

**Rectory Meadows, School Lane, Longhope,
Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for The Diocese of Gloucestershire**

by James Lewis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RML 09/04

January 2009

Summary

Site name: Rectory Meadows, School Lane, Longhope, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire

Grid reference: SO 6845 1965

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 26th-28th January 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James Lewis

Site code: RML 09/04

Area of site: 0.8ha

Summary of results: Eleven evaluation trenches were opened but no cut features nor artefacts predating the 19th century were observed.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Dean Heritage Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 02.02.09
	Steve Preston ✓ 02.02.09

Rectory Meadows, School Lane, Longhope, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 09/04

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Rectory Meadows, School Lane, Longhope, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire, SO 6845 1965 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Jo Emmett of Hives Planning, 46 Queens Road, Reading, RG1 4AU on behalf of The Diocese of Gloucestershire.

Planning permission is to be sought from the Forest of Dean District Council by The Diocese of Gloucestershire to construct new housing in Longhope. The site is located in an area considered to have high potential for medieval archaeology and lies within close proximity to the parish church and rectory. An archaeological evaluation was requested to assess the archaeological potential of the site, inform the planning decision and develop a programme to mitigate the effects of development if necessary.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Forest of Dean District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer for Gloucestershire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis and Andrew Muddin between 26th–28th January 2009 and the site code is RML 09/04. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at the Dean Heritage Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the north-western margins of the village of Longhope which extends along part of the NW–SE aligned valley of the Longhope Brook. It is situated on a south-east facing slope which at present is used for pasture and recreation. To the south-east is a small residential estate comprising semi-detached housing, to the east are several houses that border onto the main road which leads through the village. To the north is the old primary school and the Old Rectory, now a residential home (Fig. 2). The underlying geology consists of bright orange-brown clay within which is frequently found blue-grey sandstone. This is known as the Raglan Marl Group (BGS 1975). The site lies between 75–80m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological Background

The archaeological potential of the site has been summarized in an advice note prepared by Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council. The site lies within the historic (medieval) core of the village relatively close to the church and churchyard and it is anticipated that contemporary occupation deposits would have lain close by. Longhope has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002). The Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record records that the parish church contains 13th century elements and a medieval cross base lies in the church yard. To the north-east is a moated (manor?) site and to the north and south several listed buildings have late medieval or early post-medieval origins. Two hollow ways visible from the air to the north-west are thought to be of medieval or post-medieval date.

A number of archaeological observations have taken place in the village. An evaluation just to the north of the proposal site produced negative results and a watching brief carried out nearby only recorded foundations of buildings recorded on early Ordnance Survey maps. The most significant discovery, found during a watching brief at the church, recorded the presence of iron slag suggesting the presence of iron production nearby.

Historic maps from the early 18th century and into the late 19th century show the site as glebe fields with the rectory and then the school present beyond the northern boundary of the site (Figs. 5–7).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project are;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if archaeological deposits representing late Saxon or medieval occupation of the site are present.

To determine if any metal production (iron) sites are present on the site.

Eleven trenches were to be excavated in total. All were to be 1.6m wide and 18m in length (c. 4% of the site area). They were to be dug by a JCB-type machine fitted with a ditching bucket and the work carried out under

direct archaeological supervision. Any features found were to be hand cleaned and excavated. Spoilheaps were to be searched for artefacts assisted by the use of a metal detector.

Results

All 11 trenches were dug in the positions intended except that some shortening of Trenches 1 and 11 had to take place to avoid services and other obstructions. Other trenches were lengthened in compensation. The trenches ranged in length between 12.6m and 19.7m and in depth between 0.46m and 1.6m (Fig. 3).

