

**10 Turk Street/rear of 53 High Street,
Alton, Hampshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Choudhary

by Jennifer Lowe

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HSA07/107

April 2008

Summary

Site name: 10 Turk Street/rear of 53 High Street, Alton, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 7175 3925

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 28th February to 3rd March 2008

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Jennifer Lowe

Site code: HSA 07/107

Area of site: 280 sq m

Summary of results: Several post-medieval pits and a well were recorded during the watching brief, as well as a late post medieval building footing.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course, with the accession code A2007.43

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 18.04.08
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Report 07/107b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 10 Turk Street/rear of 53 High Street, Alton, Hampshire (SU 7175 3925) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr N. Choudhary, 12 Quinneys, Cambridge Road West, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 6RA.

Planning consent has been gained on appeal (APP/M1710/A/1189196) from East Hampshire District Council to redevelop the site for residential purposes. It is intended to construct an apartment block on the site with ground floor parking to the rear. This consent is subject to a condition (6) relating to archaeology which requires a programme of archaeological investigation on the site. Previous evaluation showed that whilst parts of the site had archaeological potential, this was deeply buried by modern deposits (Taylor 2007). The current phase of work therefore involved a watching brief during groundworks on the site which were expected to be relatively shallow compared to the depth of the archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Stephen Appleby, then Archaeological Officer with Hampshire County Council, acting as archaeological adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Jennifer Lowe between the 28th February 2008 and 3rd March 2008 and the site code is HSA07/107.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service with the accession code A2007.43.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on an L-shaped parcel of land on the south side of Turk Street and the rear of 53 High Street, Alton, Hampshire (Fig. 2). The site slopes gradually from the south-west to the north-east and is bounded by shops to the west and east and a car park to the south. The underlying geology comprises river and valley gravels (BGS 1990), which was observed during the course of the watching brief. The site lies at a height of 104m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site is derived from its location within the historic core of the town. Alton is one of a large number of small towns in Hampshire, and the south of England generally, known to have medieval or Saxon origins, but from which little detailed archaeological evidence has been recovered. Few large scale archaeological excavations have taken place in Alton or the surrounding area (Hughes 1976, 23–8), although a number of smaller projects in recent years, such as watching briefs and evaluations, have shed some light on the archaeological background to the town (Edwards 2002). Intensive medieval occupation has been identified at a number of locations along the High Street as well as later medieval buildings fronting the street. Fieldwork in the rear of burgage plots, as here, is likely to encounter pit digging and rubbish disposal of the inhabitants of the properties on the street frontage (Hammond and Taylor 2007). However, on occasion, deposits are also found which reflect the trade of the occupants and help reconcile archaeological and documentary sources for the use of the site. Turk Street is known from as early as 1334 (Edwards 2002). The archaeological potential of the site has been identified in a previous phase of evaluation which recorded late medieval pits close to the eastern side of the site (Taylor 2007)

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new construction work. This was to include any areas of ground reduction, excavation of trenches for foundations, services and soakaways.

Results

The initial intention was to reduce the site by approximately 1m or so to the rear (southern end of the site). The site was already level with Turk Street (northern end). In the first instance approximately 0.60m of made ground was removed from the rear of the plot with less being removed as it progressed north. The initial strip revealed some late post-medieval brickwork, but little else was visible at this stage. The site contractors decided that another 0.80m was required to be removed from the rear of the plot, again graded upwards towards the north. The second stage of stripping was carried out under constant archaeological supervision and several post-medieval features were encountered (Fig. 3).

?Late medieval (15th century)

A well (10) was encountered in the western corner of the site (Figs 3 and 4). The feature was exposed in section which revealed it to be 1.40m wide and was recorded to a depth of 1.20m (base not encountered). The well was constructed from chalk blocks (61) and was filled with a loose dark grey brown silty clay (60). A single fragment of tile as well as three very small sherds of pottery were recovered from the well, with the pottery suggesting a possible 15th-century date (one 13th-century sherd is certainly residual). The top of well was exposed after the initial strip of the site and in section the well was only observed to cut natural geology. The 15th-century pottery is likely to be residual (given its size) and it is therefore more likely that a post-medieval date should be ascribed to this feature.

