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Historic Environment and Archaeology Service:
Historic Environmental Record

Source No: WR 4828.....

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS
AT LAND AT HODGKISS FIELD,
CHARLTON LANE,
TORTON, NR HARTLEBURY
WORCESTERSHIRE**

WSM 38552



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at land at Hodgkiss Field,
Charlton Lane, Torton, nr Hartlebury,
Worcestershire
WSM38552**

February 2008

Mike Napthan MIFA, February 28th 2008

1 Summary

An archaeological programme of works was undertaken in February 2008, by Mike Napthan Archaeology, in response to the proposed construction of a timber framed "American barn" and associated hardstanding. The site is presently grassland, having been formerly used for cultivation. Previous archaeological observations in the immediate area have been fairly limited in scope, with the exception of an evaluation of part of the route of the proposed "Hagley-Blakedown Bypass" in 1992. This evaluation proved to have almost entirely negative results, producing only a flint scraper and undiagnostic flint flake, both probably casual losses of the Neolithic period. The proposed bypass has not been built and no further evaluation has been undertaken in the area. A very small assemblage of Roman material has been recovered from fields to the south-west of the present site, but there appear to be no indications of Roman habitation in the immediate vicinity of Hodgkiss Field. No medieval sites are recorded in the immediate vicinity, and it is likely that the present site lay within the extensive medieval warren belonging to Hartlebury Castle. Post-medieval land-use of the development site itself appears to have been purely agricultural.

In conclusion: the development appears to be very unlikely to impact on buried remains, and the potential for archaeologically significant deposits in the immediate area is likely to be very slight.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 An archaeological programme of works was undertaken by Mike Napthan Archaeology at Hodgkiss Field, Charlton Lane, Torton nr Hartlebury (Fig 1; NGR SO 8422 7227). The project was based upon a brief supplied by Mike Glyde of WHEAS (5th Feb 08, W/07/2789). A planning application has been submitted to and approved by Wychavon District Council for the construction of six stables in the form of an "American barn", hard standing and access track. The works were undertaken for Mr Chris Rogers and Mrs A-M C Ball (the Clients).
- 2.2 The project design (Napthan M, 17th February 2008) was prepared in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching briefs* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage. This report represents a summary of the findings of the Stage 1 (research) and Stage 2 (test-pitting).

3 **Aims**

- 3.1 The aims of the evaluation are to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature of the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, state of preservation and quality)
- 3.2 These aims will be achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) to attempt to characterize the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;
 - iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent , ecofactual and environmental samples.

4 **Methodology**

- 4.1 Searches were made at the Worcestershire County HER, Worcester Family History Centre, and 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 2) and the 1st and subsequent Editions of Ordnance Survey (Figs 3-6) indicate that the development area has been in agricultural use, probably since the Enclosure Act. Hartlebury received its Act of Enclosure in 1815 and the Award was given in 1821 (Gaut 1939, 218).
- 4.2 Fieldwork for Stage 2 of the project consisted of the archaeological hand excavation and recording of four test pits (nominally 0.5x0.5m) to establish the depth of topsoil and determine the potential impact of the development. The results of the test pits are illustrated in Figs 7, 8 and 9.

5 **Geology**

- 5.1 The underlying geology is comprised of Bunter, and Keuper sandstone of the Triassic period overlain by drift deposits of the Newport Series sandy and stony phases. On the lower terrace this is covered further by a disturbed area of blown sand (Hollis and Hodgson 1974, 3, 72-3). The physical topography is defined by three periglacial terraces. The upper Fourth, or Kidderminster, Terrace mostly comprised of the Stony Phase materials, the lower (Second or Worcester) terrace, on which the present site lies comprised mostly of the Sandy Phase materials with pockets of embedded clay and the First or Power Station Terrace occupied by the lower part of Hartlebury Heath. As with the Second Terrace this is comprised of Sandy Phase materials (Hollis and Hodgson 1974 10-11; Tucker, Zaluckyj and Alma 1986, 4-5).

6 **Archaeological and historical background**

- 6.1 Very little archaeological field work has been undertaken in the immediate area. There has only been one previous professional intervention in the vicinity; two 30m trenches were dug circa 85m to the east of the present site as part of the programme of archaeological works in advance of the proposed (but never built) Hagley-Blakedown Bypass in the early 1990s. The evaluation (WSM29955) was undertaken (by the present author) on a site recorded as 'Brickworks' (WSM05835). No archaeological features were revealed within the trenches but a single fragment of

Neolithic worked flint was recovered from the plough soil. A neolithic D-shaped scraper was recovered as a surface find close to the same trench. These finds are not indicative of settlement and it is likely that they represent low-level transient activity (WSM29955; Brown, D, 1992).

