BUILDING RECORDING AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AT MASON'S YARD, HOLBETON, DEVON

by
C.S. Wakeham & P. Jones

Exeter Archaeology

Report No. 10.84

Project No. 6470

June 2010

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a programme of historic building recording and archaeological monitoring (watching brief) carried out by Exeter Archaeology (EA) at Mason's Yard, Holbeton, Devon (NGR SX 6130 5090) in April 2008 and June-July 2009. The work was required by the local planning authority, South Hams District Council, as a condition of the grant of planning permission for the redevelopment of the site for residential accommodation (Ref: 25/2649/07/F for Gerald Wood Homes and The Flete Estate). An archaeological evaluation of the site was carried out in 2007.[1]

1.1 **Project brief**

The work was undertaken in accordance with written schemes of investigation (WSIs) prepared in response to an initial project brief produced by the Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES, Ref: Arch/dc/sh/11136).

1.2 **The site**

The site is situated in the centre of Holbeton village to the west of Fore Street (Fig. 1). Mason's Yard has a road frontage onto Fore Street, behind which the buildings are aligned on an east-west axis within a long narrow plot, amid similar length plots included within the development area.

The site lies on a general east-facing slope, facing toward the valley of the River Erme (about 1.125km distant) and one of its tributaries. The geology of the area comprises Staddon Grits (and slates) of the Lower Devonian Period.[2]

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 **Former archaeological investigations**

The site of the proposed development was the subject of a preliminary archaeological evaluation in 2007 (Swindin 2007). Features identified in the northwest part of the site included a ditch of medieval date, two undated smaller ditches, a revetted hedgebank (constructed within a scarp) and associated ditch. The alignment of some of the features suggests that they formed boundaries associated with the surviving narrow plots.

2.2 **Historical and cartographic evidence**

A brief history of the site was included within the previous evaluation report[3], from which an updated version has been reproduced below.

In 1086 Holbeton was probably part of the estate of *Flete*, but by the reign of Henry I (1100–1135) it was a separate manor. The place-name *Holbouton* first occurs in 1229. It was subsequently in the ownership of the Hele family, passing to the Bulteels in 1716.

Although schematic, a map of *c*. 1785 depicts apparent orchards on the site (Fig. 3). The more detailed 1842 Tithe Map (Fig. 4) shows that the bulk of the site comprised five long narrow plots (orchards) with a private road along the northern boundary. The 1839 Tithe Apportionment and 1841 census state that the property was owned by John Crocker Bulteel. The private road and northernmost orchard (plot 1026) were occupied by H. J. Millman (a

[1] Swindin 2007.
[2] Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983.
[3] Swindin 2007.

publican), and the orchard to the south (1027) by John Godfrey (a mason). There were another three smaller orchards to the south, the northern one (1028) containing a probable shed. The middle orchard (1029), occupied by Benjamin Dingle, extended to a building on the Fore Street frontage, part of which lay within the site area. The two strips to the south were occupied by James Denbow and Edward Nichols, both agricultural labourers with cottages on the street.

By 1885 the strips formerly occupied by Benjamin Dingle and James Denbow had been merged, the 'shed' had been replaced with a larger building and four smaller structures had been built (Fig. 5). By 1905 the blacksmiths workshop had been built (marked 'smy', Fig. 6). The 1951 OS map shows further infilling (Fig. 7), in particular, an open-fronted structure, *c*. 33m long. A cottage fronting the street had by then been demolished.

Mason's Yard has been used for about 80 years as the estate workshops and yard for the Flete Estate, owned by the Mildmay-White family. The estate is comprised of about 5000 acres within this locality and includes several working farms and a number of cottages. There were recently five employees on the maintenance staff, although there were about 16 people based at Mason's Yard during the later 20th century.[4]

3. METHOD

3.1 **Building recording**

A record was made of the historic buildings due for conversion (numbered in this report as buildings 1-6 and 8) and the building to be demolished (building 7). The work was undertaken with reference to specifications applicable to Level 2 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practices*. *English Heritage 2006.*

The record consisted primarily of written notes and digital photographs. A selection of photographs is presented in this report (Plates 1–8); further photographs form part of the site archive. A 1:50 section of the smithy was also produced to define the layout of the two surviving forges (Fig. 8).

3.2 **Watching brief**

Groundworks associated with the development in Areas 1, II and III (Fig. 9) were monitored and recorded. Overlying topsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket, under direct archaeological control. Excavation continued to either the top of archaeological deposits or the surface of the natural subsoil (whichever was higher). Archaeological features and deposits were then cleaned by hand, investigated and recorded. Spoil was also examined for the recovery of artefacts.

Standard EA recording procedures were employed. Stratigraphic information was recorded on *pro-forma* single context record sheets, a drawn record was compiled at a scale of 1:20, 1:50 or 1:100 as appropriate and a photographic record was made in black and white film and digital format.

[4] Mr D. Frampton, pers. comm. (tenant and employee of Flete Estate).

4. THE BUILDINGS (numbered 1-8 and located on Fig. 2)

1. **Smithy**

This is a single-storey building constructed on the raised bank on the northern side of the yard (Plate 1). The building has raised footings on the south-east side and is entered via doorways in the north-east and north-west elevations. It has a pitched roof with a dovecote near the centre of the apex.

Materials and construction

The walls of the building are 0.42m thick and constructed of coursed Devonian slate rubble. Larger stone of a variety of materials is used for the quoins, including limestone and at least one possible block of breccia. The bonding is a white lime-based mortar with large grit inclusions. The wall openings have segmental machined red-brick arches. The jambs of the windows have additional brick dressings, with brick alignment alternating in pairs. The windowsills are of thick slate.

North-east elevation

This end elevation contains a centrally located doorway and a brick-dressed slit-opening near the apex.

South-east elevation

This elevation has raised footings and two high-set windows. The southernmost window has a four-light top-tilting wooden frame, whilst the northernmost has a three-light wooden frame.

South-west elevation

This wall contains a single three-light wooden-framed window near the centre.

North-west elevation

The north-west wall is effectively the front of the building and contains two wide doorways with a window to the north. The window has a three-light top-tilting wooden frame. The northernmost doorway is central to the elevation and leads to the main compartment containing the forges, whilst the southernmost doorway leads to a smaller ancillary compartment.

Interior

The larger of the two compartments measures 5.8 x 5.9m and contains two south-west facing stone-built forges with brick chimneystacks (Fig. 8). Both forges are missing their hoods, although otherwise largely intact (Plate 2). The forge located against the south-east wall, near the eastern corner, has been partially rebuilt with concrete blocks at the front. The other forge is more centrally located, though offset to the north.

The floor surface is composed mainly of brick, with stone sett and concrete surfaces at the front of the forges and an area of cobbles along the north-west wall. A section of a wooden tree trunk has been cemented into a cobbled section of the floor to the west of the second forge, in a position appropriate for mounting an anvil. Other features include a workbench sited under the north-west window and a large vice mounted on a concrete block.

The compartment also features miscellaneous brackets and fixtures, the most notable being a square stone (about 15cm x 15cm) with a central circular hole. This stone is located in the

north-east wall and has been coated in whitewash, suggesting it has been reused from elsewhere. Similar stones are often found in 19th-century stable floors where they were used to anchor stall-posts.

A stone wall separates this compartment from the smaller compartment to the south-west. Only the courses in the lower half of the wall are tied into the external walls; the wall is, however, probably an original feature. A doorway at the north-west end of the wall gives access between the two compartments.

The smaller compartment measures 2.7 x 5.8m and is lofted, although this is only accessible from the main forge area. The floor is of brick and the room is largely featureless, apart from two iron-ring tie-points on the southeast wall and one each on the southwest and northeast walls. These were used for tethering horses brought in for shoeing. There is a modern stainless steel sink unit in the western corner.

Roof
The roof is supported by two tie-beam trusses with bolted kingposts and diagonal queen struts. These support a purlin either side and additional beams from which rise yokes forming additional support for some of the common rafters. The ridge piece is also held by a yoke. Outside, a wooden vent-housing is situated near the centre of the ridge and the two chimneystacks are offset to either side of the ridge.

2. **Lean-to wood shed**
This building, measuring 2.35 x 3.25m, lies against the east end of the stable. It is entered from the southern end, although there is a second (blocked) doorway in the east wall.

Materials and construction
This building is composed of coursed slate rubble walls, 0.39m thick, bonded with a pale brown lime-based mortar with large grit inclusions. The openings are dressed with slate quoins.

East elevation
This elevation is largely obscured from view. It contains a former doorway, infilled with concrete blocks.

South elevation
This end elevation is set back from the front of the stable and contains a central doorway with a wooden lintel. The door is hung on strap hinges.