Mid 16th century

Pit 11 was recorded in the south-west facing section at the rear of the plot. Its full extent was not recorded as it was not exposed fully in plan, nor was it bottomed (Figs 3 and 4). This feature appeared to be sealed by the made ground and cut the natural gravel. The pit was filled with a dark brown silty clay (63) and two fragments of bone as well as two sherds of pottery were recovered from the pit fill.

A second pit (12) was identified 4m to the south-east of pit 11. This pit was sealed by a late post-medieval structure and again was not fully exposed in plan. In section, however, it was roughly 0.70m wide and recorded to a depth of 0.60m. This feature was filled with a mid grey brown silty clay (63) producing a fragment of pottery. Both pits 11 and 12 appear to date from the mid 16th century, which is a similar date to the features identified during the course of the evaluation.

Mid-late 17th century

A large U-shaped cut (14) was exposed in the north-west facing section, to the rear of the plot. This possible pit was recorded in section only and was approximately 3.60m wide and recorded to a depth of 0.80m. The pit was filled with a mix of mid grey brown silty clay and chalk crush (65) and it is possible that it corresponds with a layer of crushed chalk observed during the evaluation phase. A single sherd of mid 17th-century pottery was recovered from the fill of 14 which is slightly later than the pottery recovered from the chalk layer; two fragments of undated bottle glass were also retrieved from 14.

A second pit, 15 was recorded sealed by the brickwork towards the centre of the site. This feature was only recorded to a depth of 0.43m (not its full extent). A single fragment of clay pipe, two pieces of glass and two sherds of pottery were recovered from the dark grey brown silty clay fill (66).

Two later post-medieval structures were recorded towards the centre of the site, extending from below the boundary with no. 10 Turk Street and extending towards Turk Street itself. Both L-shaped foundations were comprised of brick bonded with a lime mortar. One of the structures sealed pits 12 and 15 which therefore suggests a later post-medieval date as pit 15 is assumed to be one of the later features on site. According to the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1874), a rectangular building extended between the rear of 10 Turk Street in to the area of the site; this may correspond to the structure encountered during the watching brief.

19th Century

Pit 13 was encountered in the southern corner of the site and was only observed in section. The feature was 0.90m deep and 1m wide and the fill (64) contained four pieces of 19th-century pottery, four fragments of clay pipe and a single sherd of glass.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 13 sherds with a total weight of 359g. It was mostly post-medieval, although three fragments of residual medieval wares were also present.

The following fabrics were noted:

Early Medieval Ware. 12th–13th century? Sparse sub-rounded white, pink and orange quartz up to 1mm. Rare sub-angular red ironstone of the same size. Occasional organic voids. 1 sherd, 3g.

Late Medieval Transitional Earthenware. 15th century? Orange sandy fabric with few visible inclusions apart from rare sub-rounded chalk up to 0.5mm and red and black ironstone of the same size. 2 sherds, 12g.

German Stonewares. AD1480 and later. A range of hard, grey, salt-glazed fabrics produced at numerous sites in the Rhineland and beyond (Gaimster 1997). 1 sherd, 18g.

Glazed Red Earthenware, 16th–19th century. Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century. 1 sherd, 14g.

Border wares *c.* 1550–1700 (Pearce 1992). White fabric, moderate rounded red quartz, iron stained to varying degrees, up to 0.25mm in size, with occasional grains up to 0.5mm. Sparse rounded red and black ironstone up to 0.25mm with sparse flecks of mica up to 0.1mm. The range of glazes on the vessels range from green, olive and yellow. Made in a wide range of utilitarian forms. 2 sherds, 74g.

