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*Evaluation of Land at Corner House,
Hanley Swan, Worcestershire*



*An Archaeological Project
at Corner House,
Roberts End, Hanley Swan,
Worcestershire*


A Report for Mr Michael Dean

May 2007

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Project: PJ 125

WSM 33955



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1. Project Background

1.1. Location of the Site

Hanley Swan is located to the east of the ridge of the Malvern Hills, which run north to south and parallel with the River Severn to the west (NGR SO 8166 4294). The village is within the parish of Hanley Castle on the B4209 Hanley Castle to Malvern Wells road (Figure 1)

Corner House lies on the road to Welland, diagonally opposite to the Swan pool, which forms the focal point of the village. The development site lies within the former gardens of Corner House, which have been divided to provide the building plot.

1.2. Project Details

A planning application was presented to Malvern Hills District Council for the erection of a pair of semi-detached houses and associated infrastructure (MH/07/0234). The planning process determined that the proposed development site lies within an archaeologically sensitive area, which may contain remains relating to medieval and later pottery and brick and tile production. It was determined that the groundwork associated with the proposed development may pose a threat to any buried remains associated with the early ceramic industry of the area. As a result, the Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council, placed an 'evaluation' planning condition on the application, for which a brief of work was written (WHEAS 2007) and a written scheme of investigation (Mercian Archaeology 2007) for the work was subsequently approved.

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 have involved 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 at the development site was proposed in order that an assessment of the nature, extent, period and condition of any archaeological remains or deposits encountered could be made and informed decisions made regarding mitigation of deposits and structures.

2. Methods and Process

2.1. Project Specification

- ❑ The archaeological project conforms to the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IFA 2001).
- ❑ The project conforms to a brief prepared by The Planning Archaeologist, Worcestershire County Council (Brief MH/07/0234, WHEAS, May 2007), for which a project proposal and detailed specification was produced (Mercian Archaeology 2007).
- ❑ Mercian Archaeology adhere to the service practice and health and safety policy as contained within the *Mercian Archaeology Service Manual* (Williams 2003)
- ❑ The record archive will be offered to the appropriate museum after discussion with the client and / or archaeological curator.
- ❑ *The Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists* (1997) will be adhered to.
- ❑ *The Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, Institute of Field Archaeologists* (1997) will also be followed
- ❑ *Guidelines for Finds Work, Institute of Field Archaeologists* (2001) will be followed.
- ❑ The project and any recommendations will conform to the government advice contained in *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* (DoE, PPG 16 1990).
- ❑ The documentary research will follow the guidelines contained within the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (2001)
- ❑ *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) will be followed.
- ❑ *Conservation Guidelines No 2*, United Kingdom Institute of Conservation.
- ❑ *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*, 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)

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 and location of archaeological deposits from any period.
 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 Research

3.1. The Topography

Hanley Swan lies on the relatively flat plain between the River Severn to the east and the ridge of the Malvern Hills to the west. The underlying geology of the area is Mercian Mudstone (Keuper Marl) below Pleistocene fan gravels. The soils are surface water and ground water gleys of the Brockhurst 2 Association (Hurst 1994). The properties of the clay deposits, which lie below the soil horizons (topsoil and subsoil), are ideally suited to the production of ceramics. The other components for economically viable ceramic production was also in abundance across Malvern Chase, in the form of timber that was a requirement to fire the pottery kilns and brick-making clamps. Local pottery also has inclusions of Malvernian stone. The pinkish stone particles can be seen in the sections of broken pottery. The crushed stone was added to the clay as a ‘temper’ (also termed grog, or filler). The temper was added to change the properties of the clay by reducing plasticity.

The ceramic wares (pottery, brick and tile) produced around Hanley Swan and Hanley Castle could be readily exported along the River Severn to Worcester and further afield.

A Brief Archaeological Overview

Abbreviations used: WSM ~ Worcestershire Historic Environment Record number.

It is well documented that during the medieval period the parish of Hanley Castle (including Hanley Swan) was the centre of a significant regional ceramic industry. For a complete overview of the medieval ceramic industry in the area, reference should be made to Derek Hurst’s paper (Hurst 1994).