Interior
The floor has a concrete surface and the walls are whitewashed. There is a timber-framed storage rack against the western wall. The shed is currently used for domestic storage.

Roof
The building has an east-facing monopitch slate roof supported by common rafters.

3. **Stable**
The stable is a two-storey, roughly south-facing building with symmetrical fenestration (Plate 3). It is almost square in plan, measuring 5.49m x 4.96m internally. The linhay adjoins its western end and it is abutted to the north and east by the shippen and former wood shed, respectively.

Materials and construction
The walls, 0.39m thick, are constructed of Devonian slate rubble courses, bonded with a white lime-based mortar with large grit inclusions. Larger pieces of rubble have been used for the quoins. The ground- floor openings are dressed with red brick.

East elevation
Much of the lower portion of this elevation is obscured by the lean-to wood shed (5.2). A tall, narrow slit-opening is located in the apex. The lower part of the southeastern corner of the building is rounded, to facilitate passing traffic through the yard; the position of the wood shed, which is set back, also maximises passing space on this corner.

South elevation
The front wall of the building has a window either side of a centrally placed doorway, above which is a wide loft doorway. This is a typical 19th-century layout, although the proportions are slightly unusual; the windows are fairly small and the doorways are notably wide, particularly the doorway at loft level.

The ground floor openings have coarse brick-dressed segmental arches and the doorway also has dressed jambs. The dressings of the jambs are notably inconsistent (Plate 4). Those along the east jamb generally alternate in pairs, whilst some of those on the western jamb alternate singly.

The jambs of the loft doorway are composed of slate rubble with two bricks at each foot. The bottom 0.3m of the opening has been boarded over with three planks and the remaining part fitted with a casement window.

Interior – ground floor
Parts of a wooden hayrack and manger survive along the western end of the north wall. These features continue eastward behind a timber stall partition, which is positioned near the centre of the north wall.

Two slightly raised square stones are visible in the cobbled floor to the east of the doorway. The stones appear to predate a wooden workbench (one of three in the building), the legs of which fit awkwardly around them. The stones may relate to the earlier stable layout, perhaps defining the position of a door or gate.

There are two opposing alcoves, approximately 0.25m deep and 0.4m wide, in the west and east walls. Both of these are offset toward the front of the building.

A shallow surface drain is visible within the cobbled floor, at the western end of the building, running parallel to the south wall. The eastern part of the floor was obscured by furnishings.

Interior – first floor
The stable loft is set on two levels due to the addition of a raised L-shaped section of flooring designed to be level with the loft of the adjoining workshop. An inserted doorway in the west wall allows access between the two lofts. The raised section of flooring would have facilitated moving heavy items from the workshop to the stable; the remaining floor is at its original height.

The loft is divided into two sections by an east-to-west timber and wire partition, containing a wide doorway. Part of the partition follows the edge of the raised section of flooring; the position in the floor of a bolthole fixing for the door suggests that the flooring and partition were built at the same time.

The loft is now used for general storage, including the Mildmay-White family's own funeral bier, which was made in the adjacent workshop during the 1950s.[5] The loft was previously used as the painter's store, to which the painted inscription on the partition door attests: 'PAINTERS ONLY'.

Roof
The pitched slate roof has been lined internally and only the two scissor-braces and the purlins are visible.

4. **Linhay/workshop**
This south-facing building adjoins the western end of the stable and measures 10.96m x 4.84m. internally. The linhay was built in a traditional two-storey open-fronted style with three pillars along the front (Plate 5), although the openings have now been blocked. At the rear are 20th-century lean-to looseboxes and the western end of the lean-to shippen.

Materials and construction
The walls of the building are 0.41m thick and of random slate rubble construction, bonded with white lime-mortar with large grit inclusions. The three pillars are built of large pieces of slate and other stone, with later concrete-block and brick repairs. The infill between the posts is of weatherboarding and corrugated metal sheets.

South elevation
The front of the building is divided into four bays by the three stone-built pillars. Three of the bays are approximately the same width, the easternmost bay is notably wider.

At ground-floor level there is a variety of openings within the bays. At the western end is a two-leaf steel doorway. The adjacent bay contains a twelve-pane-window and a small section of weatherboarding. In front of this bay is a small concrete block bunker containing sawdust. The third bay from the west contains a wooden door and a six-pane window. The entire width of the eastern bay is composed of a large two-leaf doorway, the eastern door of which is folding.

At loft level, the westernmost bay has been infilled completely with corrugated metal sheeting. The remaining bays contain wooden casement windows above weatherboarding. Two of these windows are three-light casements and the easternmost is a five-light window.

[5] Mr D. Frampton, pers. comm.

West elevation
The western end elevation contains a loft doorway, accessible via a flight of stone steps surfaced with concrete. The doorway appears to be an original feature, although it has been subject to cement repairs above the wooden lintel. On the south side of the doorway is a wooden-framed rectangular opening, which has a wooden flap on the interior. The flap is held by two strap-hinges and fixed at the bottom by two wooden catches. The opening was probably used to run pulley belts into the building to work machinery, from an external tractor or other power source. To the north of the doorway, a cylindrical iron flue projects from the wall and runs up toward the apex of the roof, serving a stove within the loft. In the wall *c*.0.6m below this flue are remains of an earlier flue.

North elevation
The northern wall now faces into the adjoining looseboxes and shippen and is coated in whitewash. No features were noted in its construction.

Interior- ground floor
The ground floor is divided across its width by a timber plank partition. The western side of the partition is subdivided by further plank partitioning to create a small room in the south-east corner, entered via a doorway in its western side. The room contains a generator or alternator and a pulley system with a belt running up towards the loft. Above this, a steel chute runs down from the loft to the back of the small concrete bunker outside. The remaining western part of the building is used for general storage, as is the eastern section. The eastern compartment contains a diagonal wooden chute from the loft.

The western side of the building has an earth and rubble floor and the eastern side has a concrete floor.

Interior- loft
The loft is laid out as a carpenters' workshop, with a variety of shelves, workbenches and cupboards. The walls are whitewashed. A saw bench, powered via the pulley belt from the small room on the ground floor, is located along the southern wall. The sawdust produced was taken away via the wooden chute to the eastern room below. General sawdust appears to have been swept into a small square hole in the floor, which lead to the steel chute to the bunker outside. A wood-stove is situated at the western end of the building.

There are concrete blocks over the lintel of the doorway into the stable loft. It is probable that this doorway is a secondary feature, although the coating of whitewash prohibits confirmation.

Roof
The slated pitched roof is constructed of three bolted A-frame trusses with two purlins on either side. The roof interior has been lined.

5. **Lean-to shippen**
This north-facing structure is built against the rear walls of the stable and linhay (Plate 6). Being positioned on the higher ground behind these two structures, its floor level is comparable to that of their loft floors. Internally the building measures 8.95m x 3.22m.

Materials and construction
The primary construction is of random slate rubble with larger slate quoins, bonded with a white lime-based mortar with large inclusions. The walls are 0.45m thick. Later alterations have been carried out using concrete block.

East elevation
This end wall contains a central door, which is hung on two pintles within the doorway. The door jambs appear slightly rough, although obscured externally by vegetation and internally by render and whitewash. The doorway leads to a feed passage at the end of the shippen. The end of the wall abuts the corner of the stable and there are no obvious signs of it being keyed in to the latter.

West elevation
This end wall is featureless and is keyed in to the back wall of the linhay. The wall faces into a 20th-century timber loosebox (building 6).

North elevation
The front of the shippen contains two doorways and two windows. The eastern window was formerly a third doorway, which has been partially infilled with concrete blocks and a metal top-tilting window inserted. The external pintles have been left in situ.

The eastern doorway is relatively unaltered, although the western jamb has been partially rebuilt and concrete blocks added over the wooden lintel. It also has external pintles. Adjacent to this doorway is an inserted metal-framed window within concrete block-work.

The westernmost doorway is based on an original opening, although its width has been reduced by the insertion of concrete blocks against the partially rebuilt eastern jamb. The doorway leads to a second feed passage along the western wall.

In the north wall, under the western jambs of the two easternmost original doorways, there are two surface drain outlets with slate covers.

Interior
The interior consists of a central shippen flanked by two feed passages, both of which are about 0.8m wide. At either end of the shippen, facing these feed passages are three cattle standings, each 0.9-1.0m wide. Behind these are two wide parallel surface drains, 0.78m wide and 0.16m deep. The floor, lower wall courses (to a height of over 1.0m) and cattle standings are rendered with concrete and cement as per mid 20th-century Ministry of Agriculture guidelines. The feed passages remain unrendered.

No break between the stable and linhay masonry was observed during the site visit, although it is possible that such a break is be obscured by a wooden cupboard mounted on the south wall.

Roof
The monopitch roof has been covered with corrugated metal sheets.

