Worcester Records Office BA328 r264.72 (not reproduced as of poor quality)
Ordnance Survey 1 st edition Worcestershire Sheet LVII.2 (1884)	Worcester Records Office

Other sources used are referenced within the report.

4. The Archaeological Project

4.1. The Fieldwork Methodology

The archaeological project was undertaken on 16th May 2005.

Proforma Record Forms were used to record the site stratigraphy in tandem with site notes to produce the final record contained within this report.

The trench was machine excavated by a JCB fitted with a 1.60 metre wide ditching bucket.

The methodology adopted and the favourable working conditions meant that the aims and objectives of the brief could be fully met and the fieldwork was successfully concluded, even though the high water table meant that the excavated areas flooded rapidly.

4.2. The Fieldwork Results

One trench was excavated adjacent to the site of the proposed new building. The trench was 20 metres long and was extended out on the southern side by a further 10 metres to make a

3.50 metre x 10 metre open area within the central area of the trench, appearing as a 'flattened L-shaped' in plan. Overall, the area excavated covered around 50 square metres as suggested in the brief.

The trench was excavated to 0.50 metres with a maximum depth of 0.64 metres at the eastern end. The natural undisturbed yellowish clay with some reddish iron staining [103] was encountered at between 0.48 metres and 0.60 metres below the present ground level. This was sealed by a 25-centimetre thick subsoil layer of greyish-brown silty clay with some charcoal flecking and very small fragments of degraded limestone and tree roots [102]. The overlying topsoil [100] was of a greyish-brown silty clay, becoming more silty and friable near the interface [101] with the subsoil below.

There was a relatively high water table and the trench began to flood at 0.50 metres below the surface. The flooding must have been apparent since at least the 19th century, as a ceramic land drain was located running north to south through the trench.

One feature was encountered during the evaluation. This was the lowest course of a rough limestone wall [104] without any bonding mortar, running north-west to south-east across the trench (Figure 3). The stonework was sealed by the subsoil layer [102]. There were no dateable finds associated with this feature, or from any of the deposits below topsoil level.

5. Discussion of the Physical and Documentary Evidence

An ephemeral foundation course of a dry-stone wall was encountered during the evaluation, running north-west to south-east across the site (Plates 3 and 4). Only the lowest course of the structure survived, indicating that the stone above had been removed and probably used elsewhere during antiquity. There was no visible robber trench, suggesting that the robbed stonework was all above ground and at the time. Unfortunately, there were no finds associated with the remnant stonework that could date its construction or decline. There was a build-up of subsoil over the feature indicating that it was buried gradually over probably several centuries and the remains may date from the time of construction of Farnham House in the 17th century. The lack of mortar suggests that the construction was merely a boundary wall. It was noticeable that the wall appears to run parallel to a 19th century (?) brick boundary wall, which still stands to the west of the evaluated area (Figure 4). The distance between the brick wall and the stone wall remains cannot be correlated with a definitive burgage plot width based on the map evidence available and the orientation suggests it is more likely a division of a garden plot.

The lack of cultural material retrieved from the evaluation site suggests that the plot had been used as a garden / orchard since the construction of Farnham House. The high water table would also have presented problems with regard to direct occupation and use of the site, although changes in water table level should be taken into account.

6. Conclusion

The results of the archaeological watching brief demonstrate that there was no significant archaeological remains or deposits located within the area of trenching. The ephemeral remains of a dry-stone wall encountered during the trenching, were thought not to be significant and probably form the remains of an early garden plot boundary associated with the house. The lack of finds suggests that the site has been used as a garden / orchard since the construction of Farnham house in the mid-17th century.

7. Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Mr and Mrs Thorneywork, of Farnham House for their interest, help and hospitality. Thanks are also due to the JCB operator (John). Thanks are also due to Deborah Overton of Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service for undertaking the Historic Environment Record search, Mike Glyde, Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council and the staff of Worcester Records Office.