Trench 1

This trench measured 13.2m long and was 0.46m deep. It was aligned NE-SW. Due to the limited space, this trench was shorter than intended. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil, which overlay 0.21m of made ground which overlay the natural geology. A number of features were observed cutting the natural geology these however, were clearly of late post medieval or modern date comprising a concrete pad, field drain, house drain and soakaway. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Trench 2

This trench measured 18.6m long and was 0.59m deep, aligned east–west. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.33m of topsoil above 0.23m of subsoil above the natural geology. Two relatively modern features were found; a gully and a small, irregular pit. The gully was 0.32m wide and 0.10m deep without finds. The pit was at least 1m in diameter and 0.11m deep and contained slate and tile. Both features were cut from the topsoil.

Trench 3 (Fig. 4)

This trench measured 18m long and was 0.80m deep. It was aligned east–west. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.38m of topsoil above 0.29m of subsoil above the natural geology. One feature, a small pit (1) was partially exposed and measured 1.80m in diameter, 0.15m deep (Pl. 1). The fill (53) consisted of firm brown red clay and occasional charcoal with dating provided by 19th- or 20th-century pottery.

Trench 4

This trench measured 18.9m long and was 0.49m deep, aligned roughly east–west. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil, above 0.15m of subsoil above the natural geology.

Trench 5

This trench measured 18.7m long and was 0.57m deep. It was aligned NE–SW. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil above 0.28m of subsoil above the natural geology.

Trench 6

This trench measured 18.5m long and was 0.55m deep. It was aligned NE–SW. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil above 0.23m of subsoil above the natural geology.

Trench 7

This trench measured 18.6m long and was 1.6m deep. It was aligned NE–SW. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil above 0.40m of subsoil above the natural geology.

Trench 8

This trench measured 19.7m long and was 0.78m deep. It was aligned roughly north–south. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil above 0.29m of subsoil above the natural geology.

Trench 9

This trench measured 18.7m long and was 0.50m deep. It was aligned NE–SW. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil above 0.28m of subsoil above the natural geology.

Trench 10 (Plate 2)

This trench measured 19m long, and was 0.58m deep. It was aligned roughly north-south. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.37m of topsoil above 0.18m of subsoil above the natural geology.

Trench 11

This trench measured 12.6m long and was 1.2m deep. It was aligned NW–SE. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.77m of made ground above 0.22m of subsoil above the natural geology. Due to the limited space, the length of this trench was reduced.

Finds

Only three pieces of ceramic were recorded from the site, all of which came from pit 1. All three pieces were dated to the 19th and 20th centuries and comprised a fragment of plant pot, a black glazed red earthenware handle and a unidentified decorated ceramic possibly from a tile or plate.

Conclusion

Despite the close proximity of the site to the church and the potential for archaeological deposits, no evidence of Saxon or medieval activity was recorded. In fact no evidence of any period was found that predated the 19th century and no evidence was revealed for industrial activity such as the production of iron. The only evidence observed from later post-medieval (19th century) times was a small pit, a few pieces of 19th- or 20th-century pottery and relatively modern disturbance cut from just below the topsoil. The archaeological potential of this site therefore appears to be very low.

References

BGS, 1975, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 234, 1975 Edition, Keyworth
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
Williams, A and Martin, G H, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