6. **Looseboxes**
The north-west corner of the range contains a late 20th-century lean-to structure in the position of an earlier structure shown on the 1st edition OS map.

Exterior
The present exterior consists of wooden planking and contains three doorways along the northern elevation. Any earlier walling from the original structure is obscured by two diesel tanks along the western wall.

Interior
The building is divided into three compartments, the easternmost of which has a slab floor and a concrete trough in the south-east corner. The internal stone walls are whitewashed.

Roof
The monopitch roof is covered with corrugated metal sheets.

7. **Shed/office and woodshed**
This is a small single-storey rectangular building opposite the smithy, measuring 5.02m x 4.05m externally (Plate 7). The greater part of the building is used as an office/store whilst the western corner forms a separate small unit, formerly a coal shed[6] and now a woodshed. A late 20th-century concrete block shed adjoins the south-western wall and this is in turn adjoined by various other 20th-century sheds.

Materials and construction
The walls, 0.33m thick, are of coursed slate, bonded with a pale brown mortar with large grit inclusions.

North-east elevation
This elevation contains an inserted central opening containing a wood-framed top-tilting window.

South-east elevation
This elevation faces into a neighbouring property and is obscured by vegetation.

South-west elevation
This elevation is obscured by the adjoining concrete block shed. It contains a low window which has been boarded over.

North-west elevation
This is the gable-end of the building (facing the yard) and contains two doorways. The easternmost door, which leads to the office, has been fitted into a wider opening that has been partially blocked with wooden planks. The other, smaller, doorway leads to the woodshed. Both doors have wooden lintels.

Interior
The main part of the building consists of the L-shaped office. On the northeast side of the building the walls have been plastered and a ceiling added. An array of 20th-century cupboards, shelving and units with drawers surround the room. The floor has a concrete surface.

[6] Mr D. Frampton, pers. comm.

The wood shed is a small single cell in the western corner of the building, measuring 1.3 x 1m, with a slate floor. The top of the north-east wall is composed of wooden planks, rather than stonework, and is tilted inward.

Roof
The pitched slate roof is based on a single A-frame truss.

8. **Cart shed**
This is a small single-celled, west-facing building, positioned at an angle to the smithy (Plate 8), and measuring 3.83m x 2.22m internally. A 20th-century concrete-block shed has been constructed on its northern side.

Materials and construction
The building is composed primarily of Devonian slate rubble walls, 0.43m thick, bonded with a pale brown mortar with large grit inclusions.

East elevation
This wall was largely overgrown at the time of the site visit although the indications from the accessible interior are that it is a solid stone gable end.

South elevation
About midway along this wall is a doorway facing the smithy, providing relatively direct access between the two buildings.

West elevation
This gable-ended elevation contains the wide main entrance to the building, fitted with large double doors, with strap hinges, hanging on external pintles. Another set of pintles is located just inside the building, suggesting either the use of alternative doors or gates for specific functions, or that the current layout has superseded a different arrangement.

North elevation
The northern elevation has been obscured completely by the addition of the 20th-century shed. Inspection of the interior suggests that the wall is relatively featureless.

Interior
The open interior has a concrete floor and the walls have been whitewashed.

Roof
The lined slate pitched roof has a common rafter structure with two purlins.

5. RESULTS OF WATCHING BRIEF

A number of archaeological features were exposed within Areas I and III (Figs 9-11). All were cut from the level of natural subsoil and were sealed by subsoil. Natural subsoil in the form of an orange to dark reddish-brown silty sand containing fragments of natural weathered slate (102/119) was exposed across the site at a maximum depth of approximately 0.40m. The general sequence of overlying deposits comprised a *c.*0.20m thick layer of orange-brown clayey silt subsoil (101) overlain by topsoil (100).

Area I
This area contained a small number of features. A ditch (118), aligned roughly northwest-southeast, was exposed over a distance of 5m (Plate 9). It had maximum dimensions of 1.05m wide and 0.34m deep and contained two fills (114 and 115). Contained within the primary fill (115) was a large number of red daub fragments, most of which had slight straight-edged indentations; it is possible that these represent remnants of wattle and daub walling. The ditch did not appear to continue southward into Area II. The right-angled alignment of the ditch in relation to the present east-west boundaries suggests that they may have been contemporary, and that the ditch may have been associated with a former bank. It is possible that such a bank lay in the apparent gap between the ditch and ditch 122 to the east.

Immediately to the east of ditch 118 was ditch 122. The greater part of this ditch was oriented east-to-west, turning sharply to the northeast at its eastern end. The ditch was exposed over a distance of 6m, with a maximum width of 1m and measuring 0.15m deep. It contained a single fill (123) from which a single sherd of 11th–12th century chert tempered coarse ware was recovered. The western extent of the ditch terminated 1m from the eastern edge of ditch 118.

In the centre of Area I, lying just to the east of ditch 122, were two distinct north-to-south aligned patches of un-bonded and irregularly set shillet fragments (120). The similar form and alignment of the material suggests that they once formed part of the same feature extending for a projected length of at least *c.* 5.50m. The feature probably relates to a post-medieval stone-built hedge-bank exposed during the 2007 archaeological evaluation (Swindin 2007).

Some 9m to the east of feature 120 were three closely-spaced north to south aligned parallel gullies 128/132, 130/138, 134/136. Each of the features was traceable for between 5.50-6.00m. The only terminal visible was the southeast end of 128/132, the remaining gullies extending beyond the edge of the site or truncated by a modern intrusion to the south.

All of the gullies were characteristically shallow, ranging in depth between 0.14-0.20m, with bow-shaped profiles, and were filled with a homogenous clayey silt (Plate 11). Gully 130 contained a single sherd of 11th–12th century chert-tempered coarse ware. The exact stratigraphic relationship of gullies 130, 132 and 134 with those to the south (128, 136 and 138) is unclear, although the common alignment, dimensions and profiles suggests that they are of the same date and function.

The gullies were cut through by two southwest-to-northeast aligned ditches (126, 140). Ditch 126 was the earlier of the two and measured 2.30m in length with a maximum width of 0.65m and a depth of 0.25m (Plate 10). It contained a single fill (127) composed of dark brown silt. No finds were present. Ditch 140 was exposed over a distance of 1.80m and had a maximum width of 0.30m. It contained a single black ashy fill (141). No finds were present. It is possible that ditch 140 represents a partial reuse of ditch 126.

Area II
No archaeological deposits or features were exposed within Area II.

Area III (Fig 9)
Across most of Area III a layer of subsoil (101) was exposed, which produced 13th–15th century pottery. The remains of a southwest-to-northeast aligned Devon hedgebank (103-

105) extended across the eastern part of the area. The hedgebank measured 21m in length and survived to a maximum height of 0.70m (Plate 12). The bank was faced with irregularly coursed slate-type stone, laid on edge and bonded by clay sand. A sequence of soil layers (108-112) overlay part of the bank, from which were recovered a number of 18th and 19th century pottery sherds. The position and angle of the bank suggests that it represents the southern boundary of the rectangular plot numbered 1019 on the Tithe Map (Fig. 4). To the north side of the bank an irregular and very shallow depression (106) infilled with stone fragments produced a number of 15th–18th century pottery sherds.

6. THE FINDS

The assemblage comprises a single lithic and pottery from the medieval and post-medieval periods. The quantities are summarised in table 1 below.

Context	**Date**	**Medieval pottery**		**Post-medieval pottery**		**Clay pipe**		**Lithics**	
		Qty	**Weight**	**Qty**	**Weight**	**Qty**	**Weight**	**Qty**	**Weight**
101	13th / 15th C	1							
107	15th -18th C			21		5			
108	18th C			6					
112	19th C			2					
123	11th to 12th C	1							
131	11th to 12th C	1							
unstrat		6						1	
Totals		**9**		**29**		**5**		**1**	

Table 1: Quantification of finds by context and category.

7. DISCUSSION

Watching brief

The settlement of Holbeton is of at least medieval origin. It is likely that the surviving narrow plots within and around the site, which were used as orchards in at least the late 18th and early 19th centuries, derive from the enclosure of medieval open ‘strip fields’. During the 2007 evaluation two scarps or lynchets were found to underlie later hedgebanks, possibly indicating the earlier form of strip boundary.

The ditches found during the present work within Area I probably represent the medieval and later subdivision of plot number 1026 on the Tithe Map. This plot appears to be defined to the south by the present northeast-to-southwest field boundary; neither the westernmost ditch (118) or remnant hedgebank (120) were found to continue south of this into Area II. The single smaller east-to-west medieval ditch (122) may represent an additional subdivision and the concentration of smaller linear features to the northeast may be associated with horticultural activity, possibly bedding trenches, of a comparable medieval date.