The physical evidence of the ceramic industry includes the location and identification of several kilns, waster dumps and clay pits. At Forty Green, a significant dump of pottery manufacturing waste (WSM 09685) helped identify a medieval pottery-manufacturing centre (Pearson and Griffin, 2001). A further production site is listed as Catterall Cottage, Hanley

Swan (WSM 26909) and a possible tile kiln is recorded near Hanley Swan Pond (WSM 32736). Medieval pottery and wasters have also been recorded close to Brickwalls Farm (WSM 30572) and medieval pottery scatters have been recorded at the rear of Bay Tree Cottage, Gilberts End (WSM 08514); at Ravelin, Gilberts End (WSM 8515); West of Ivy House (WSM 08516) and south-east of Balcony, Hanley Swan (WSM 8517). Further quantities of medieval pottery and roof tile, some glazed, were recorded at Clap Gate Field (WSM 08519) and at The Grange, Hanley Swan (WSM 25880). Archaeological work at Albion Lodge, which is located around 500 metres to the north-east of the development site, identified fragments of vitrified brick, which may have been part of a destroyed pottery kiln in the vicinity; sherds of pottery dating from the 13th to 19th centuries and locally produced roof tile were also found (WSM33955).

There is further evidence of the medieval past of the Hanley parish with remnant ridge and furrow north of Gilberts End (WSM 15103) and south of Hanley Swan (WSM 11755).

3.2. Brief Historic Background

The section below is based on the introduction to *'The Records of Hanley Castle'* edited by J.P.Toomey (Toomey 2001), unless otherwise stated.

There is limited evidence relating to Hanley during the pre-Norman period. Anglo-Saxon charters concerning the boundaries of the manors of Powick to the north and Upton to the south indicate that the manor of Hanley took much the same form as today's civil parish.

At Domesday the manor of Hanley was granted to William FitzOsbern, the earl of Hereford. The limits of Malvern Chase (forest) were recorded as being 5 leagues, stretching from the Malvern Hills to the west, the River Severn to the east, the River Teme to the north and the Leadon in the south, giving some idea of the extent of availability of wood as fuel for the ceramics industry, although at this time the chase was protected as a royal forest, reserved for aristocratic hunting pursuits with only licensed management of the woodland.

Charters and documents highlight population expansion during the 13th century with the focus of settlement at Church End, where a weekly market was held close to the church of St Mary (possibly earlier dedicated to St Botolph).

An inquisition of 1295 refers to the well-recognised ceramics industry of Hanley Manor. There were sixteen potters digging clay and making pots. A later inquisition indicates that in 1350 there were no potters in Hanley (Hurle 1978, 24), possibly indicating the stark reality of the devastation caused to local communities by the Black Death of the early to mid-14th century.

The ceramics industry of the parish did, however, recover to such an extent in fact, that in 1573 John Hornyold, Lord of the Manor, complained that Malvern Chase was being spoiled by excessive tree felling to fire kilns for making brick, pot and tile (Hurle 1978, 24).

It is no coincidence that during the medieval period the manor of Hanley was also commonly known as Potter's Hanley (VCH IV 1924, 89).

3.3. The Cartography

The earliest available map of the area was the 1797 inclosure map of Hanley Castle (WRO). However, this was of no use regarding the project.

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

The 25" to 1 mile 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 shows the development site set to orchard. The Corner House is shown opposite the Swan pool and generally the area is little different from today (Figure 2), though there is much new development to the south of the site.

Cartographic Sources Consulted

Source	Reference Number
Inclosure Map of Hanley Castle (1797)	Worcester Records Office BA 816/2 s269.81
Ordnance Survey 1 st edition Worcestershire Sheet XLVII.2 (1886)	Worcester Records Office. (Figure 2)
Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping based on 2 nd edition (1904)	Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service printout (no permission to reproduce)
Ordnance Survey Digital Mapping based on 3 rd edition (1927)	Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service printout (no permission to reproduce)

Other sources used are referenced within the report.