Staffordshire Slipware. AD1650–1750. Fine cream fabric with white slip and pale yellow lead glaze, commonest decoration is feathered dark brown trailed slip. Chiefly press-moulded flat wares, although small bowls and mugs etc are known. 1 sherd, 91g.

English Stoneware. Late 17th century and later. Hard, grey fabric, often with a brown, iron-rich exterior wash. Range of utilitarian vessels, particularly mugs. sherd, 59g.

Miscellaneous 19th and 20th century wares. Mass-produced white earthenwares, stonewares etc. 4 sherds, 88g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. The range of pottery types is typical of medieval and post-medieval sites in the area. The post-medieval

assemblage comprises a mixture of utilitarian and tablewares. One sherd of note is the fragment of English Stoneware from pit 15 (context 66). It is from the rim of a large mug, and has part of an inscription which was incised pre-firing. All that remains is “W^m”, presumably an abbreviation of “William”. It is likely that the name is that of the owner of the vessel, and English Stoneware pots with names and dates are well-attested. For example, the British Museum holds a Fulham Potteries mug similar to the item from this site inscribed ‘Peter Waters 1721’ (Blacker 1922, 50). It is likely the original inscription on this vessel was of a similar type. It appears to date from the later 17th or early 18th century.

Clay Pipe

A total of 6 fragments of clay pipe, weighing 20g, were retrieved from pits 12, 13 and 15. Most of the fragments are undiagnostic stem fragments. A small stem fragment with spur still intact was recovered from pit 13 (64). The initials ‘SG’ on this pipe may be the mark of Hampshire pipe maker Sophia Goodall who worked in Fareham between 1847 and 1851 (Oswald 1975).

Glass

Five fragments of glass were recovered from pits 13, 14 and 15. All appear to be fragments of bottle glass, with the exception of one fragment from pit 15 which is a much finer fragment and may be from a wine glass.

Ceramic Building material

Two pieces of undiagnostic tile fragments and a single brick fragment were recovered during the course of the watching brief from two features (10 and 12).

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

Two fragments of animal bone were recovered from pit 11 (fill 62), weighing a total of 58g. A left sheep/goat distal humerus was identified with associated butchery-related cut-marks, while the second fragment lacked diagnostic characteristics to allow for confident species identification. No further information could be determined from the poorly preserved remains.

Conclusion

As with the evaluation, the watching brief recorded several features, post-medieval in date. The archaeology encountered is typical of this type of site ie. land to the rear of a burgage plot, where the land would have been used for the disposal of domestic refuse. The fact that so little evidence of medieval, or indeed earlier, activity was encountered may reflect only that the area of site observed had already been extensively landscaped (as shown by the extent of made ground removed).