The remnant stone hedgebank within Area III appears to be of post-medieval origin, and may represent a boundary depicted on the Tithe Map.

Building survey

The earliest map clearly showing buildings to the rear of the Fore Street frontage is the Tithe Map. This map depicts a single building within the yard on the north side of one of the long narrow strip boundaries. The position of the building does not appear to fit with any of the buildings shown on OS map surveyed in 1885 (the stable is the nearest) and it appears that both building and boundary had been removed by this time.

A range of buildings, including the stable, shippen and linhay, is shown on the OS map surveyed in 1885. As the buildings were erected along a former property boundary, with no interconnecting openings between those in the north and those in the south, it is unclear whether they were built before or after the individual properties were consolidated as one.

The layout of the stable is typical of those built throughout the 19th-century and early 20th century. The brick dressings indicate 19th-century origins, although the differing brick patterns of the door jambs suggests that the eastern side (with bricks in pairs, and comparatively cleaner bonding) has been rebuilt. The stable seems likely to have been constructed between the mid-1840s and the 1850s.

The linhay and shippen appear to have been built together as an addition to the stable; the west wall of the shippen is tied into the back wall of the linhay, and the latter abuts the stable. The looseboxes have a late 20th-century appearance, although a building is depicted in this position on the 1951 OS map.

The smithy first appears on the OS map of 1906, so must have been built between 1885 and this date. The late origin of the building is borne out, in part, by the use of machined bricks for the dressings. Again, it is unclear whether the individual tenements had been consolidated at this point, or whether the smithy was initially part of a separate unit which also included the cart shed and northern lean-tos behind the stable. Whether the premises were consolidated or not, the building of the smithy may signify the first use of the yard for estate maintenance purposes.

The remaining buildings on the site were constructed during the 20th century. The pigsty and long southern range of corrugated metal-sheet sheds appear on the 1951 OS map and were probably built after 1945. The remaining, late 20th-century buildings consist of concrete block, corrugated metal-sheet and timber structures, which functioned as pigs' houses, looseboxes and storage sheds.

Most of the surveyed buildings have undergone a change of use since first being built and many of these have already been noted. Alterations evident in the exterior walls of the shippen reflect a change of internal layout and probable change of use. The original form of this building appears to have consisted of three evenly spaced doorways along the frontage, implying three separate internal compartments of comparable size. This suggests that the building is likely to have functioned as a calves' or pigs' house before being converted to a shippen in the mid-late 20th century.

It is not impossible that the linhay has always served as a workshop although it has the appearance of a traditional linhay found on many farms throughout Devon. As such its original layout may have consisted of an open hayloft over an open-fronted byre, shippen or cart shed. No traces of any fixtures were observed to suggest previous use as a shippen. Any former agricultural use is therefore likely to have involved animal pens or storage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was commissioned by A. Lewis (Midas/Gerald Woods Homes) and administered by P.J. Weddell and P. Stead (EA). The building recording was undertaken by C.S. Wakeham and the archaeological monitoring by P. Jones. The illustrations were prepared by T. Ives, and additional documentary searches undertaken by A.G. Collings. Thanks are due to Mr D. Frampton of Holbeton for sharing his useful background knowledge of the site.

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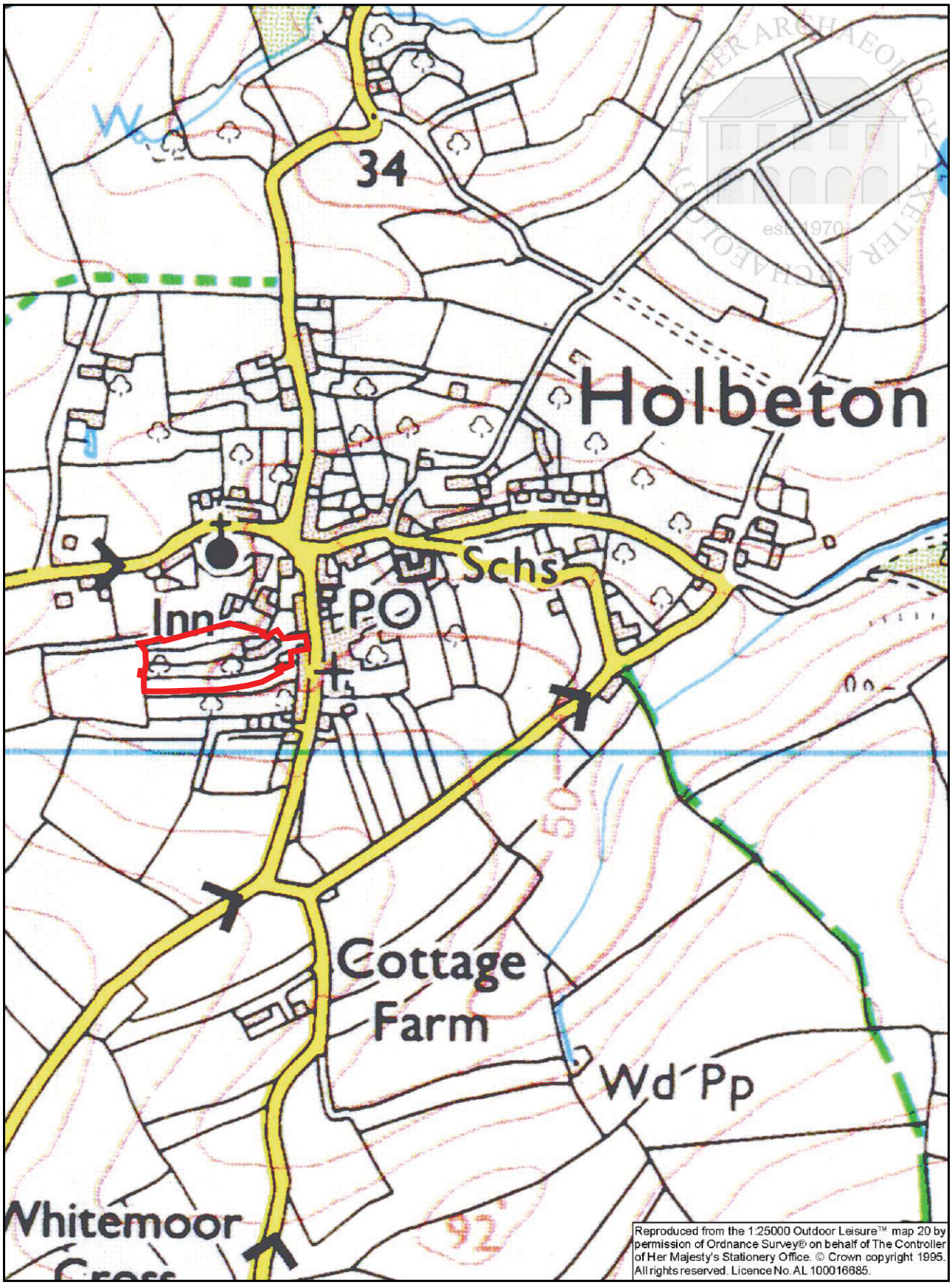

Fig. 1 Location of site. Scale 1:5000.