4. The Archaeological Project

4.1. The Fieldwork Methodology

The archaeological project was undertaken on 17th May 2007

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 initial site inspection indicated that there were no live cables or obstructions within the area proposed for trenching, though due to the 'built-up' nature of the surrounding area, extra care was taken during machining.

The areas to be trenched were surveyed using a Garrett Ultra GTA metal detector configured to detect all metals to a maximum depth of 15 centimetres. The spoil was also scanned during the excavation process.

Two 6-metre x 1.20 metre trenches were excavated by mini-digger equipped with a 1.20 metre ditching bucket. The trench surfaces and sections were then cleaned by hand tool and recorded following accepted archaeological standards and practice. The location of the trenches is shown in Figure 3.

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.

4.2. The Fieldwork Results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 85 centimetres, with the natural undisturbed substratum [103] identified at 80 centimetres below present ground level at 32.33m Above Ordnance Datum (Newlyn). The natural material was pinkish-buff and grey clay with occasional patches of orange and grey gravel.

A 48-centimetre thick subsoil layer of very gravely greyish-brown slightly sandy clay with a moderate percentage of silt [102] sealed the natural. The layer contained occasional flecks of charcoal, though it showed no evidence of mixing and it seems likely that the charcoal generally moved down the sequence by natural processes.

The subsoil was sealed by a well-mixed garden soil [100/101]. The top 23 centimetres [100] was a very loose, blackish grey organic loam, with frequent small sub-angular stones and roots. This had leached down into the subsoil, the upper 10 centimetres or so [101] of which, had been disturbed during recent gardening processes. This was lighter in colour than the topsoil and noticeably siltier.

The topsoil [100] contained two sherds of pottery and 1 fragment of roof tile (see below). There were no further finds from this trench.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated to a depth of 78 centimetres, with the natural undisturbed substratum [103] identified at 76 centimetres below present ground level at 32.39m Above Ordnance Datum (Newlyn). The natural material [202] was pinkish-buff and grey clay with occasional patches of orange and grey gravel as noted in Trench 1.

A 47-centimetre thick subsoil layer of very gravely greyish-brown slightly sandy clay with a moderate percentage of silt [201] sealed the natural. This was identical to the subsoil noted in Trench 1, indicating that it was generally undisturbed across the site.

The subsoil was sealed by a 28-centimetre thick topsoil [202], which was slightly different to that over Trench 1. The topsoil across trench 2 showed no evidence of leaching down into the subsoil. This was probably due to different gardening processes taking place in the two areas, with more movement of topsoil over Trench 2.

One fragment of brick was retrieved from layer [200] and a further fragment of a similar brick was retrieved from layer [201] (see below). There were no further finds from this trench.

5. The artefacts

Artefactual analysis

Aims

The brief required an assessment of the quantity, range and potential of artefactual material from the excavation.

The aims of the finds assessment were:

- ❑ To identify, sort, spot date, and quantify all artefacts
- ❑ To describe the range of artefacts present
- ❑ To preliminarily assess the significance of the artefacts
- ❑ To make recommendations about the future analysis, reporting, and other appropriate requirements of artefacts.

This report covers material of medieval, post-medieval and modern date.

Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period.

Pottery fabrics are referenced to the fabric reference series maintained by the Worcestershire County Council Archaeological Service (Hurst and Rees 1992).

Results of analysis

The finds from the site were limited, indicating little activity resulting in deposition in the immediate vicinity

The total finds assemblage from the site consisted of two sherds of pottery weighing a total of 16g. The pottery was confined to a date range of the 19th-20th centuries

Other material retrieved from the site included 1 fragments of roof tile weighing 25g and 2 brick fragments with a total weight of 64g.

Discussion of the artefacts

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Medieval

The fragment of locally (Malvernian; Fabric 3) produced flat roof tile was assigned to this period and probably dated from the 13th-15th centuries. This was fairly thin, of 15mm between surfaces, with a reduced fabric containing grog of very fine Malvernian stone. This was retrieved from the topsoil of Trench 1 (context 100).

Later post-medieval / modern

The later post-medieval pottery comprised a single sherd of modern stone china, which could be dated to between the late 19th century, and present day (fabric 85) and a sherd of flower pot, which can only be dated to the same period.