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Plates

Plate 1



Work in progress looking east

Plate 2



General site stratigraphy
(Scale 1 metre)

Plates

Plate 3



The wall feature [104] (Scale 1metre). Note the high water table

Plate 4

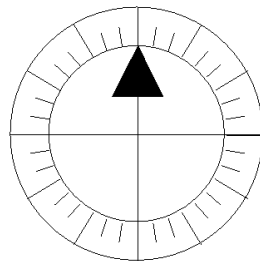
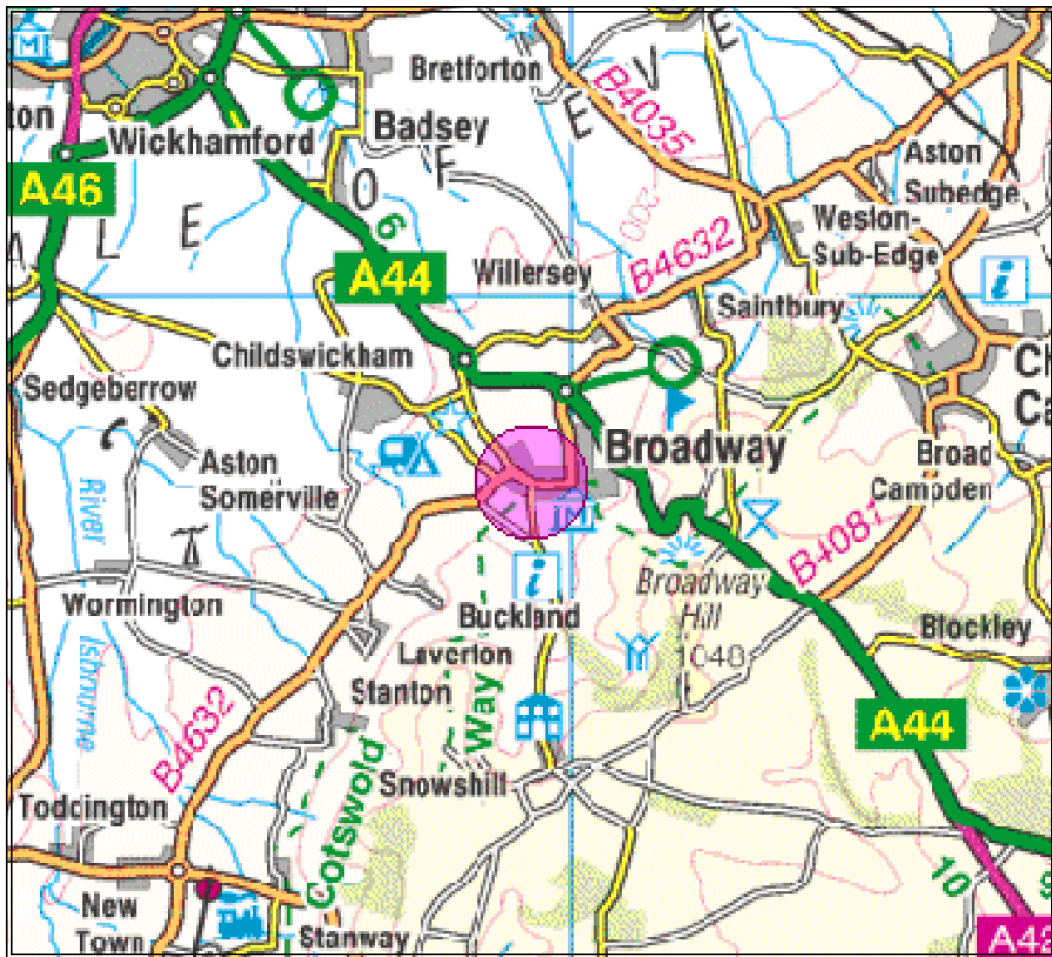


Note the subsoil [102] in the section, which seals the wall feature [104] below

(Scale 1 metre)

(Scale 1 metre)