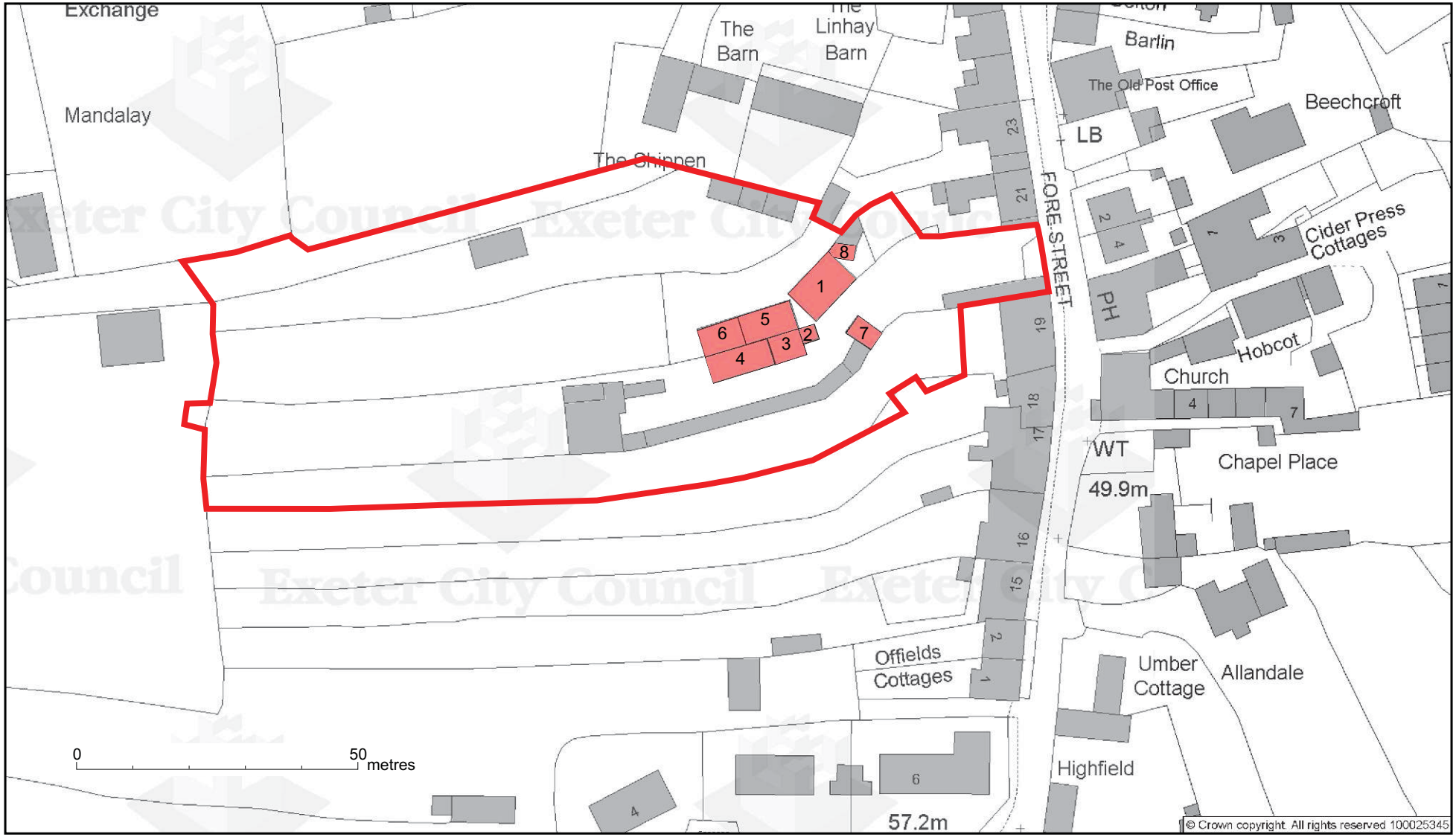

Fig. 2 Site area and location of recorded buildings (numbered 1-8).

Fig. 3 The area *c*. 1785. Extract from the Board of Ordnance's six inch to the mile (1:10,560) map sheet No. 19 Part VI, surveyed in 1784–86.

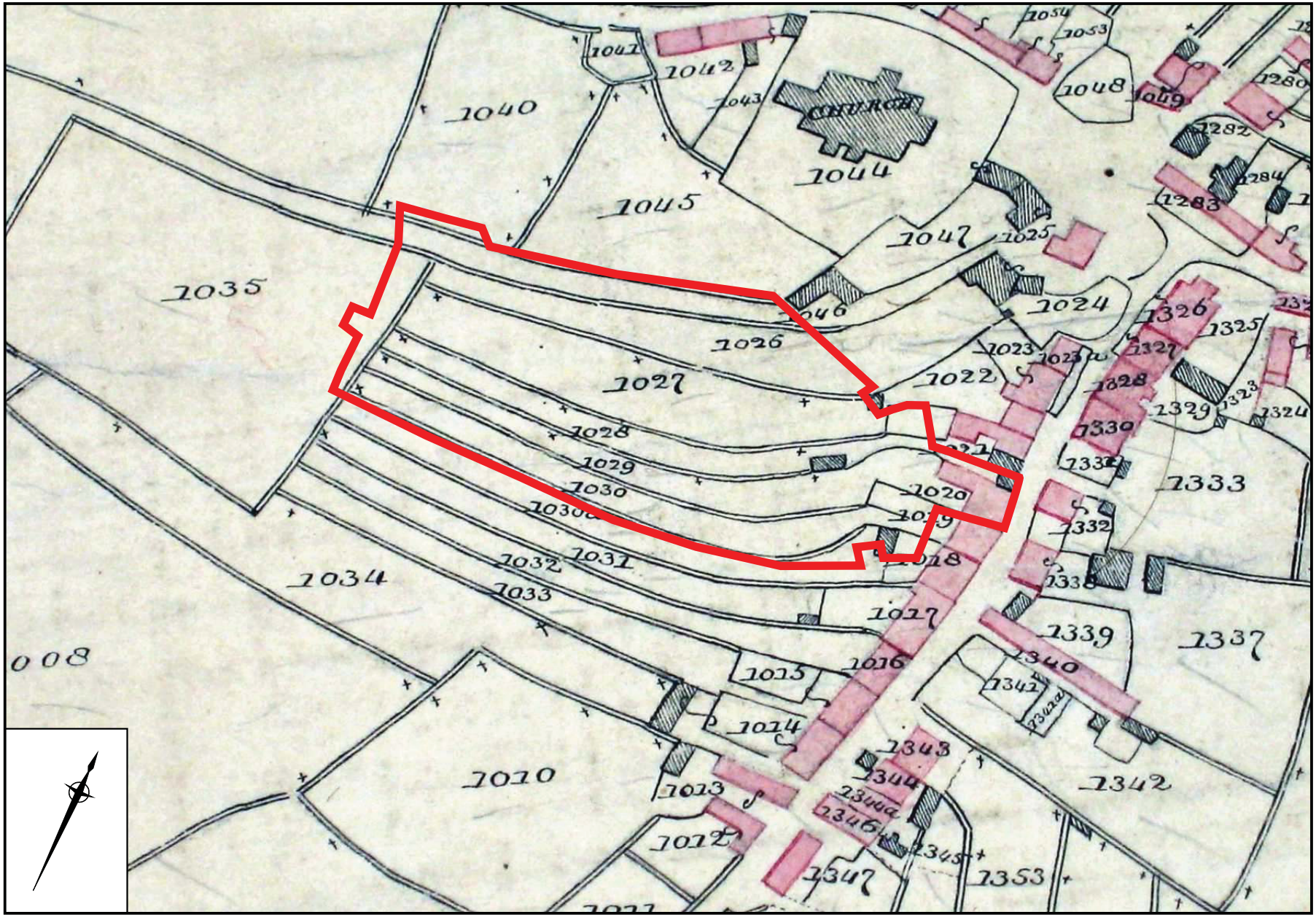

Fig. 4 Extract from the 1842 Holbeton Tithe Map (position of site boundary approximate).