Two fragments of undated brick were also recovered (contexts 200 and 201); these could not be dated, though they are likely to be *circa* 19th century.

Significance

Hanley Castle has long been known to have been associated with the production of pottery and roof tile between the medieval and early post-medieval periods and therefore, material from this period would not be unexpected. The Historic Environment record (outlined above, section 3.1) outlines extensive evidence for the early pottery industry and there is a wealth of documentary evidence relating to the pottery industry. Previous fieldwork carried out within the village has uncovered disused clay pits, sand pits, one kiln and much 'waster' material in the form of vessels, tile and brick (JD Hurst, 1994). Of particular note is the presence of substantial kiln waste dumps at nearby Brickwalls Farm, Gilbert's End which had a similar date range to the material from this site (Pearson and Griffin 2001). Though there are undoubtedly kilns yet to be identified, the evidence from the finds assemblage at the site suggests that there is none located in the immediate vicinity.

The fragment of medieval roof tile retrieved from the topsoil of Trench 1 has little significance, as the topsoil is clearly related to the development of the garden over the past century or so.

Finds Analysis Section Bibliography

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6. Comment on the Physical and Documentary Evidence

The archaeological project determined that there were no significant archaeological features or deposits within the area of trenching. The site soil profile indicates that there has been little disturbance of the site and the historic land use was likely for orchards, rather than agriculture.

The lack of finds from the two trenches suggests that there has been no settlement activity on the site prior to the 19th century. The evidence also proved negative with regard to further development of our understanding of the pottery industry in Hanley Swan. The lack of ceramics in the soil horizon is unusual for this area; the information contained on the Historic Environment Record suggests pottery is scattered widely across the fields around the village and fragments of locally produced pottery have been noted along public footpaths and in local gardens (Hurst 1994). During recent archaeological works at Albion Lodge in the village, the establishment gardener Mr Dave Branch commented that in his many years of digging holes around the village, he has always encountered pottery finds.

7. 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 evidence suggests that the area was likely to have been orchard until the 19th century, when it was gradually replaced by the gardens of the expanding village.