References

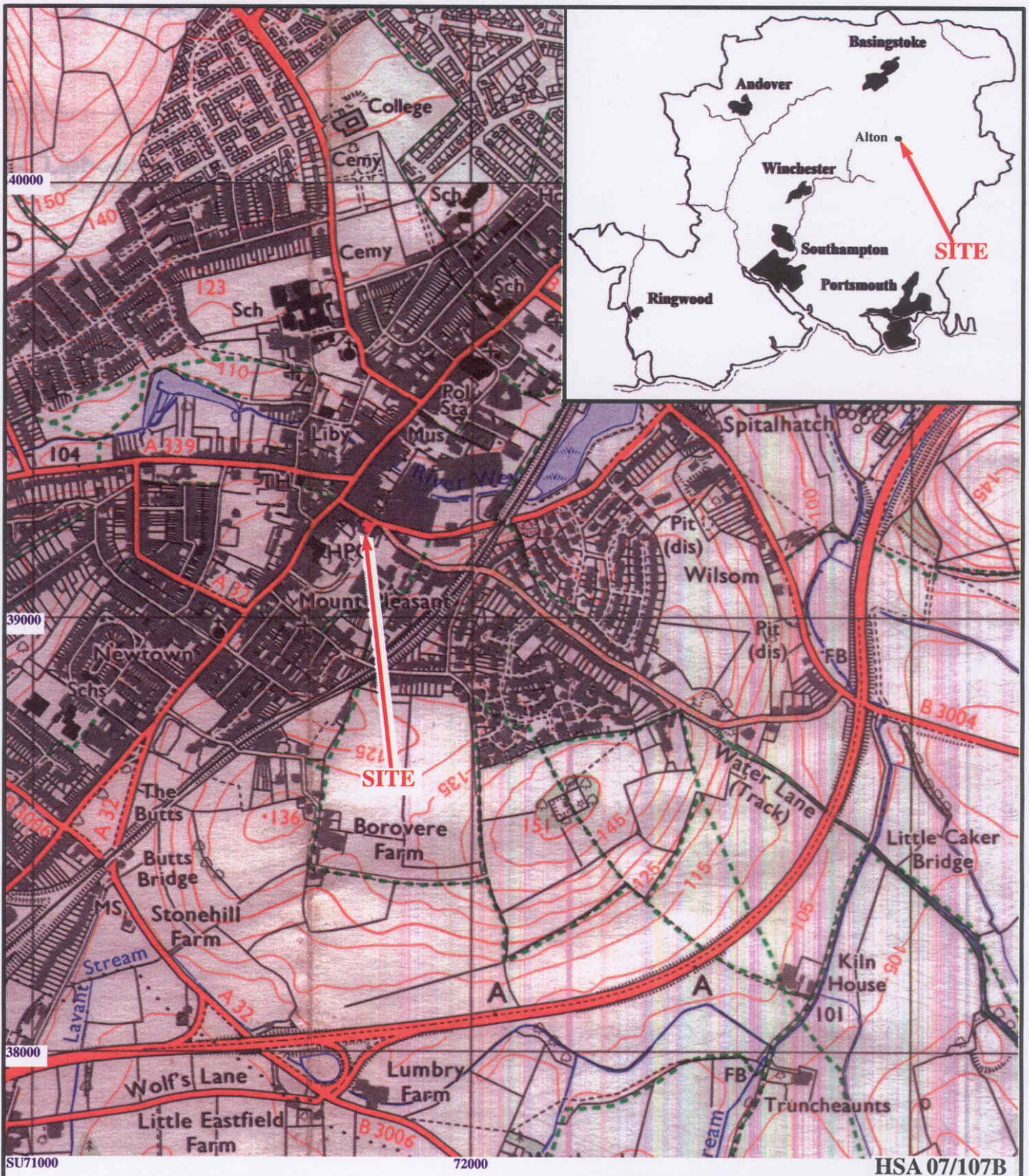
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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
10	60	Well	15th century (probably later)	Pottery (residual)
10	61	Well	15th century (probably later)	Pottery (residual?)
11	62	Pit	Mid 16th century	Pottery
12	63	Pit	Mid 16th century	Pottery
13	64	Pit	19th century	Pottery
14	65	Pit	Mid 17th century	Pottery
15	66	Pit	Late 17th century	Pottery

Appendix 2: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>EMW</i>		<i>LMT</i>		<i>GS</i>		<i>GRE</i>		<i>BW</i>		<i>SS</i>		<i>ES</i>		<i>19th</i>	
		<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
10	60	1	3	2	12												
11	62					1	18			1	57						
12	63							1	14								
13	64															4	88
14	65											1	91				
15	66									1	17			1	59		
	Total	1	3	2	12	1	18	1	14	2	74	1	91	1	59	4	88

