

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE
PRIMARY SCHOOL, HANLEY SWAN
WORCESTERSHIRE

WSM 38564



Mike Napthan Archaeology

3 Hamilton Road, Worcester, WR5 1AG email:mike@napthan.fsnet.co.uk

Archaeological evaluation at land to the north of Primary School, Hanley Swan, Worcestershire WSM 38564

March-April 2008

Mike Napthan MIFA
3rd April, 2008

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in March-April 2008, by Mike Napthan Archaeology, in response to a planning application for use of the site for affordable housing. Whilst the site lies on the western edge of the village of Hanley Swan (formerly Potters Hanley) there was no evidence for any activity related to pottery or ceramics production, and a search of the Historic Environment Record indicates that there is no firm evidence for ceramic manufacture in this part of the parish, pottery production being centred on the eastern end of the parish. Documentary evidence indicates that the area was part of Malvern Chase from the Norman Conquest until the 17th Century, and subsequently was common land until it was granted to various smallholders including Margaret Barber by the Tithe Apportionment of 1797. The land to the south and west was granted as Glebe lands to the vicar, and remained in church hands until the 20th Century.

The project consisted of documentary assessment, geophysical survey and trial trenching. Very little evidence of any activities of archaeological interest was recovered. The artefactual scatter on the site was very sparse, and consisted of very occasional Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery sherds, together with very occasional tile and slate fragments. None of these are evidence of past occupation of the site, and appear to be derived from a general manuring scatter on the edges of the settlement. No archaeologically significant cut features were observed, and a number of the possible features identified by the geophysical survey proved to be recent test-pits.

In conclusion: the proposed development will have no impact on buried remains, and the potential for buried archaeologically significant deposits in the immediate area appears to be slight.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Mike Napthan Archaeology at land to the north of Hanley Swan Primary School ((NGR SO 811 425) The project was based upon a brief supplied by Mike Glyde of WHEAS (M/08/0112 Feb 6th 2008) A planning application for residential units has been submitted. by DJD Architects on behalf of West Mercia Housing Ltd (the Clients).
- 2.2 The project design (by Mike Napthan, MIFA: 10th March 2008) was prepared in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* issued

by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: *Archaeological evaluations: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage. This report represents a summary of the findings of the evaluation

3 Aims

- 3.1 The aims of the evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct and indirect observation of the archaeological resource in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature of the buried resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, state of preservation and quality)
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of any buried remains related to the ceramic industry or other remains of archaeological interest.
 - ii) to attempt to characterize the pattern of historic land use and recover as much information as possible about any buried features or deposits of archaeological interest. Identify any mitigation works desirable.
 - iii) to provide an interpretative report on the findings of the project and to relate the findings to their local and regional context.

4 Methodology

- 4.1 Searches were made at the Worcestershire County HER, Worcester Family History Centre, Worcestershire Record Office for documentary sources, published sources, cartographic sources and aerial photographs. No material directly relevant to the present site was identified, but cartographic sources including the Tithe Awards plan (Fig 5) and the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey indicate that the development area has been in agricultural use since circa 1797 and was formerly orchard during the late 19th and early 20th C. It is presently a paddock.
- 4.2 A detailed magnetic survey was undertaken by Stratascan Ltd, and is summarized in their report (Smalley, 2008). The interpretative plot is reproduced here as Fig 2.
- 4.3 Three evaluation trenches (totalling circa 160m²) were excavated using a tracked 360° midi-excavator in locations designed to cover the development area whilst focussing on the anomalies highlighted by the geophysical survey. On visual inspection of the site prior to trenching it was apparent that several of the anomalies were in fact recent trial pits. Following machining all subsequent excavation and cleaning was undertaken by hand and deposits recorded.
- 4.4 The position of the trenches was surveyed in relation to the surrounding buildings and features marked on the Ordnance Survey (Fig 1). The site levels were approximately 35.45 to 35.75m AOD, but a precise level could not be obtained as the benchmark on the Primary School building (35.73mAOD) was inaccessible due to the school being closed..
- 4.4 All site recording was undertaken in accordance with the Excavation Manual (Technical Manual 3). Plans were drawn at 1:50 and typical sections were drawn of each Trench at 1:20.