- 6.2 A small assemblage of Roman pottery and a single Roman coin were found as surface finds during the 1980s by an amateur enthusiast in fields (NGR SO8380072450) to the south west of the present site, indicating the presence of low level Romano-British activity (WSM 01256) . The lack of finds from the Roman period in the evaluation for the proposed bypass indicates that activity did not extend as far north as the present site.
- 6.3 Hartlebury is believed to have been given to the Bishop of Worcester by Burhed, King of Mercia c. 850 (VCH, iii, 383). In 985 Bishop Oswald granted half a 'mansa' there to his 'familiar friend' Leofwine for three lives. The manor is enumerated amongst the lands of the see in the Domesday Survey, and in 1199 John granted to the bishop in this manor such liberties as he enjoyed in his other manors:
"The lords of the manor have the royalty within the same, as hawking, hunting, fishing and fowling, and particularly fishing within the river Severn, in the whole river so far as the manor is on both sides and on the one side so far after as the manor borders on the said river being about a mile. (Nash I, 569)
- 6.4 The settlement of Torton is situated on the north-east of the parish of Hartlebury. It is likely to have been the 'Torchinton' named in a 13th-century charter as one of the boundaries within which the forest of Ombersely was to be disafforested (VCH, III, 380).
- 6.5 The bishop obtained a grant of free warren at Hartlebury in 1254 and 1255: *"There is also a warren for rabbits on Haretlebury Heath, called Charlton and Tainton Warrens worth £10 per annum and a fishpond with a store of fish therein. (Nash, 1781, 568).* It remained in the possession of successive bishops until Bishop Hooper, during his short occupation of the see, gave it to Edward VI, who in 1553 granted it to the Duke of Northumberland. In the same year the duke sold it to Sir Francis Jobson. Sir Francis died in 1573, and before 1578 the manor again became a possession of the see of Worcester. In 1647 the Parliamentary Commissioners sold it to Thomas Westrowe. At the Restoration it was given back to the see, and passed in 1860 into the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.
- 6.6 The parish was historically sparsely populated, due both to the extent of warren and parkland and its poor soils - despite its large size it contained only 109 families in the early years of Elizabeths reign (Nash 1781, 570) During the seventeenth century the main population of the area was focused along the main roads including the Worcester, Ombersely, Hartlebury and Kidderminster road (now the modern A449) (Gaut 1939, 82)
- 6.7 During the late 18th and early 19th Centuries A toll gate was situated near to the present site on the Kidderminster to Worcester turnpike road (WSM 05833). The Tithe map shows a gate located at the junction of Charlton Lane and the Worcester Road (the modern A449). Several of the Tithe Apportionment field names reflect their proximity to the toll gate (Fig 2).

7 Observations

7.1 Natural deposits

- 7.1.1 The natural deposits observed consisted of underlying sandstone beds at variable depths. The sandstone outcropped to within 0.4m of present ground surface. The bed stone in TP2 was of reddish colour and very friable. Within TP4 the decayed sandstone was greyish to mottled red and several fragments in the topsoil indicated

that it being actively broken up by plough action. The stone observed was thinly bedded and interspersed with reddish-brown clay lenses. Test pits 1 and 3 did not encounter sandstone, but this appears to reflect the natural undulations of the sandstone beds, which are a feature of this area, probably due to peri-glacial action.

- 7.1.2 A light reddish brown sandy subsoil overlay the natural sandstone in the first three test-pits - this material was very fine and appeared to consist of a mixture of wind-blown sand and decayed/cultivated sandstone. The material was very leached and contained minimal organic matter. The depth of subsoil varied between 0.4 and 0.5+m. Down-slope towards the road the sub-soil was absent and recent plough soil directly overlay sandstone.

7.2 *Modified natural deposits*

The topsoil was a mid-brown cultivated loamy sandy up to 0.4m in depth. It was noticeably devoid of natural stones or pebbles, which made the sparse artefacts extremely easy to spot. The artefacts observed were almost all modern "clay pigeon" target fragments. The only artefact of any interest recovered was a small lump of iron-working slag, presumably imported with manure or spread from the existing hardstanding in the gateway.

8 **Conclusions**

- 8.1 The site of the proposed stable block appears to be entirely archaeologically sterile, and the depth of the proposed floor-make-up would remove ploughsoil horizons entirely only in the northern half of the building (due to the slight slope on the site). If archaeological deposits or features were to survive in this area it is unlikely that they would be significantly affected by the proposed new building. The areas of hard standing also appear to be archaeologically sterile, and the shallowness of the plough soil over bedrock in the area adjacent to the road would make archaeological survival in the area of the existing field entrance/hardstanding extremely unlikely.
- 8.2 The present development proposal appears to have no detrimental impact on any buried archaeological remains, and it appears improbable that any significant archaeological deposits have been lost through previous agricultural use, as there is almost no residual artefactual scatter in the topsoil.

9 **Bibliography**

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10 Acknowledgements

The project has been greatly assisted by the following: Mr Chris Rogers and Mrs A-M C Ball (the Clients) and Mike Glyde of Worcestershire County Council Planning Advisory Service.