Figure 1: Location of the Site



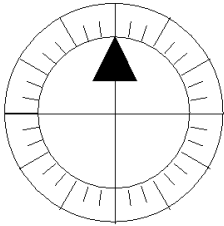
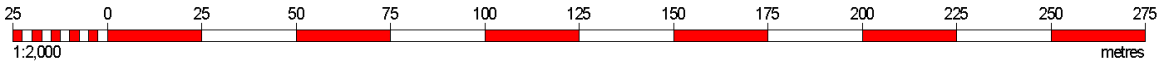
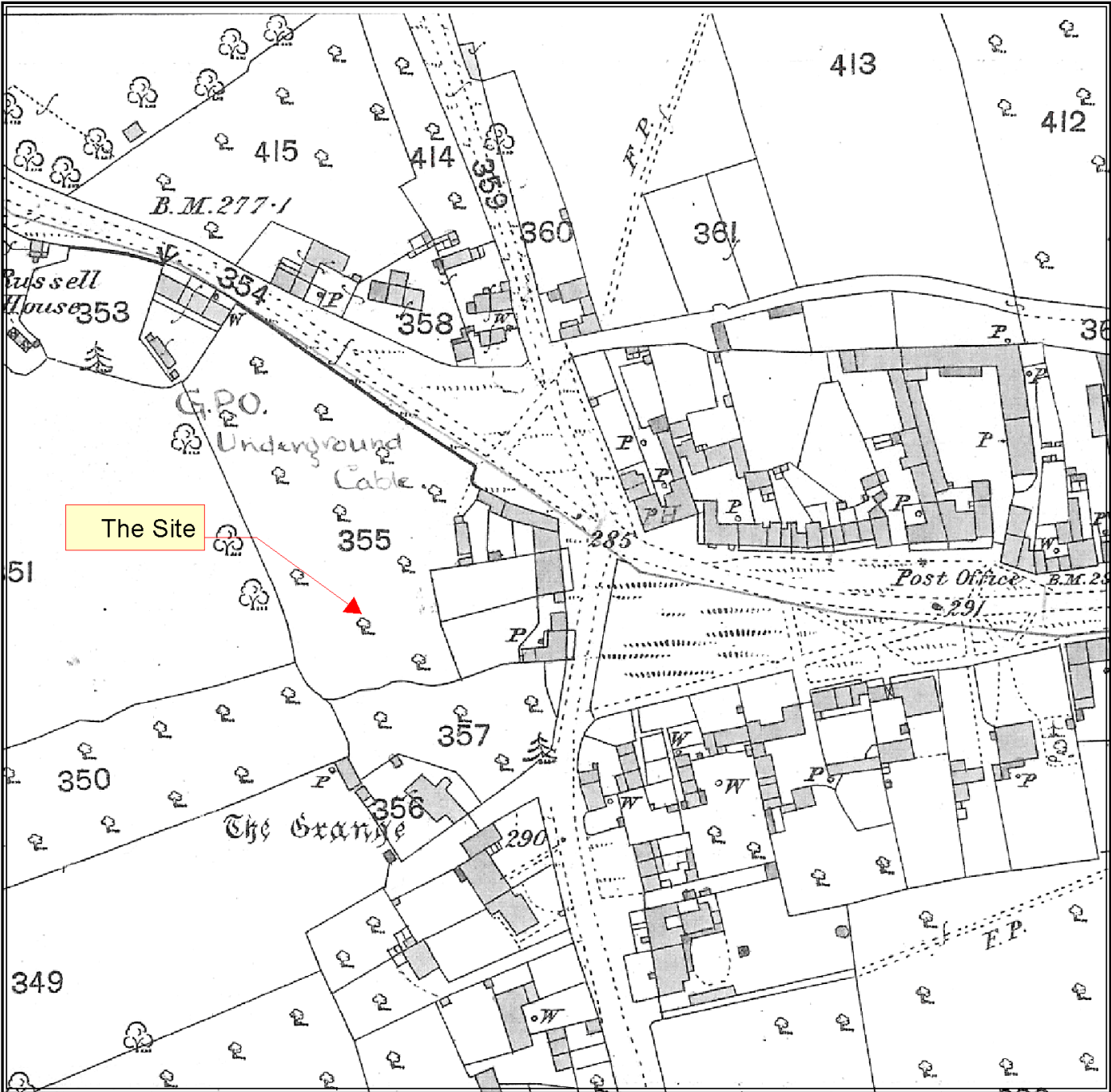
Location of the Site at Broadway

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Figure 2: 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (1884)



The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map showing the layout of the site by the late 19th century.