5 Historical background

- 5.1 Malvern Forest or Chase was created by William I (1066-1087) as an area for hunting, controlled by Forest Law rather than Common Law. The judicial centre of the Chase was at Hanley Castle. At Domesday Hanley consisted of circa 7.5 square miles of woodland. Shortly before 1275 the Chase was enlarged by Gilbert de Clare to include land in 13 parishes amounting to 8092 acres (Weaver, 1998). By the late 16th century over 8000 residents within the Chase had “*comen of herbage and panage throughout the whole Chase without payment*”. Hanley had the largest amount of Common and Chase - 1390 acres (of the total parish of 5923 acres). Hanley’s woods and commons were large, but following the Black Death its population was small. The population however rose sharply by 1540 (Weaver, 1998, 210). Charles I began the process of selling the forest rights in the Chase in 1620, but as the local population resented the potential loss of their traditional commoners rights the proceedings lasted until the 1630s, and finally a 1632 decree forbade the enclosing of two thirds of the Chase, enclosure being restricted to the King’s third share.. This held the matter in abeyance until the 1790s when a 1794 Bill attempted to enclose Hanley Commons. A 1795 trial at Gloucester Assizes recognised the whole Chase as one Common, with a general shared common right between all the inhabitants, but the Hanley Commons were divided up by the Tithe Awards of 1797, and all but 98 acres passed into private ownership (Fig 5). The remaining 98 acres were retained for the poor of the parish, but were also enclosed in 1817 (Weaver 1998). The earliest cartographic source available for the parish is Isaac Taylor’s County map of 1773, which though of small scale shows the original road pattern in the area. The modern road and field pattern derives from the major reorganization of land holdings that occurred following the decision of the 1797 Tithe Award (see Fig 5). As the present site lay within the former Common/Chase this may explain the absence of medieval ceramic production sites in the vicinity - the Chase was controlled by Forest Law, and this would prevent clay extraction and removal of timber. Pottery production sites appear to be concentrated in the eastern part of the Parish, which was historically outside the Chase.
- 5.2 In the 1797 Tithe Apportionment plan (BA816/2 s 269.81) - reproduced here as Fig 5, the following owners are recorded in the vicinity of the present site:
- | Field no: | Owner |
|-----------|------------------|
| 168 | Poor's Cottage |
| 172 | Margaret Barber |
| 177 | William Browning |
| 185 | Mark Crees |
| 186 | Mark Crees |
| 199 | Richard Mayfield |
| 207 | Joseph Willis |
| 458 | Thomas Williams |
- 5.3 The land parcel to the south and west was allocated to the vicar in lieu of Tithes, and remained as church land into the 20th Century. In 1861 the then vicar, Anthony Berwick Lechmere, conveyed part of the glebe land in Hanley Swan for the construction of St Gabriel's, a school for the education of children and adults or children only of the Labouring, Manufacturing and other poorer classes. In its early years the school did double as a chapel of ease, but once the new church of St Gabriel was built (1870) this ceased to be necessary, through the school has retained close links with the church (Hurle, 1978, 95).

6 Archaeological background

- 6.1 Whilst there are a small number of find-spots in the vicinity of the site, previous archaeological work in the immediate area has proved largely negative. It is significant that no wasters or kiln furniture have been reported from the western end

of the village, though medieval and post medieval pottery has been recovered in moderate quantities from a number of sites within a 500m radius of the present study area. An 1870 report (WSM07037) of medieval sherds being recovered during construction of St Gabriels Church does not mention any wasters, though later researchers have assumed that it might be a kiln site. Recent geophysical survey of the area around the church tends to disprove this theory. A 1983 report of material recovered from a flowerbed at Western Lodge, Hanley Swan mentions a substantial quantity of medieval material but no wasters (WSM05400). More recently medieval pottery has been recovered at 1 Winnington Gardens, (WSM11631), not far to the east of the present site, but again these were a mixture of periods and forms with no indications of a production site. An evaluation in 1995 adjacent to The Walnuts, Hanley Swan (WSM21598) revealed a holloway and a pit, possibly relating to clay extraction (Hurst, 1995), and it has also been suggested that the Swan Pool was dug for similar purposes (Hurle 1978).