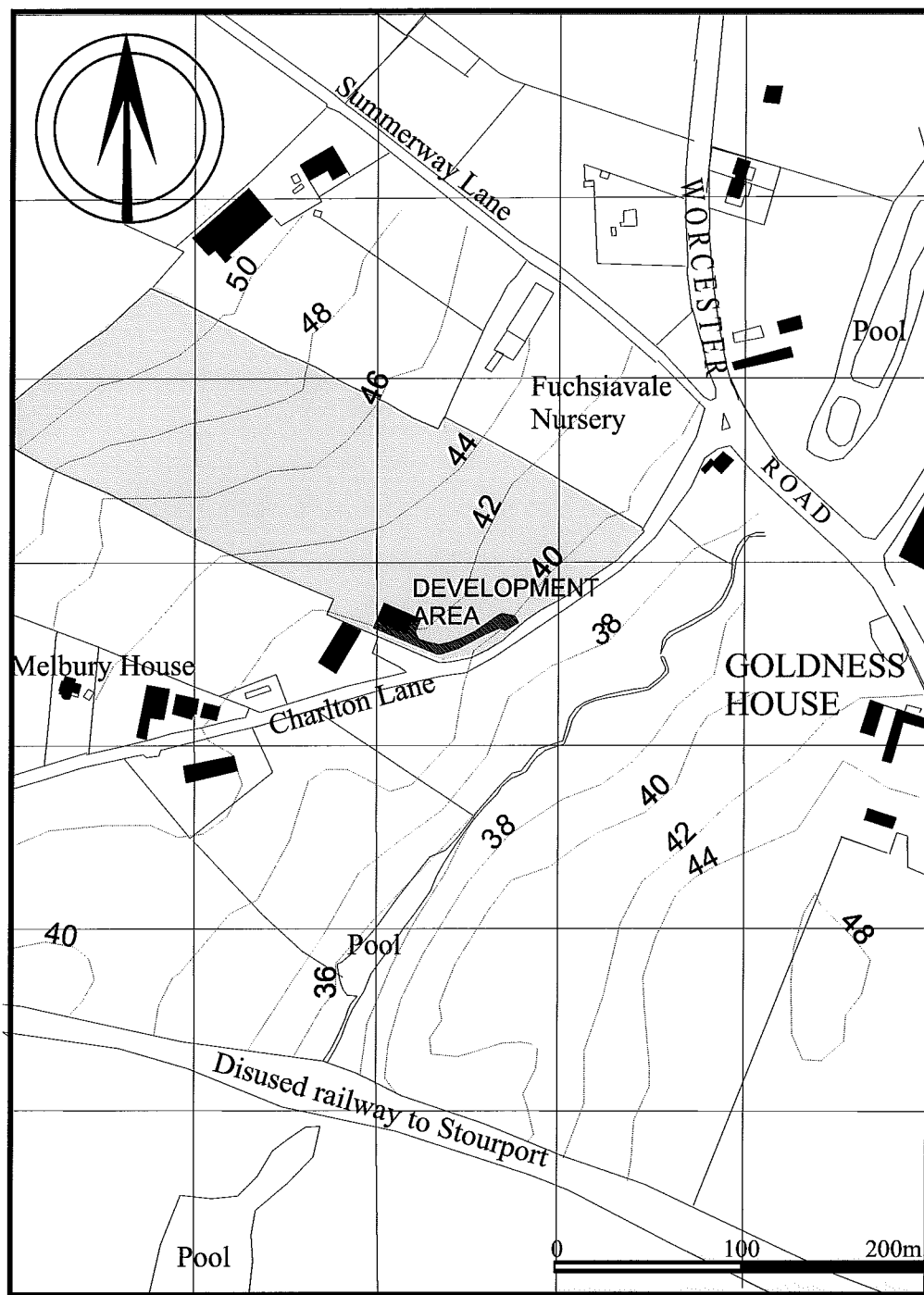


Figure 1: Site location Hodgkiss Field, Torton, SO 8421 7237. Selected contours marked in mAOd.