8. Acknowledgements

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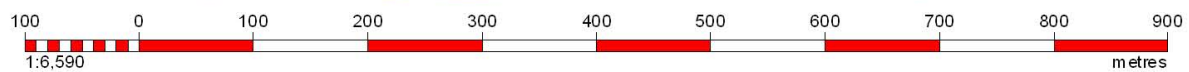
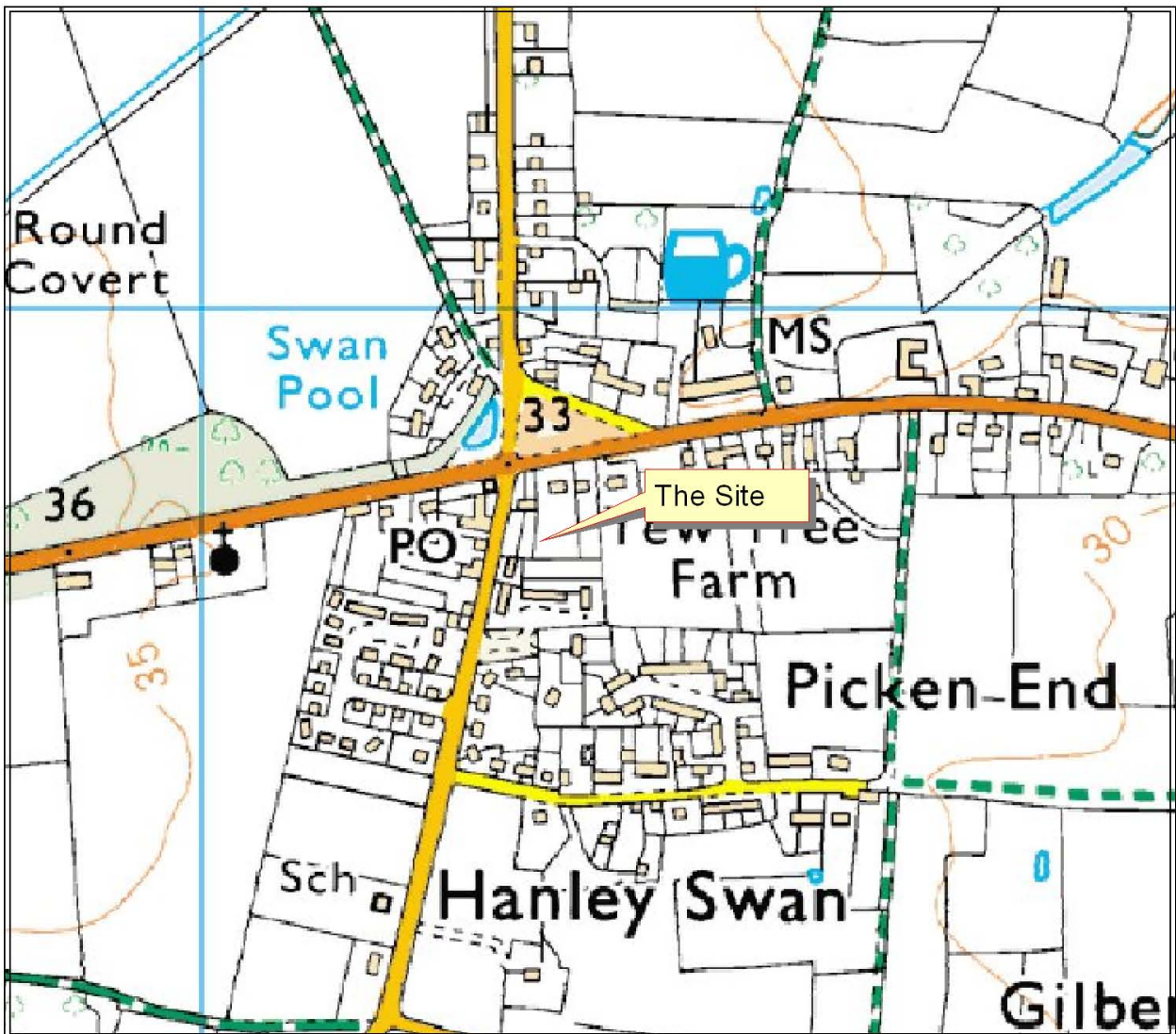
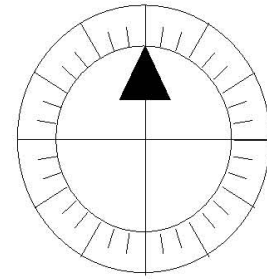
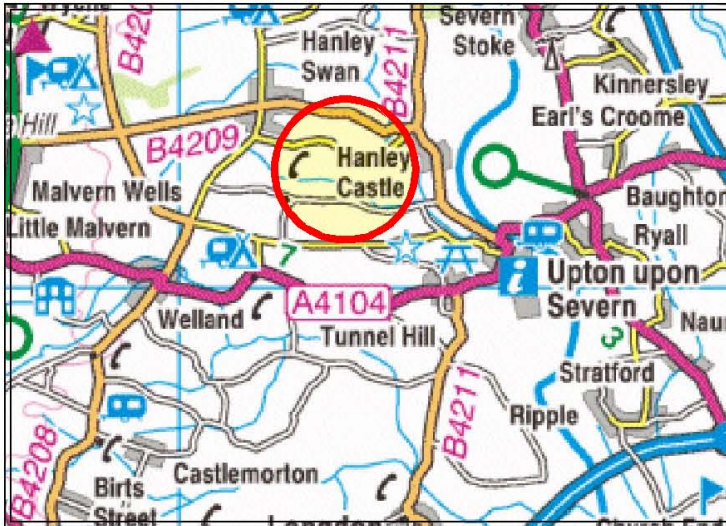
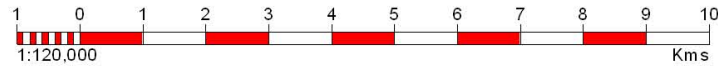