7 Observations

7.1 *Natural deposits (Figs 3 and 4)*

The natural drift geology of this area is complex, and relates to the terminal moraines of the last glaciation. The underlying geology is primarily Triassic Mudstone, better known as Keuper Marl (BGS South Sheet, Solid 4th Edn 2001). The Soil Survey records the area as Brockhurst 1 Association Soils (slowly permeable reddish fine loamy over clayey soils), but the present site has a relatively free-draining mid brown soil which appears to be a combination of glacially derived materials, primarily Loess with a variable admixture of granite chips and occasional pebbles.

7.2 The mid brown topsoil showed signs of periodic cultivation, but had not been deeply ploughed - it was locally variable in its composition reflecting the underlying geology, but generally consisted of a gritty clay element, fine silty Loess (wind blown rock particles) and highly fragmented granite chippings. The latter appear to derive from the igneous formations of the Malvern Hills.

7.3 The subsoil was of a lighter brown colour and comprised principally of Loess and gravelly granite chips, forming a highly pervious soil, which was relatively dry despite heavy rain immediately preceding the evaluation. Variations in subsoil depth may reflect natural influences, or possibly former cultivation beds, though no pattern to these could be deduced. The site is known to have been orchard, so the presence of raised beds would not be unexpected.

7.4 The underlying geology was inspected in a number of small hand dug "slots" and found to consist of patches and bands of alternating clay and granite chippings. The full depth of these horizons was locally variable, and the underlying red marl appeared to be present at depths between 0.55 and 1m below current surface levels.

7.5 No cut features of archaeological origin were located within the trenches. Small quantities of artefacts were recovered from the topsoil, and these are quantified in Appendix 1. The assemblage was predominantly late post -medieval to modern, reflecting the proximity of the mid 19th century school to the south. The presence of a single sherd of probably Roman pottery is of some interest, but is not significant. The remaining sherds were of late medieval to post medieval date. A single fragment of clay tobacco pipe bowl was also recovered - this is likely to be of 19th C date.

8 Discussion and conclusions

8.1 The site lies to the west of the known medieval pottery production sites of Hanley Swan, and to the west of the medieval settlement core, in an area that was Common until the end of the 18th Century. It is therefore unsurprising that no evidence of

pottery production was found on the site, which has almost certainly remained purely as agricultural land since it was disafforested in the 17th Century.

- 8.2 The present development proposal appears very unlikely to have a detrimental impact on any buried archaeological remains, and it appears improbable that any significant archaeological deposits survive on the site or have been lost through truncation, as there is very little residual artefactual scatter in the topsoil.

9 Bibliography

Hurst, J D 4.1995 *Archaeological evaluation at land adjacent to The Walnuts, Hanley Swan*, HWCAS internal report **372**

Hurle, P, 1978 *Hanley Castle - Heart of Malvern Chase*

Smalley, R, 2008, *Geophysical Survey Report, land next to Hanley Swan Primary School J2467*, Stratascan

Weaver, C, 1998, From private pursuit to public playground: the enclosure of Malvern Chase TWAS 3rd Ser Vol **16** 207-219

10 Acknowledgements

The project has been greatly assisted by the following Kevin Davis of DJD Architects, Richard Smalley of Stratascan, Greg Cooper of G A Cooper (Civil Engineers). The project was initiated by Mike Glyde of Worcestershire County Council Planning Advisory Service, and the HER search undertaken by Emma Hancox of WHEAS. Fieldwork and research assistance was provided by Amanda Holmes and Alison Derrick of MNA.

Appendix 1: Land next to Hanley Swan Primary School Finds List

(nb all finds unstratified, and recovered from topsoil during machining).

Trench 1

Pottery 1 frag 7g Severn Valley ware bodysherd (Fabric 12) Roman
 Tile 2 frags 35g undiagnostic flat roofing tile (med-pmed)
 Pottery 1 frag 28g Malvernian yellow glazed ?skillet (Fabric 69) med
 Pottery 4 frags 15g Redware bodysherds (Fabric 78) late Med or post med
 China 3 frags (10g) 19thC-modern
 CTP 1 frag (5g) bowl frag, probably 19th-20th C

Trench 2

Pottery 3 frags 20g Redware bodysherds (Fabric 78) post med
 Stoneware 1 1 frag 7g Modern glazed stoneware
 Slate 1 frag 7g Post med to modern