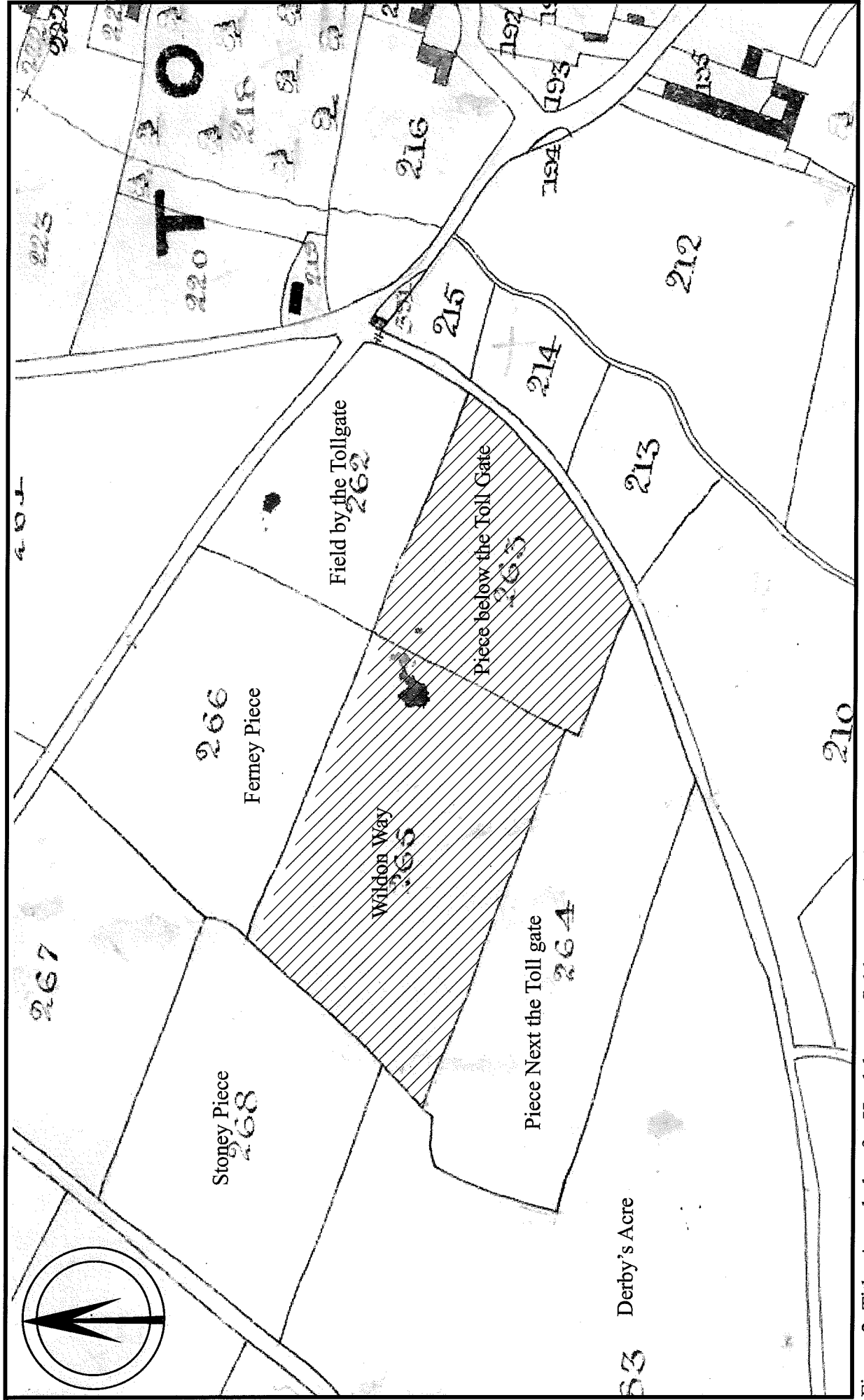


Figure 2: Tithe Award plan for Hartlebury - field names obtained from Tithe Apportionment.

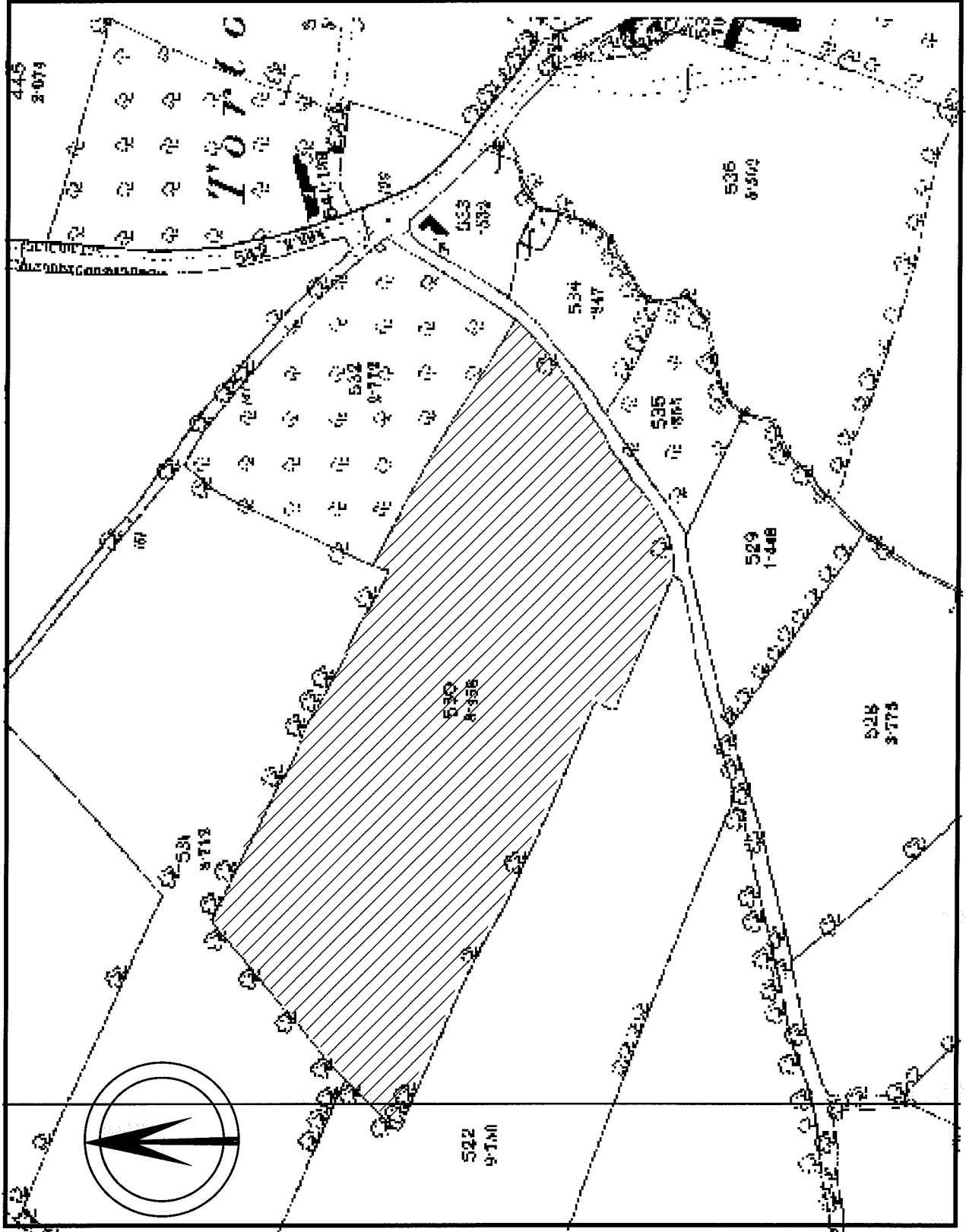


Figure 3: 1884 Ordnance Survey Mapping.