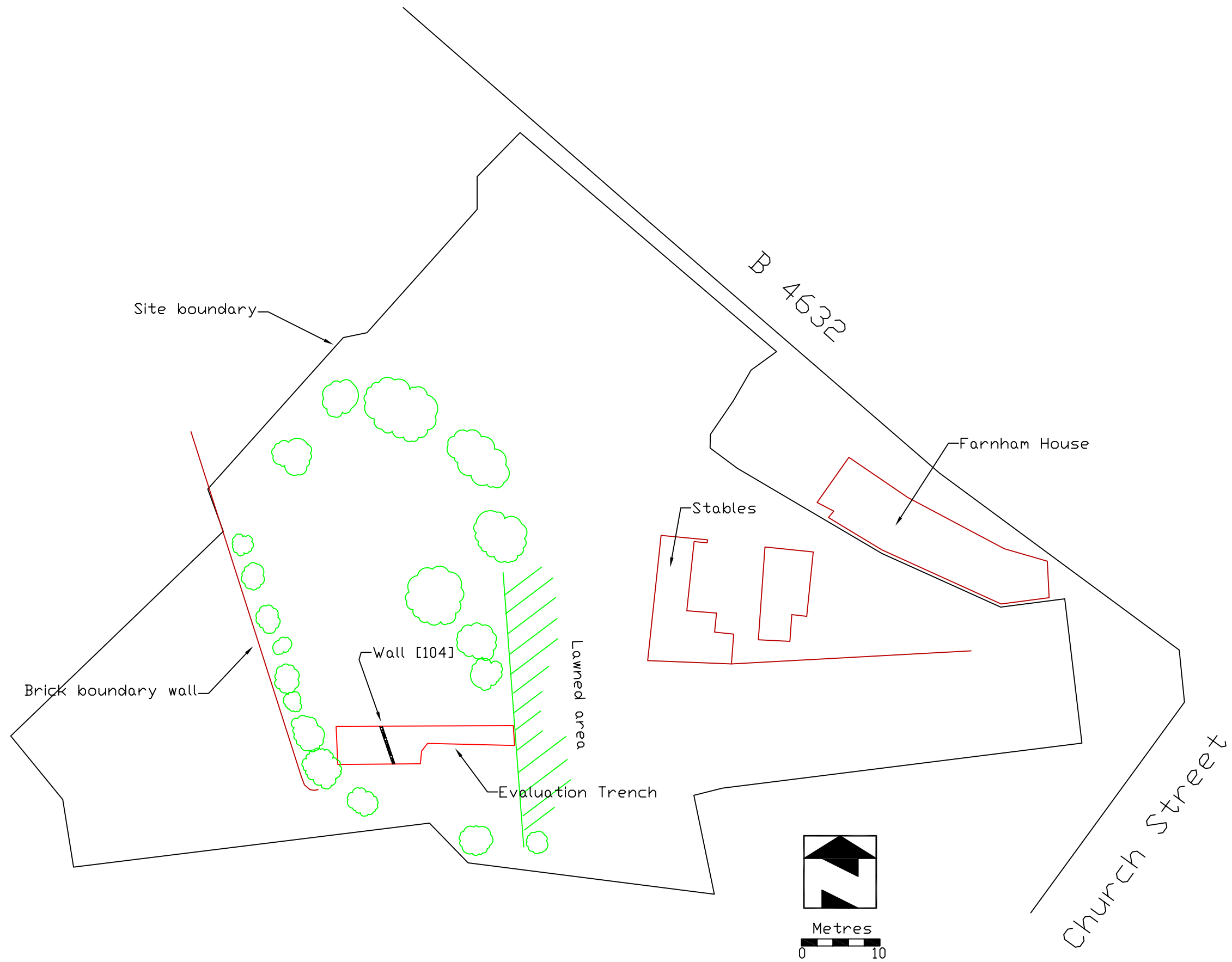


Figure 3: Site Plan and Trench Location