Trench 3

Pottery 2 frags 12g Redware bodysherds (Fabric 78) late Med or post med
 China 3 frags (12g) 19thC-modern
 Glass 1 frag (7g) Brown bottle glass (19th C-modern)

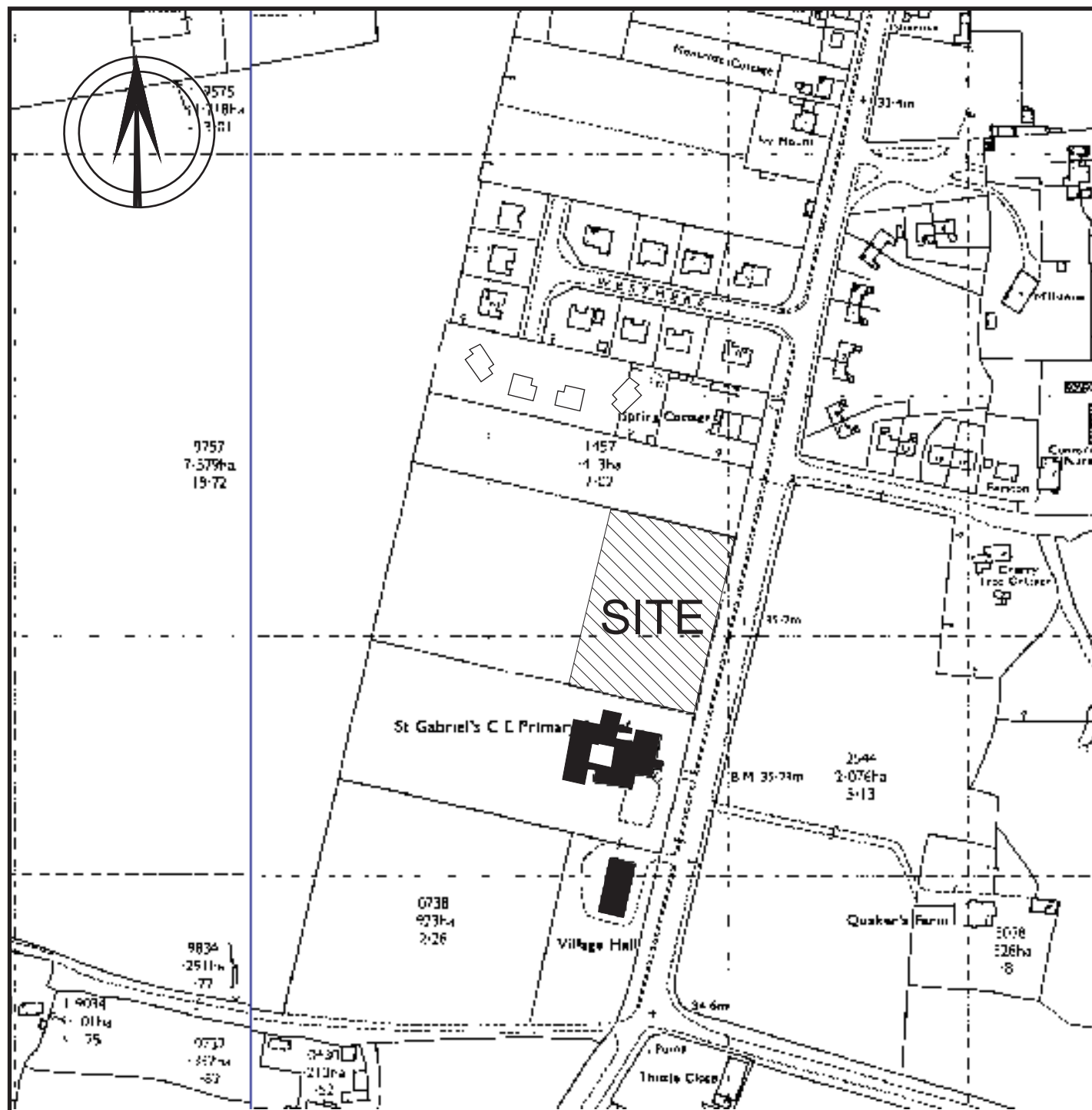


Figure 1: Site location - land north of Primary School, Hanley Swan. NGR SO 8119 4259