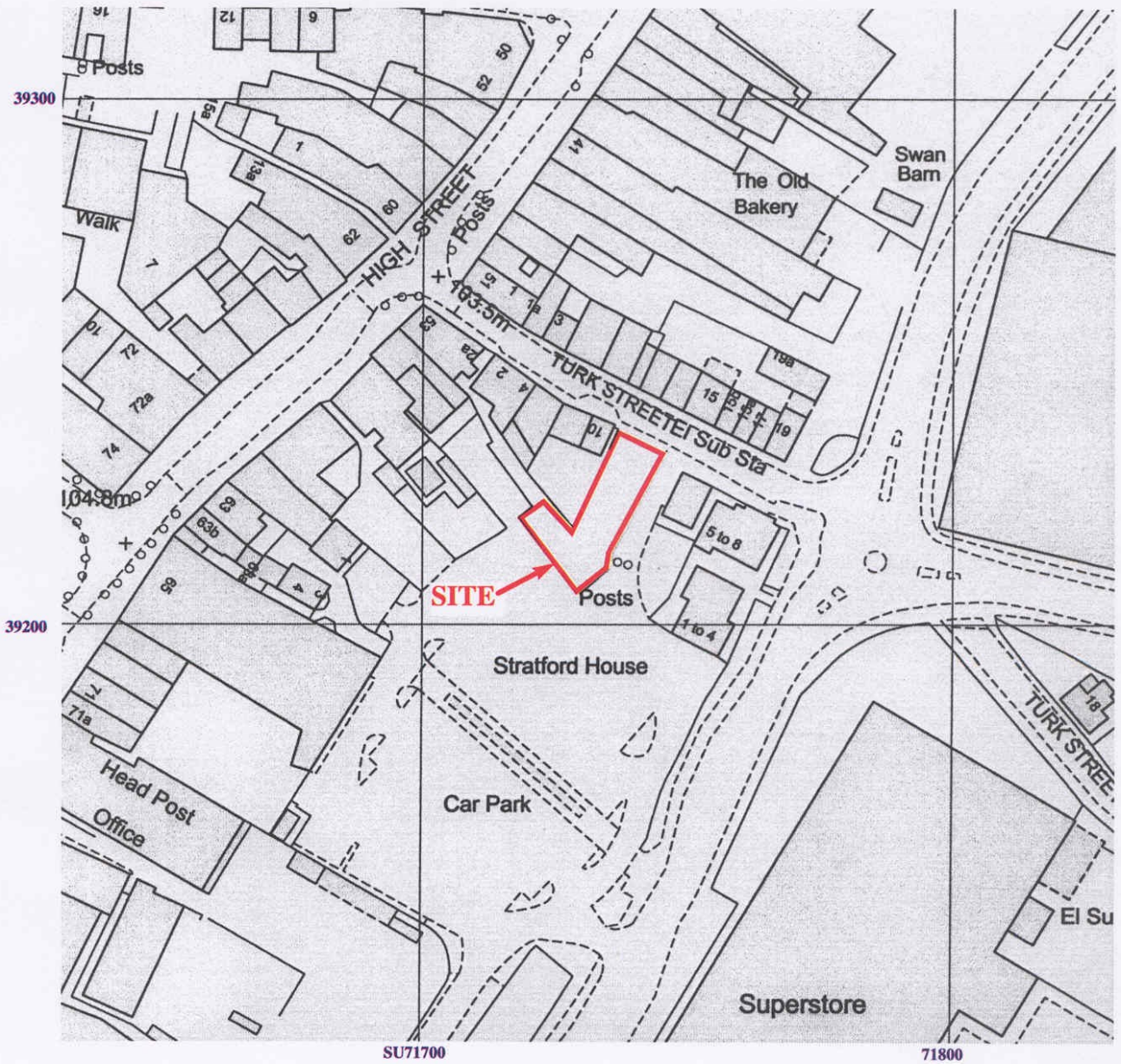


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Figure 1. Location of site within Alton and Hampshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site in relation to Turk Street and High Street.