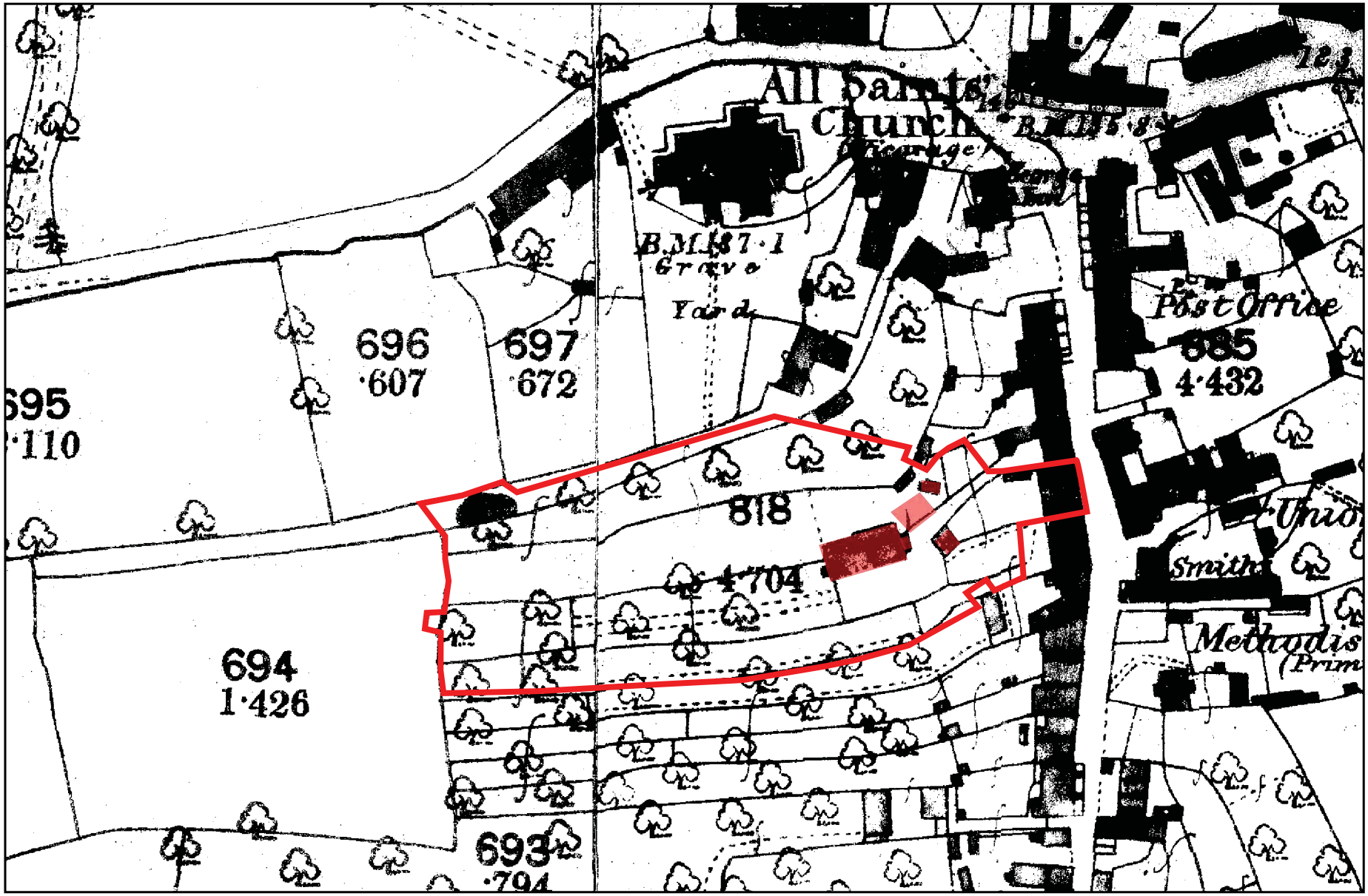

Fig. 5 The site in 1885 showing positions of recorded buildings (pink) and overall site boundary. OS 1:2500 map sheets 130.1/130.2 published in 1886/1887, enlarged to 1:1250.

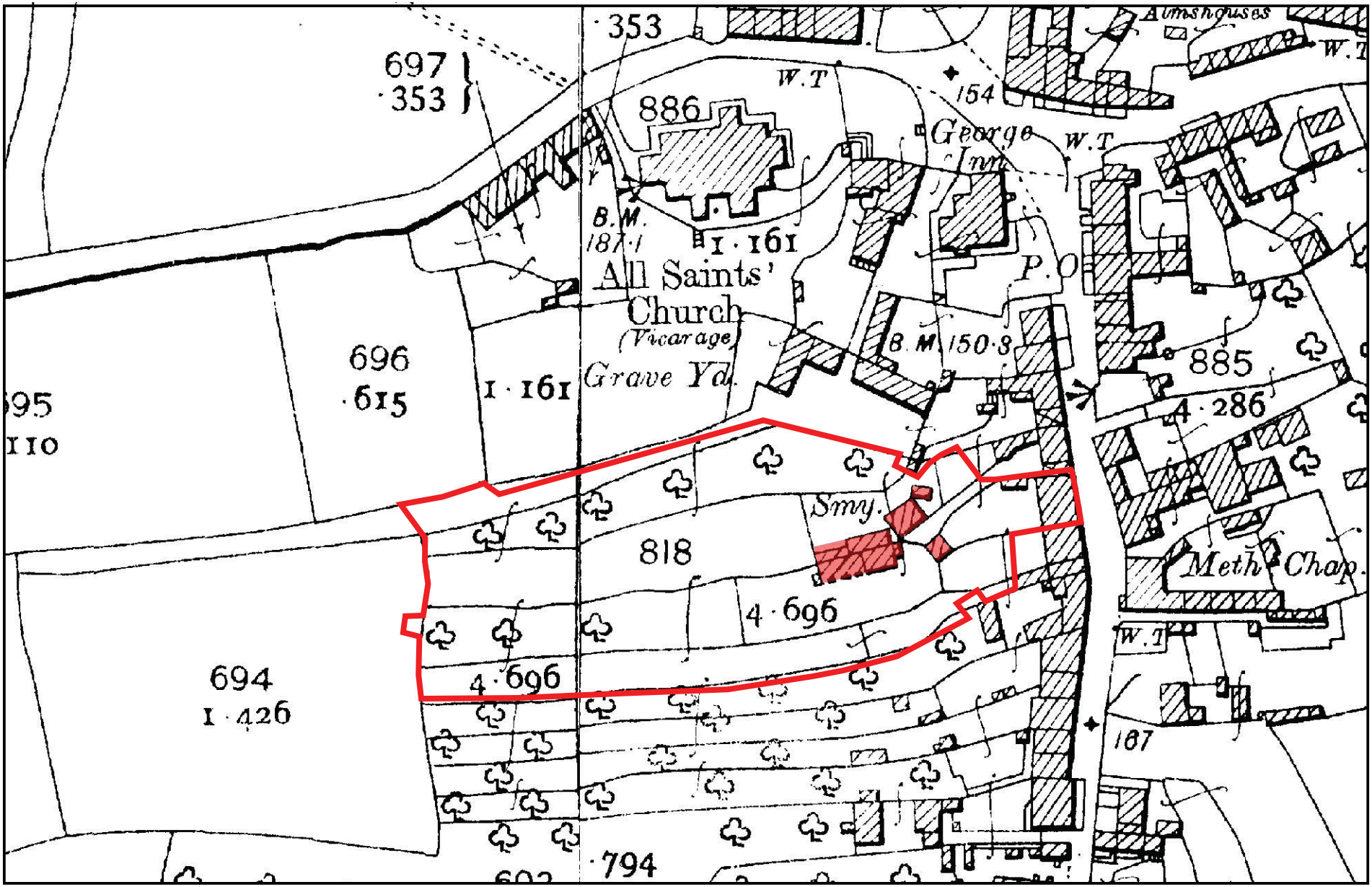

Fig. 6 The site in 1905 showing positions of recorded buildings (pink) and overall site boundary. OS 1:2500 map sheets 130.1/130.2, published in 1906, enlarged to 1:1250.

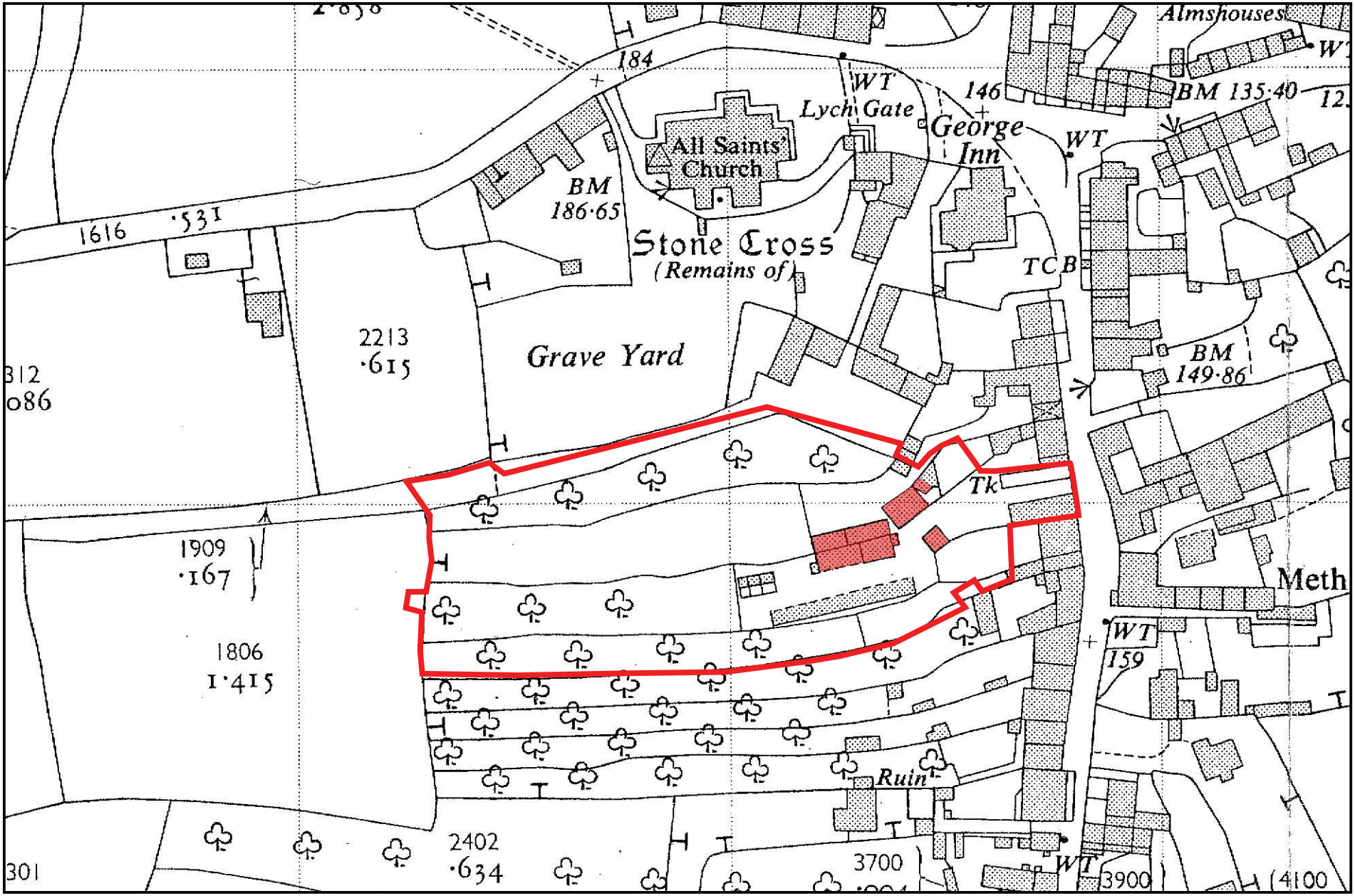

Fig. 7 The site in 1951 showing positions of recorded buildings (pink) and overall site boundary. OS 1:2500 map sheet 20/6150, enlarged to 1:1250.