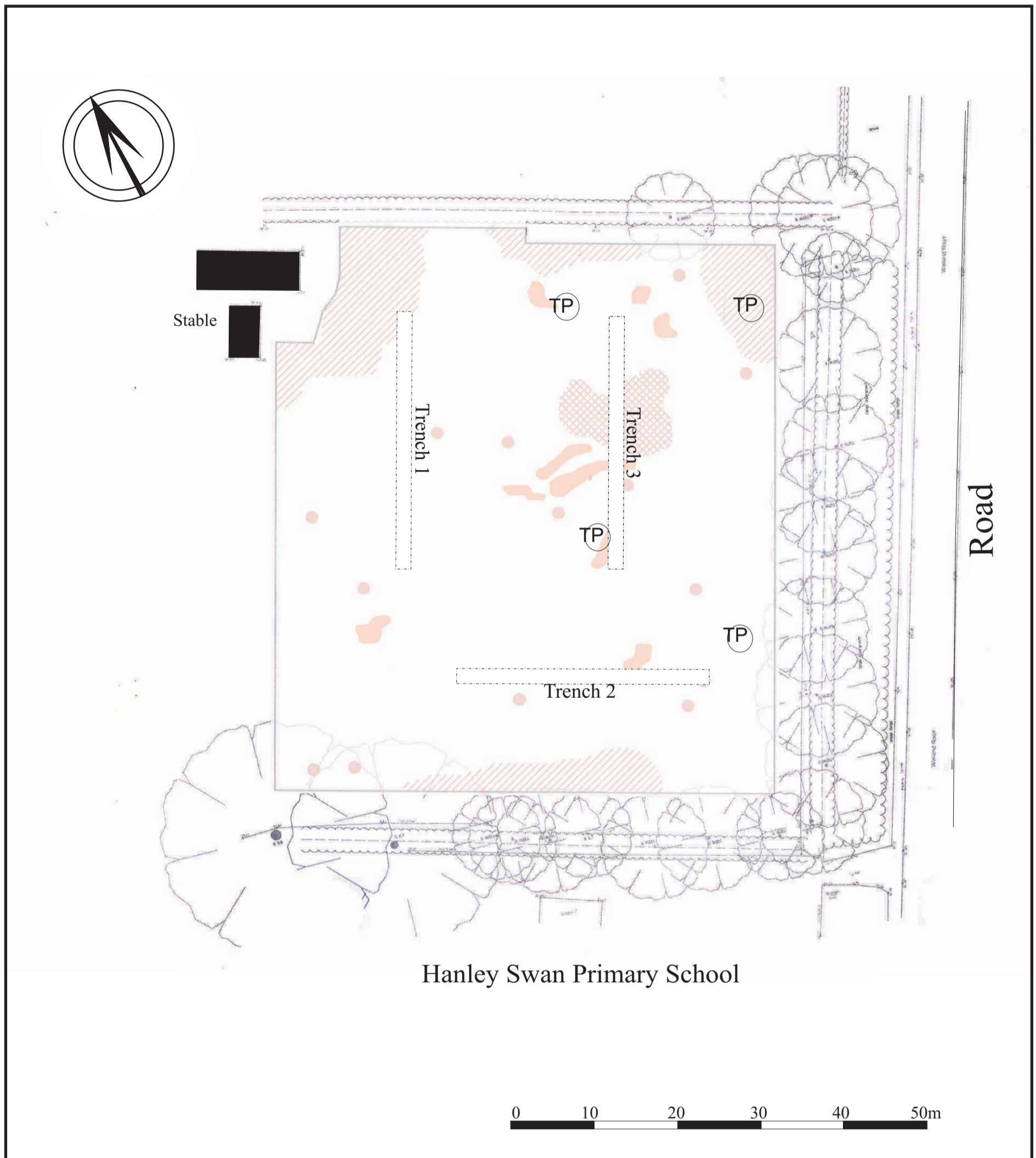


Figure 2: Trench locations, overlaid on geophysical survey interpretative plot. Spots indicate ferric objects, irregular blobs potential cut features and hatching areas of metallic interference (from fencing and buildings etc) . Several of the potential cut features appear in fact to be ground disturbance associated with re test-pitting. Others proved to represent variations in the natural sub-soil.