Plate 1: Trench 1 looking north-east



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking south-east

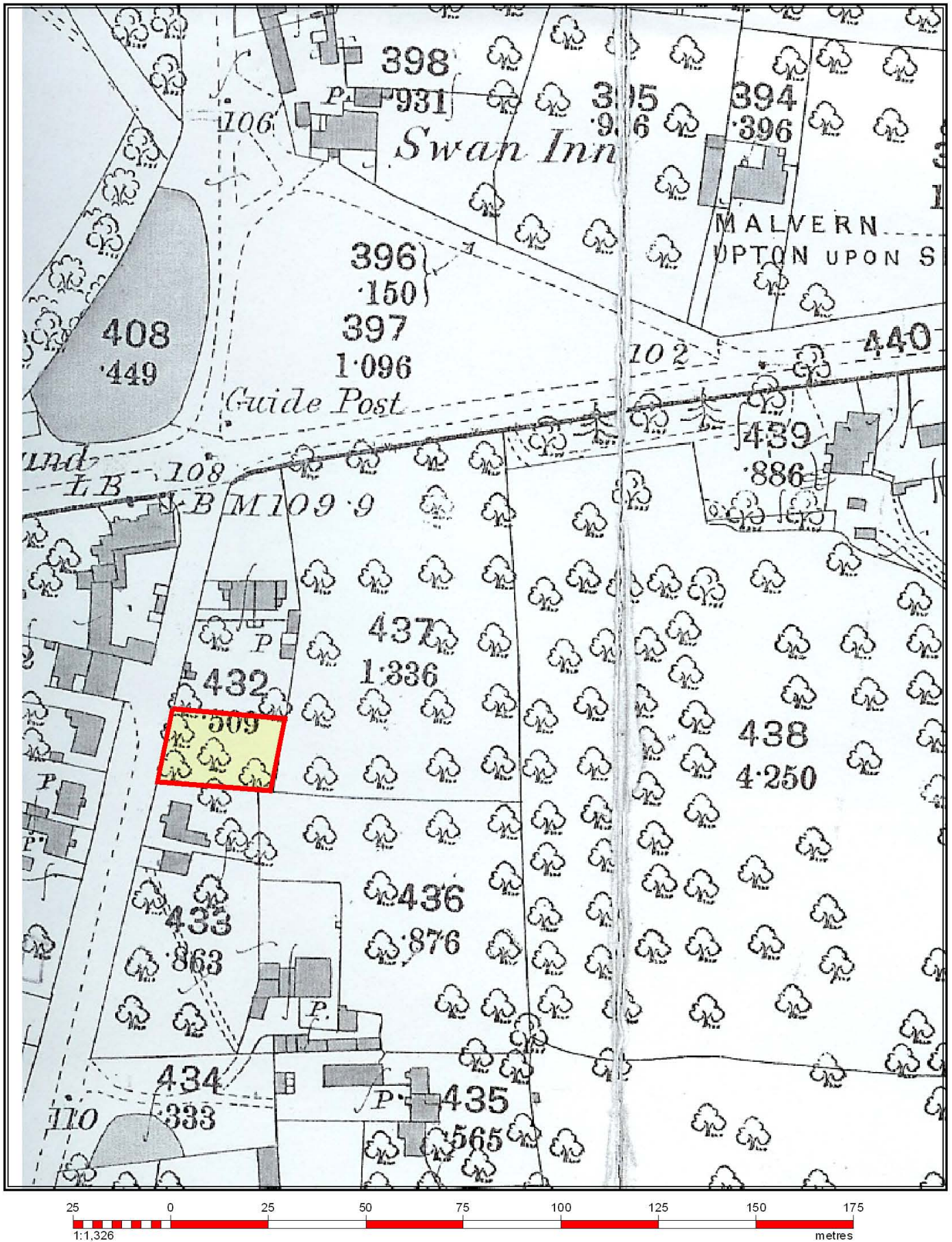
Figure 1: Location of the Site



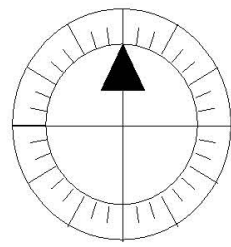
Location of the development site at Hanley Swan