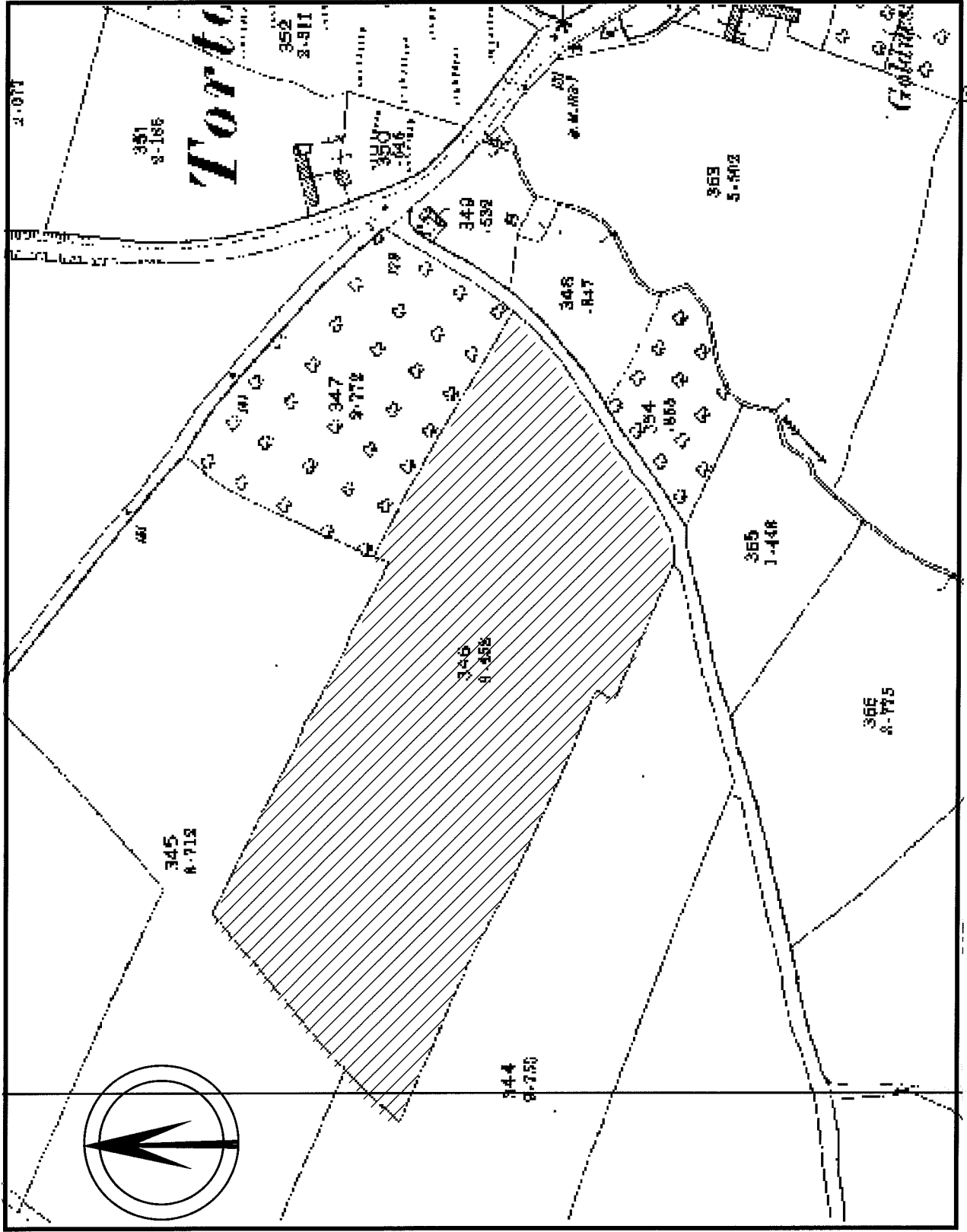


Figure 4: 1902 Ordnance Survey Mapping.