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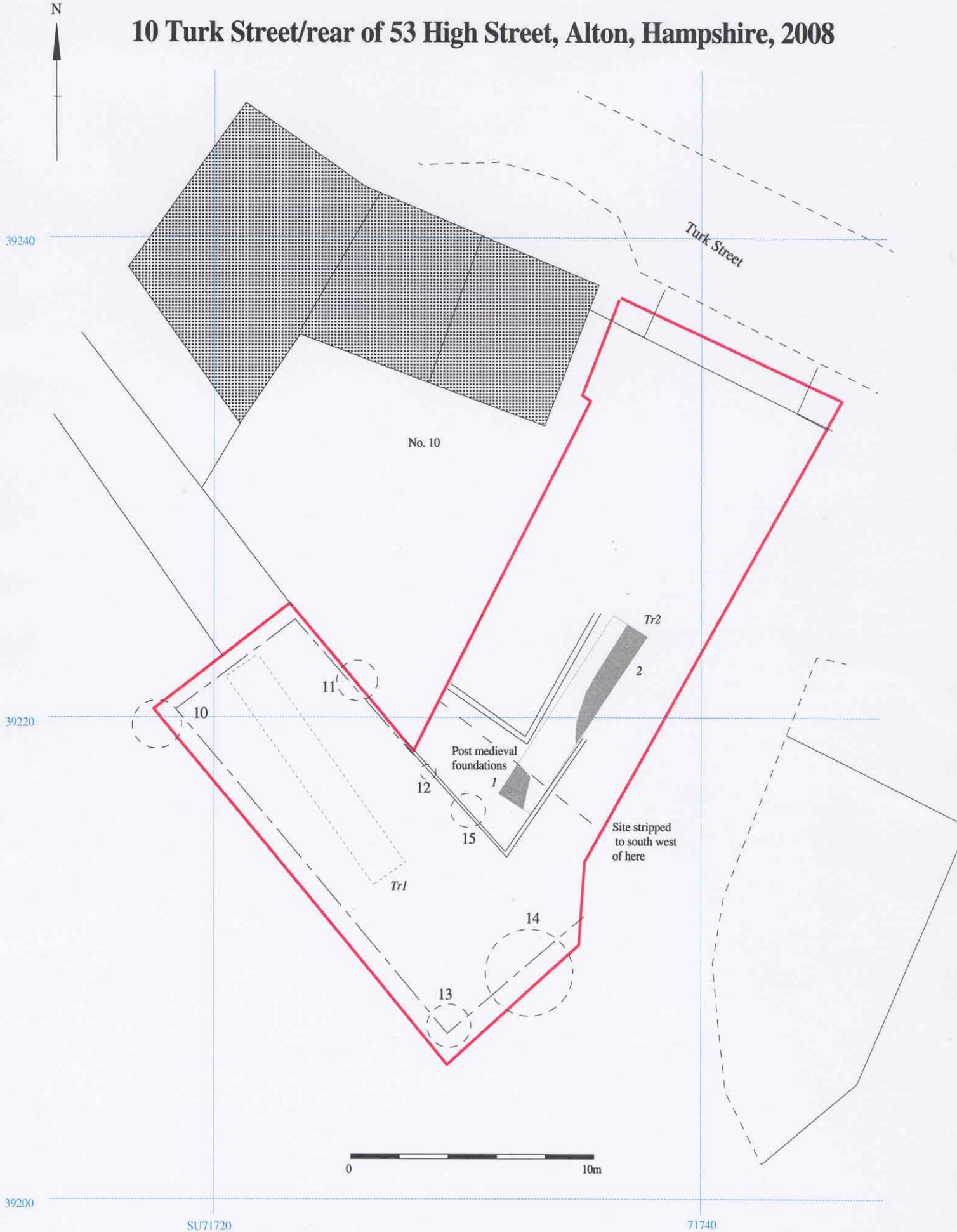


Figure 3. Detail location of areas observed in relation to previous trenches, and locations of features.