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Figure 2: 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (1886)



The 1st edition Ordnance Survey with the site highlighted



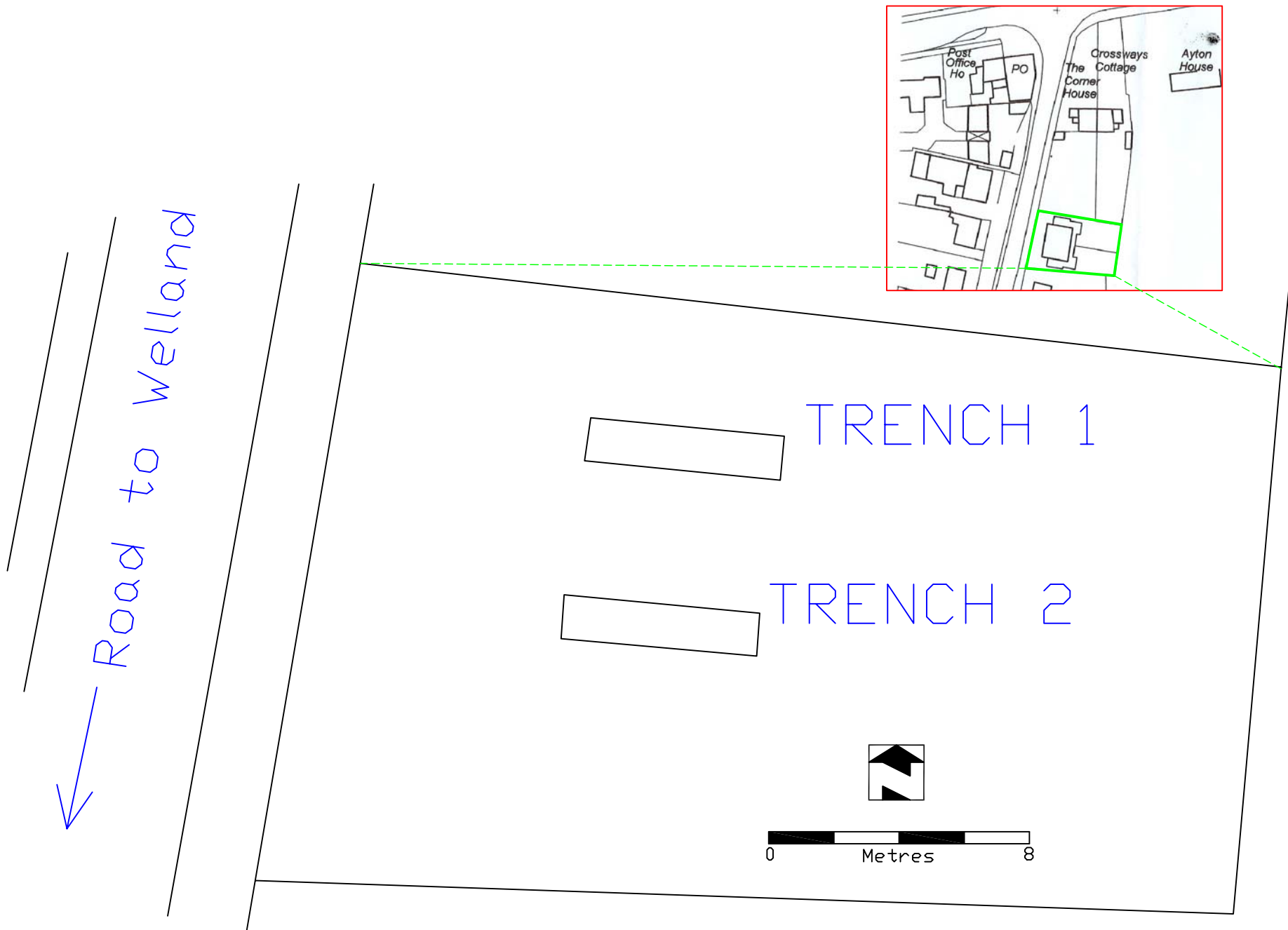


Figure 3: Trench Location Plan