General view of site prior to trenching (facing north-west)



Machining Trench 3 (facing south)



Trench 1 facing north - scale 0.5m long



Trench 1 facing south-west



Trench 2 facing west



Trench 3 facing north; note recent test pit visible to left of scale

Figure 3: Site photographs

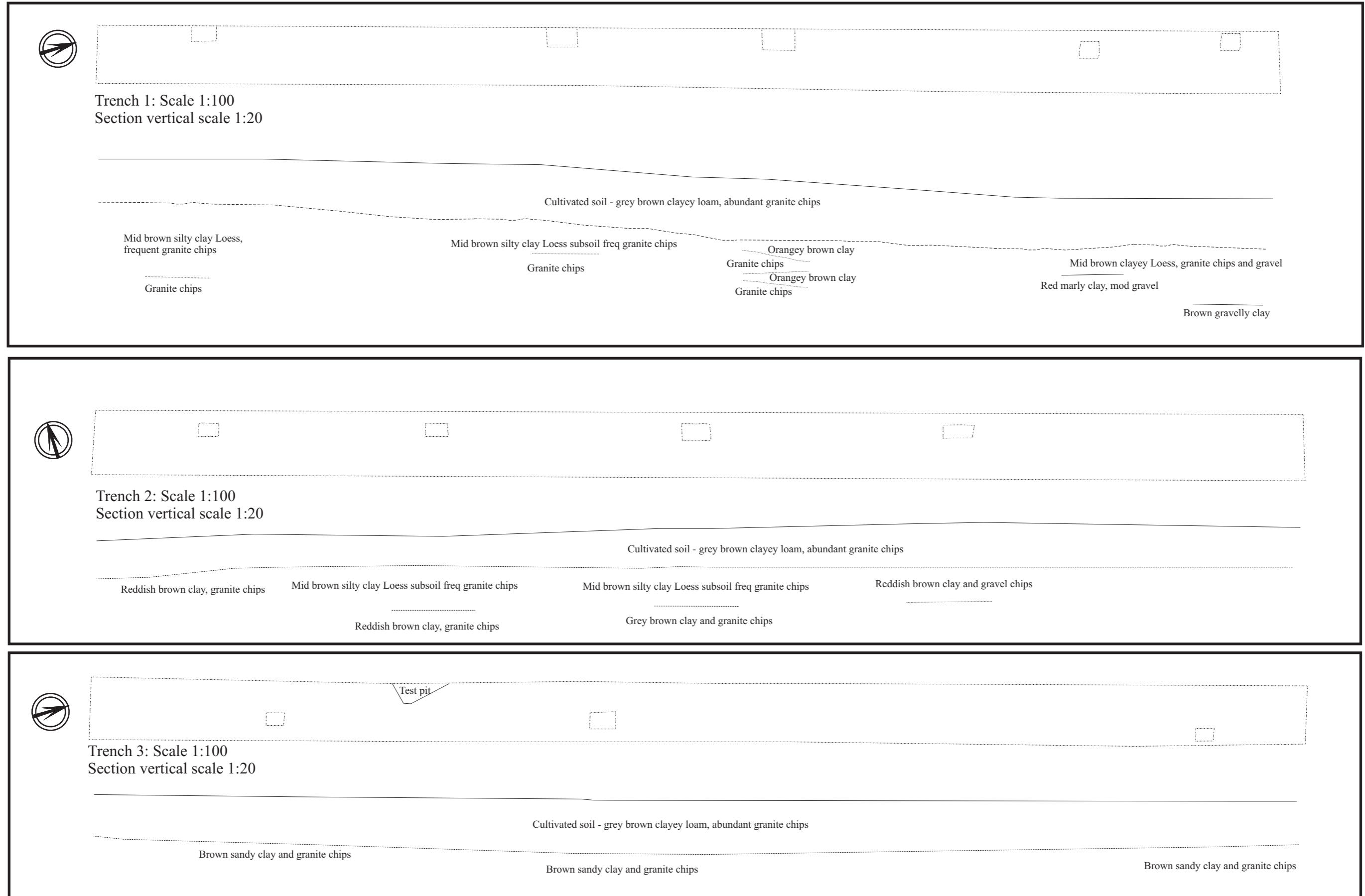


Figure 4: Trench plans and sections



Figure 5: Hanley Swan Tithe Award plan 1797 - site outline shown by dashed line