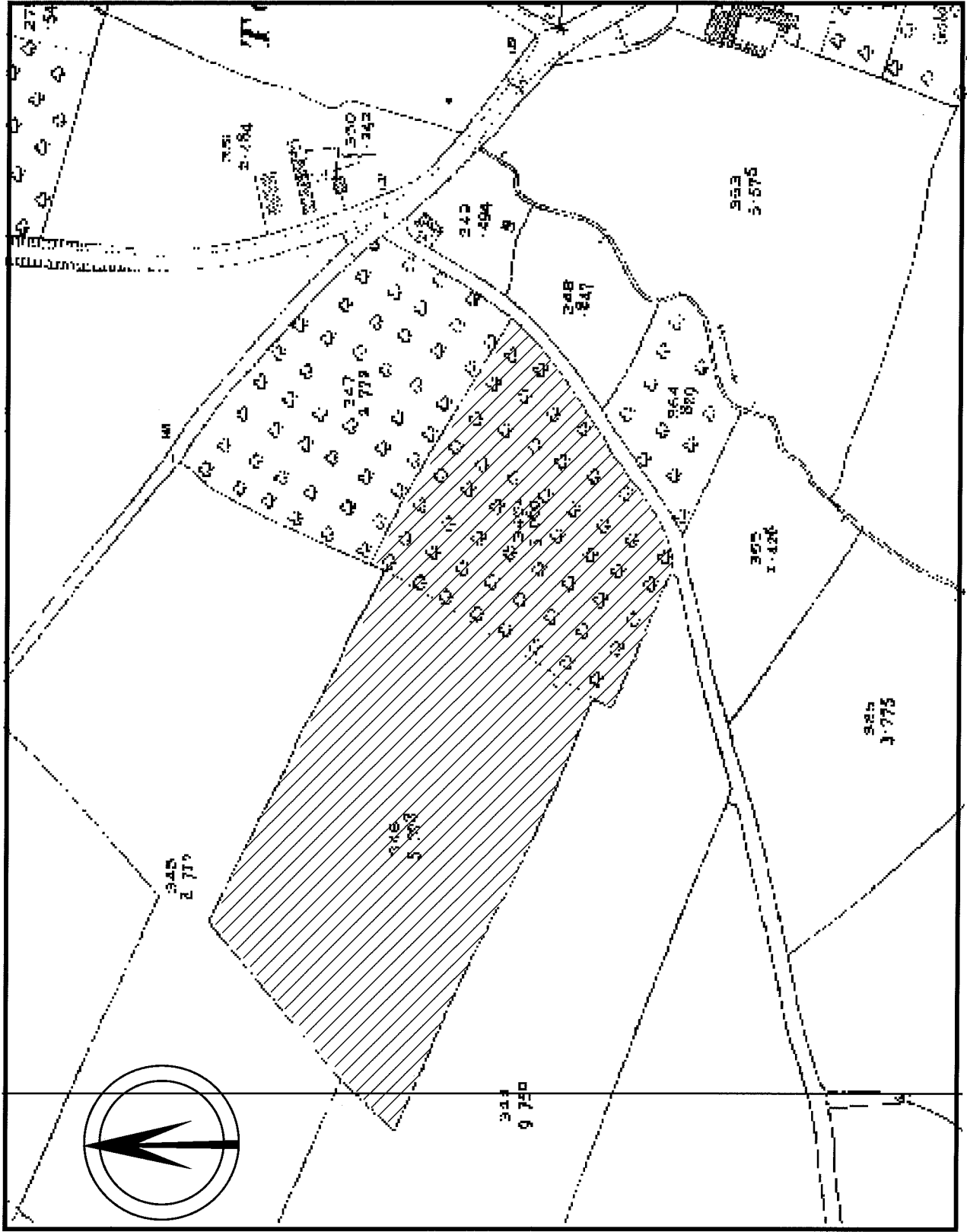
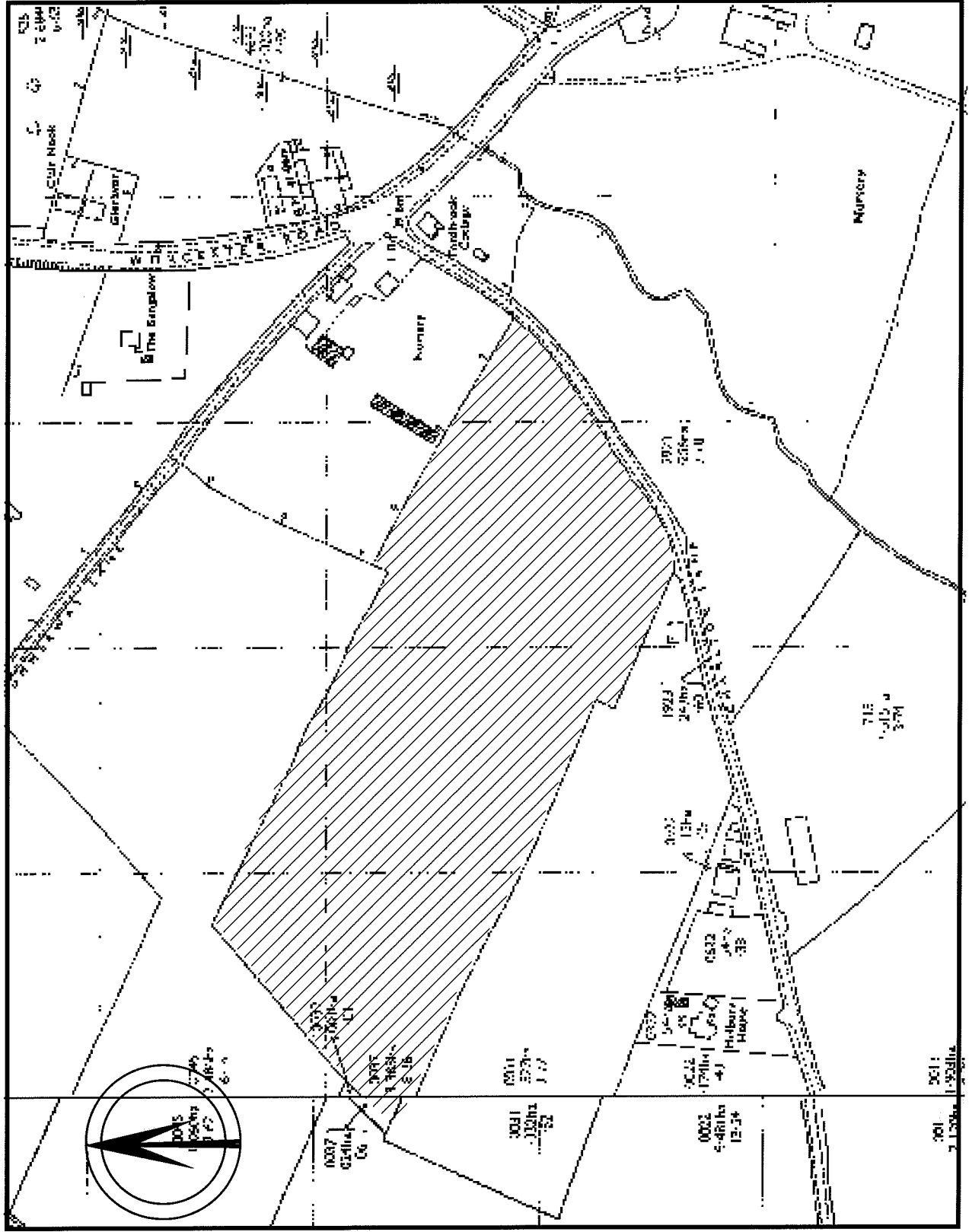