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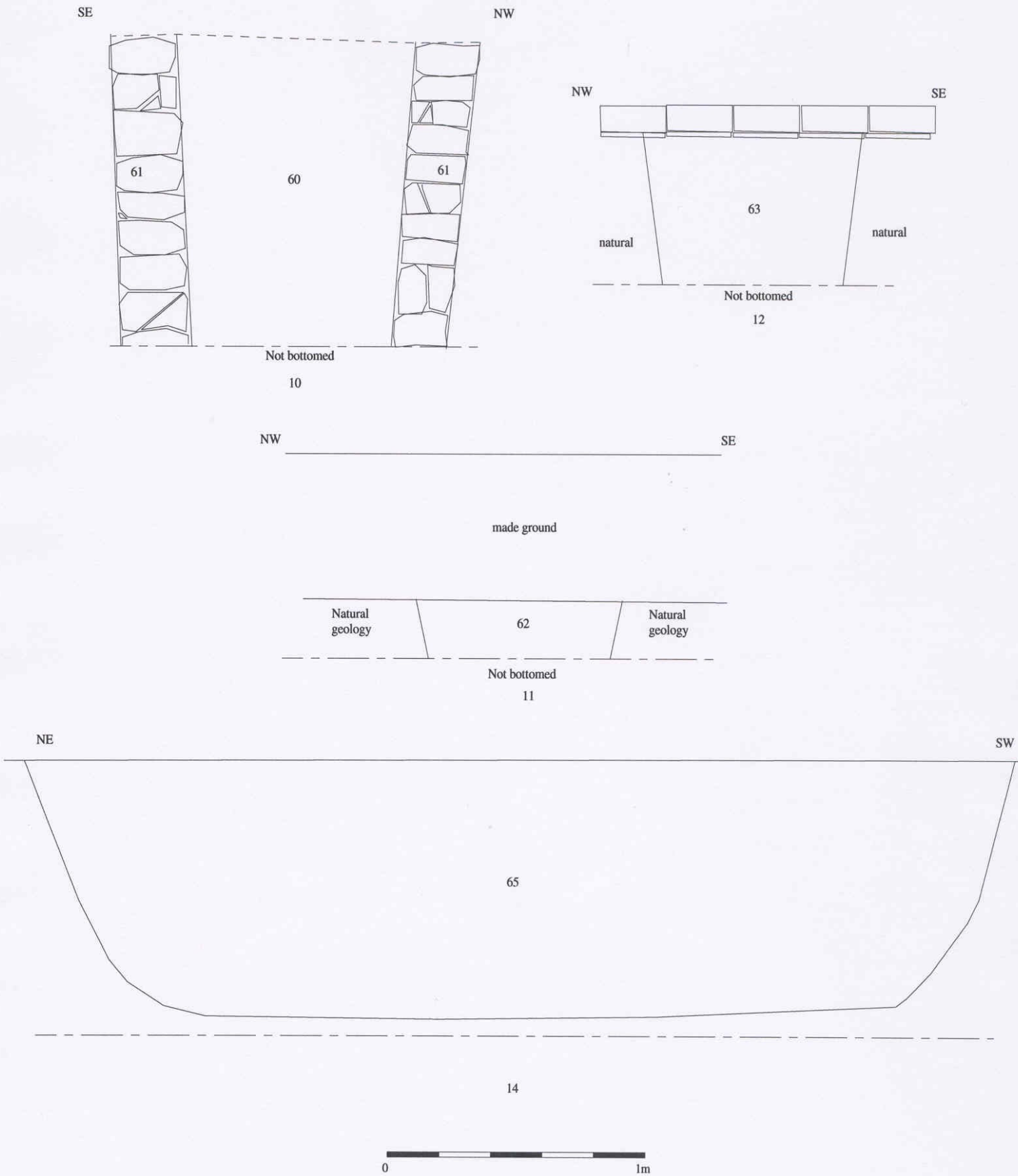
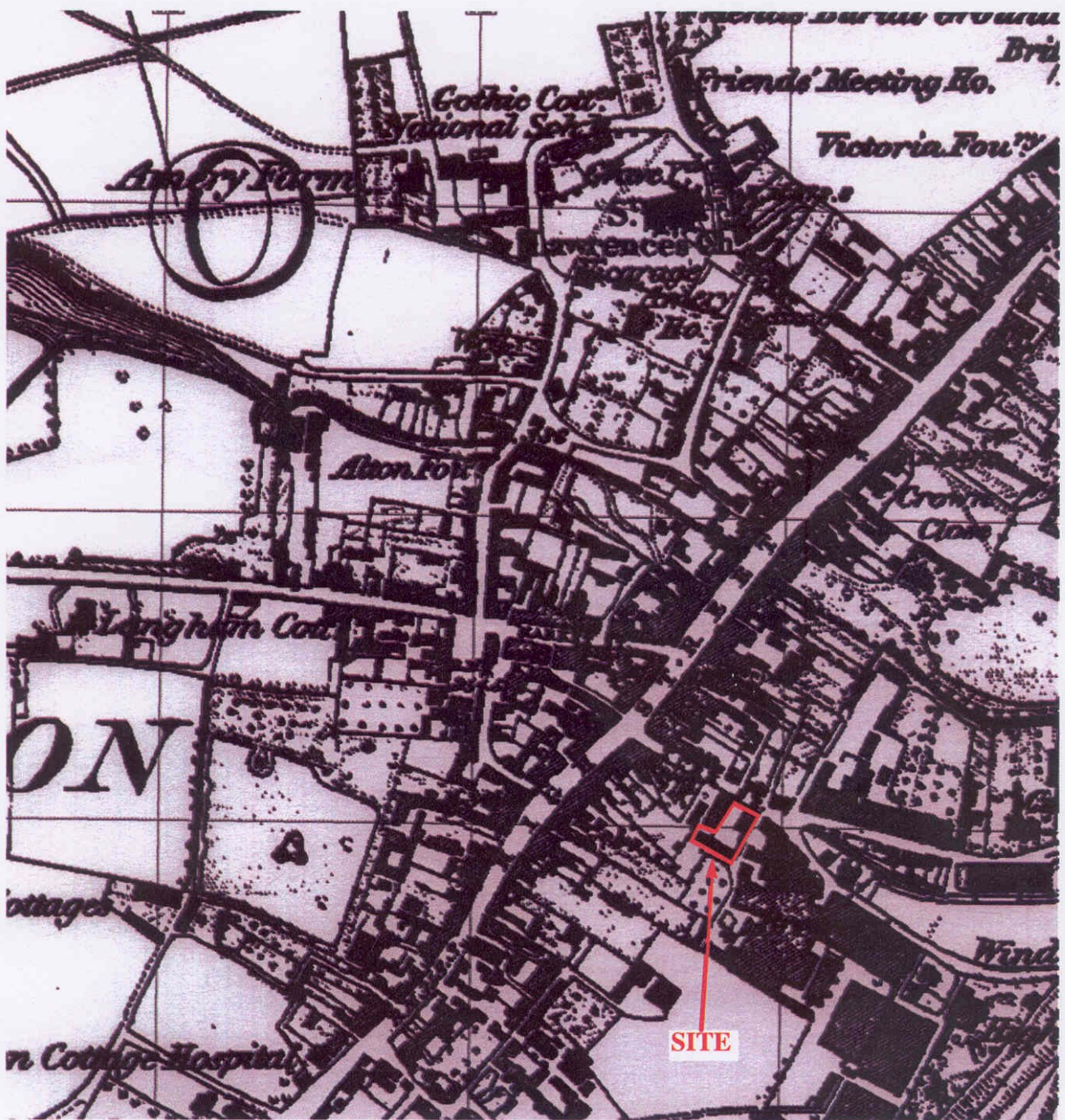


Figure 4. Sections



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Figure 5. First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1874

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