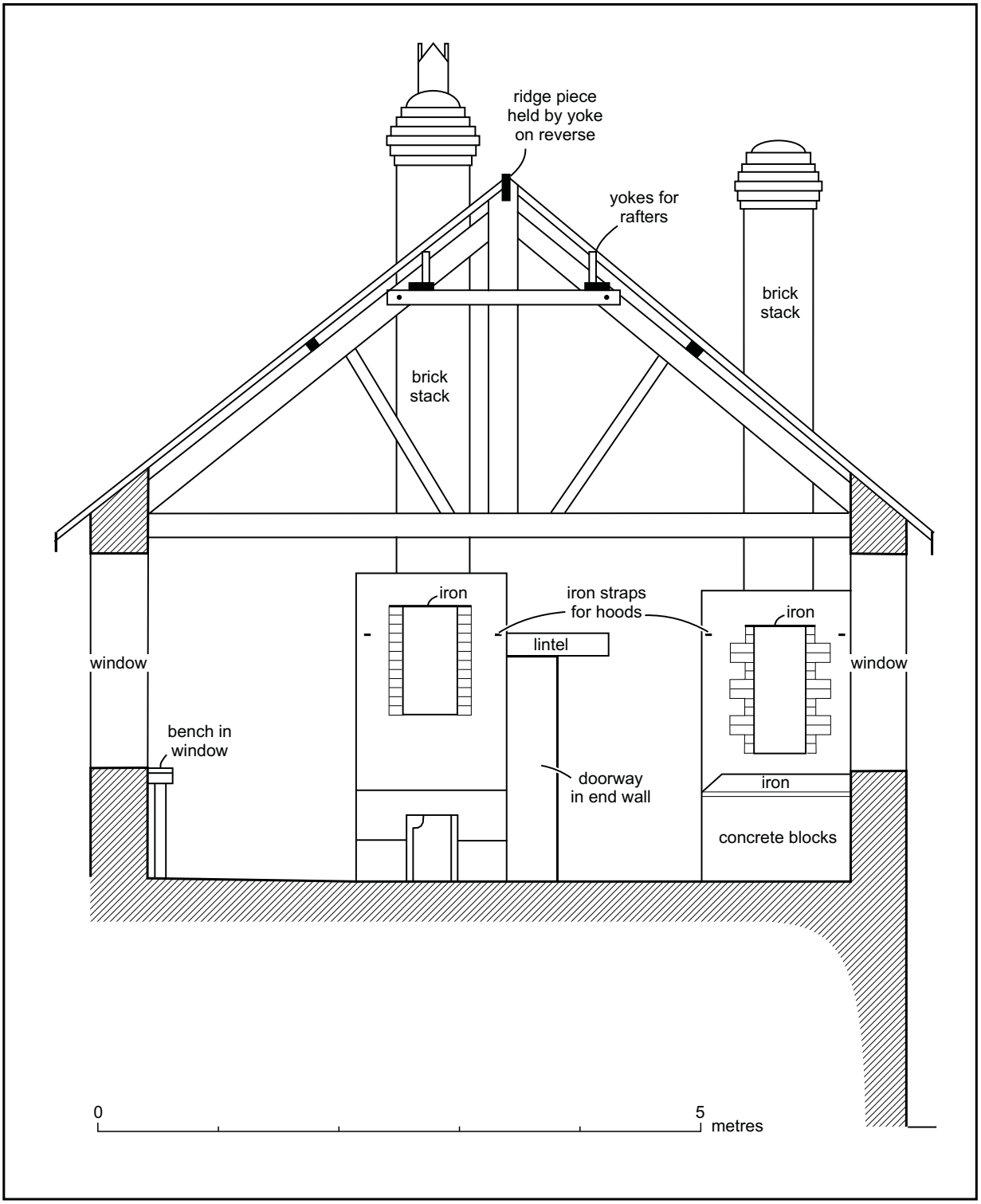

Fig. 8 Elevation of forges within the smithy (view to northeast).

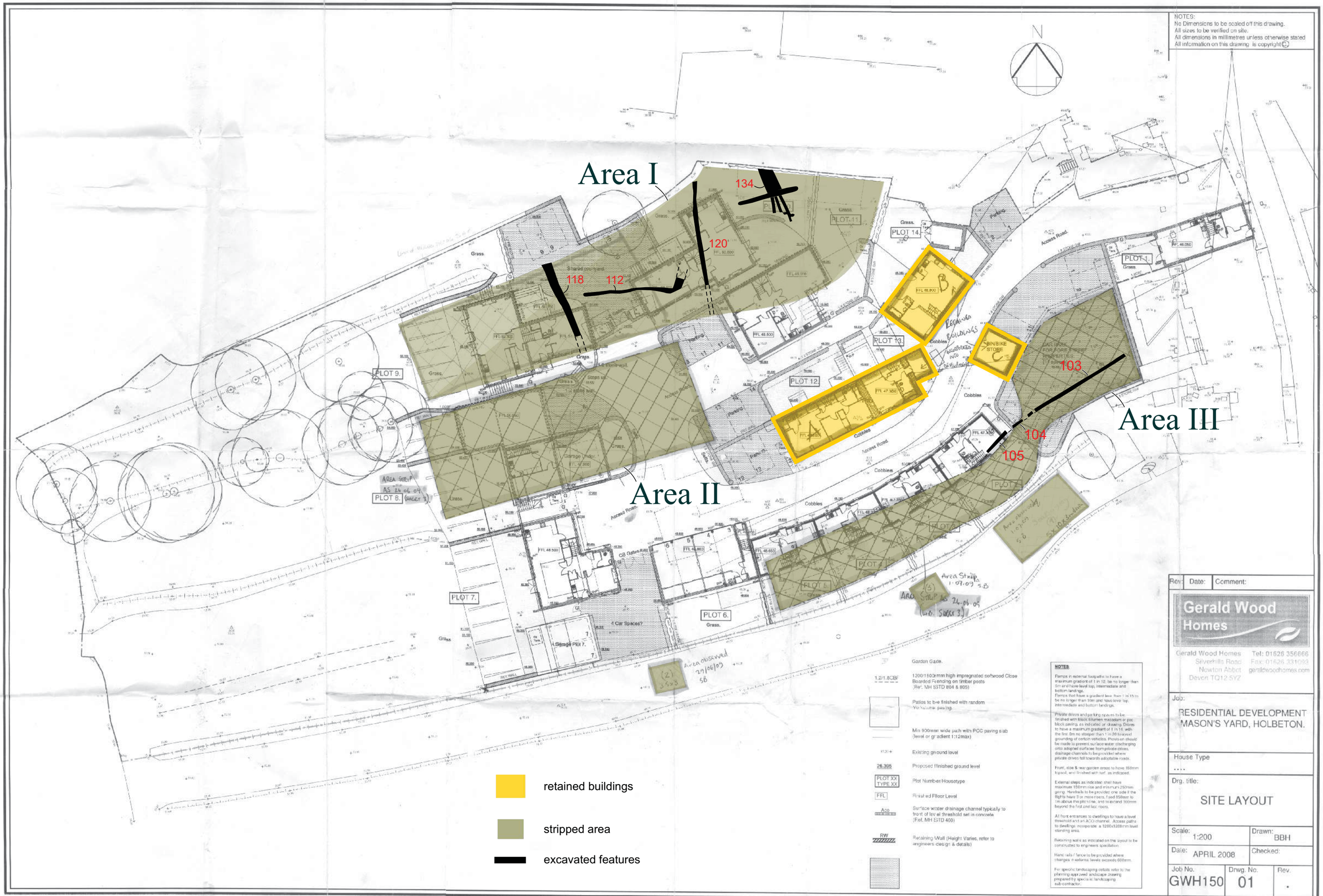

Fig. 9 Site plan showing location of archaeological features in Areas I-III (1:400)