Figure 5: 1927 Ordnance Survey Mapping.



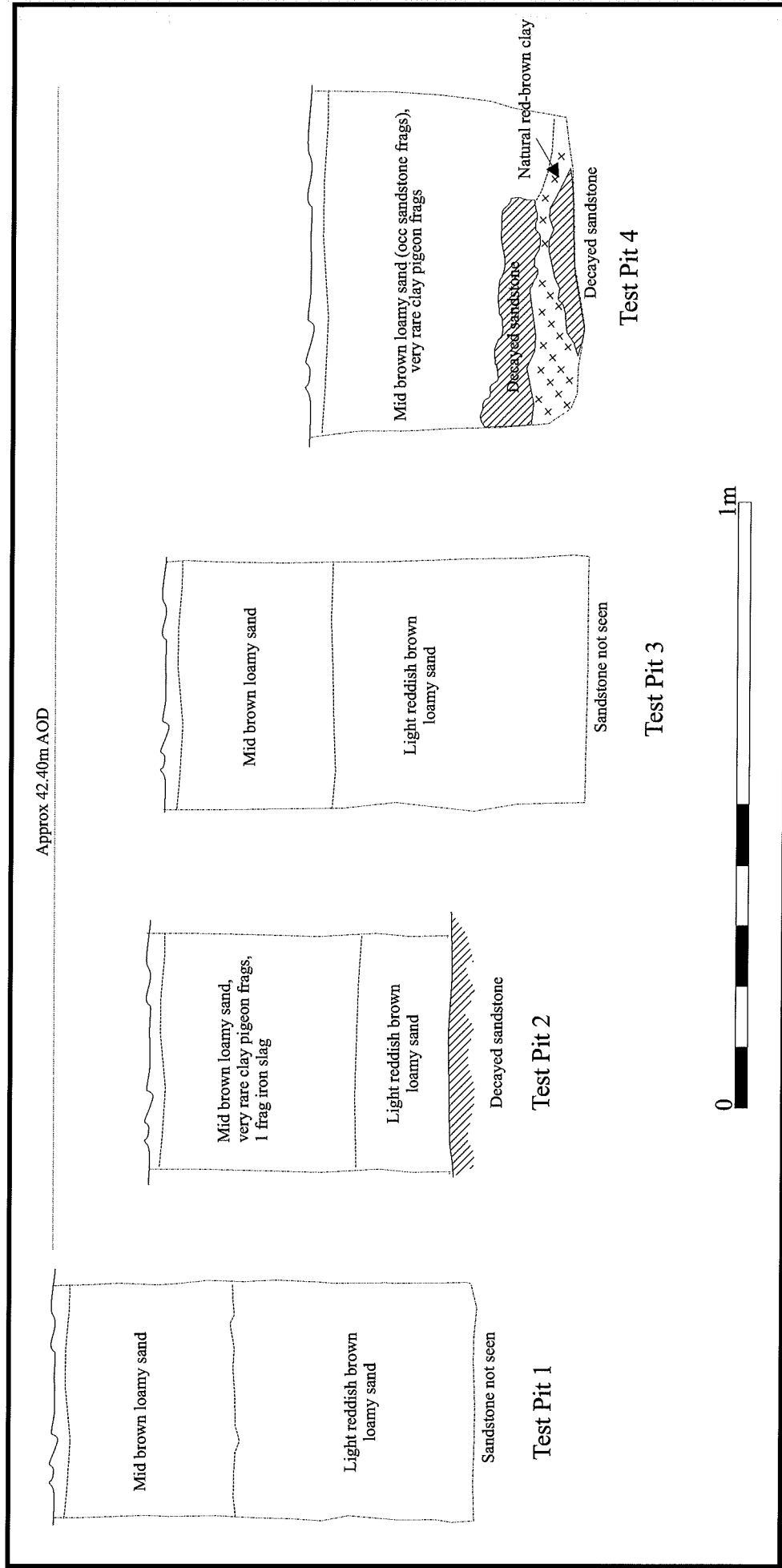


Figure 7: Soil sections

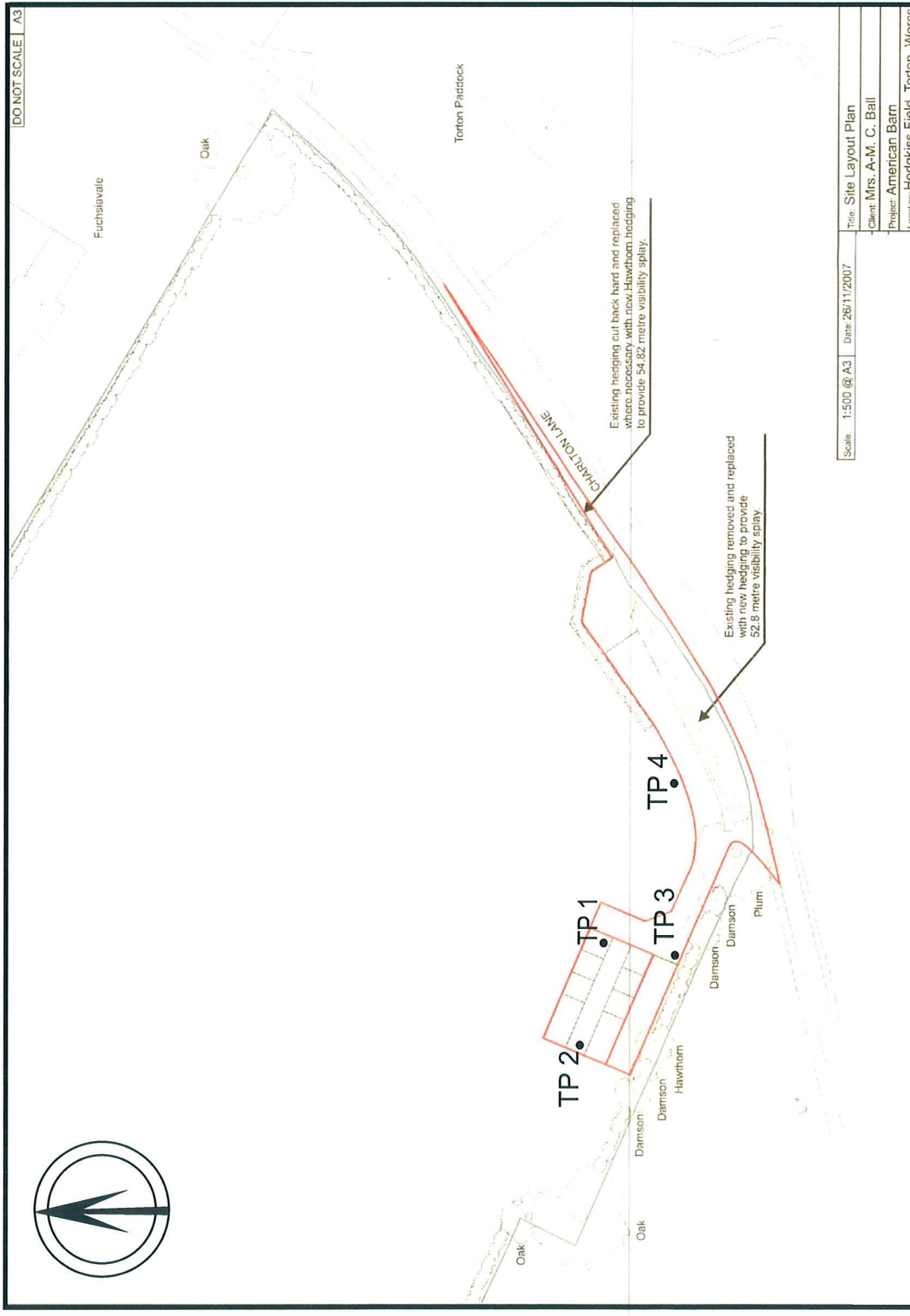


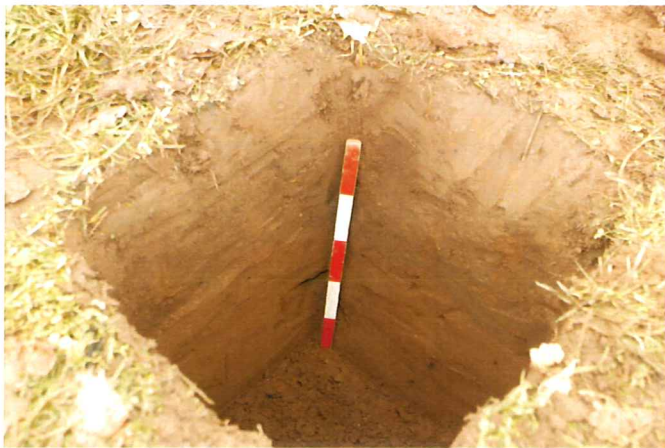
Figure 8: Location of test-pits



Test-pit 1



Test-pit 2



Test-pit 3



Test-pit 4



General view TP 2 and TP 1

Figure 9: Site photos