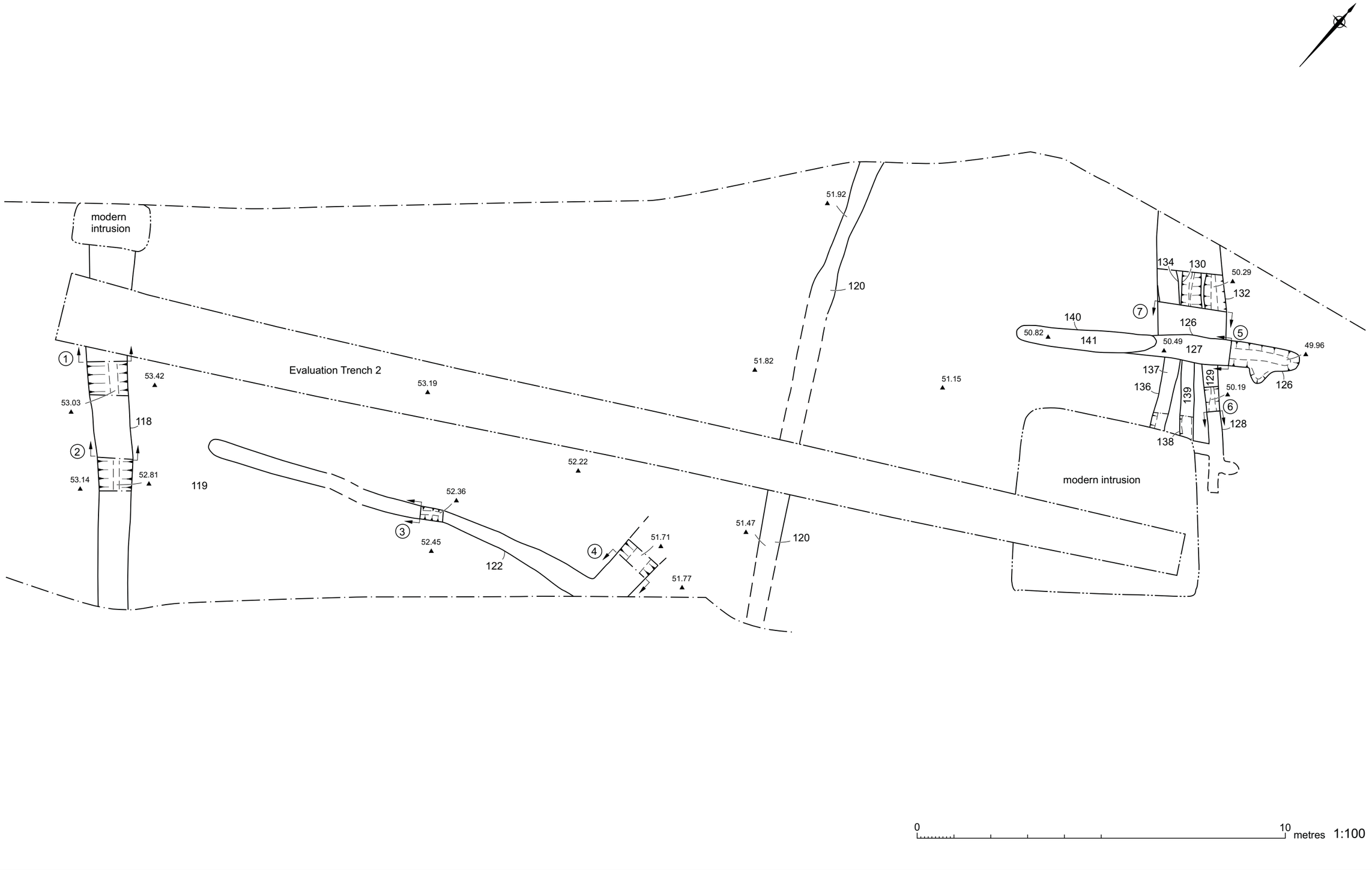

Fig. 10 Plan showing archaeological features in Area I.

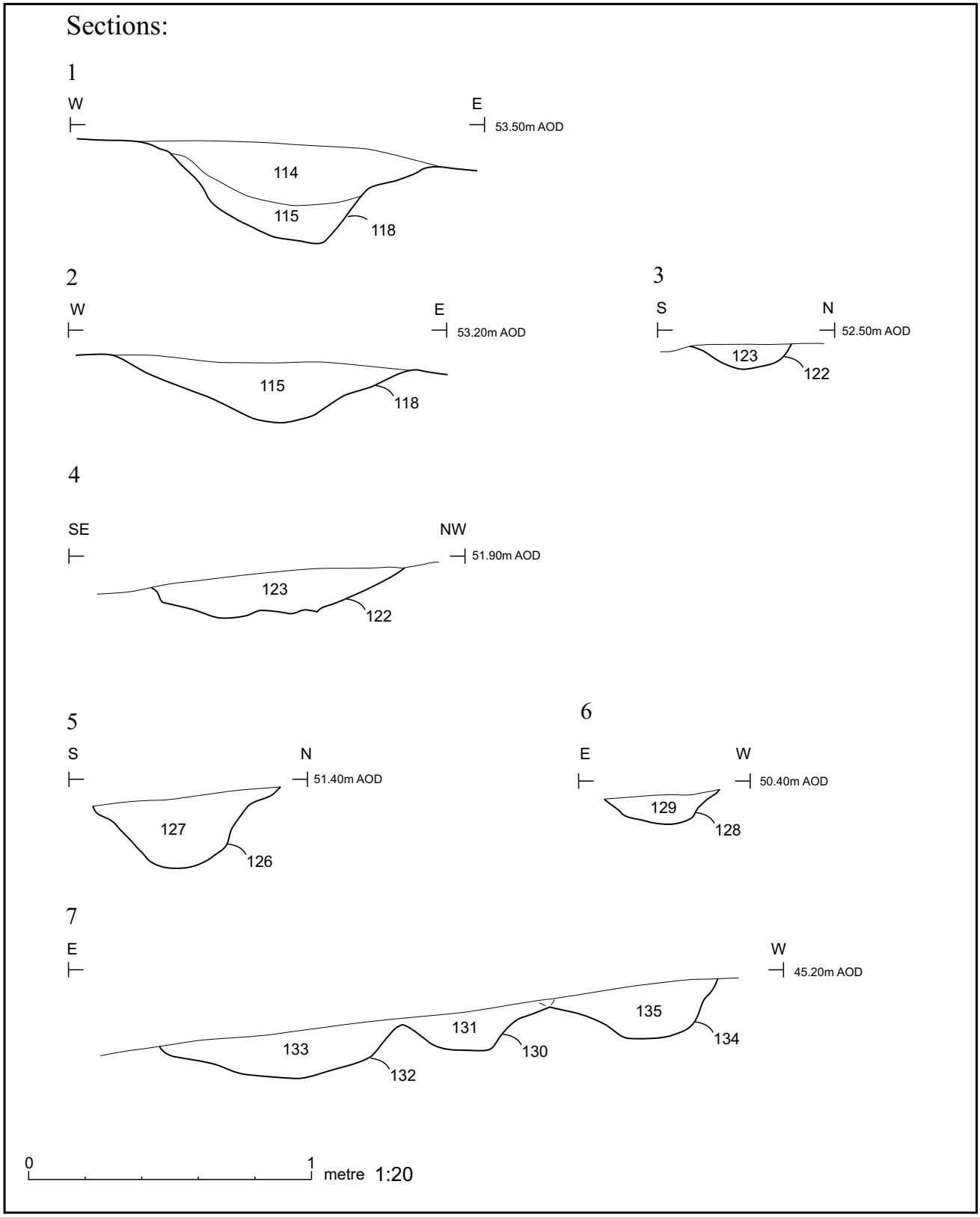

Fig. 11 Sections.

Plate 1 The smithy, southeast elevation. View to west.

Plate 2 Northernmost forge within the smithy.

Plate 3 The stable, southeast elevation. View to west.

Plate 4 The stable door showing inconsistency in the brick dressings.

Plate 5 The linhay, west and south elevations. View to northeast.

Plate 6 North sides of the main historic buildings (lean-to shippen in centre). View to southeast.

Plate 7 The office and wood shed, northwest elevation. View to east.

Plate 8 The cart shed, west elevation.

Plate 9 Slot through ditch 118, view to north.

Plate 10 Linear feature 126, view to west.

Plate 11 Slot through linear features 130, 132 and 134.

Plate 12 Hedgebank 103-105, Area III, view to northeast.