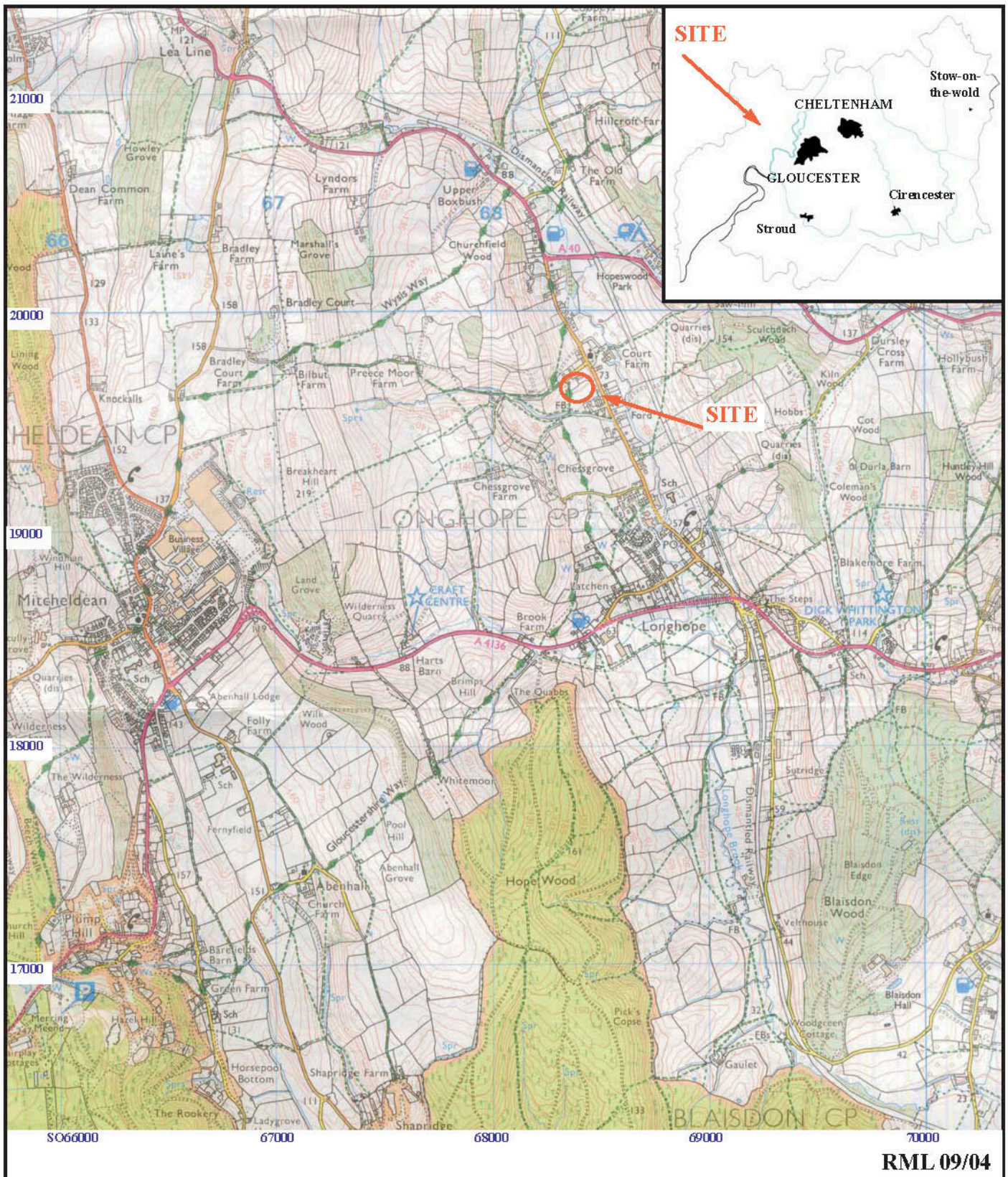
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at west or southwest end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	13.2	1.6	0.46	0-0.15m topsoil, 0-15-0.36m made ground, 0.36m+ natural geology.
2	18.6	1.6	0.59	0-0.33m topsoil, 0.33-0.56m subsoil, 0.56m+ natural geology
3	18.0	1.6	0.72	0-0.38m topsoil, 0.38m-0.67m subsoil, 0.67m+ natural geology. Modern pit (1) [PI. 1]
4	18.9	1.6	0.49	0-0.26m topsoil, 0.26-0.41m subsoil, 0.41m+ natural geology
5	18.7	1.6	0.57	0-0.27m topsoil, 0.27-0.55m subsoil, 0.55m+ natural geology
6	18.5	1.6	0.55	0-0.26m topsoil, 0.26m-0.49m subsoil, 0.49m+ natural geology
7	18.6	1.6	1.60	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.70m subsoil, 0.70m+ natural geology
8	19.7	1.6	0.78	0-0.27m topsoil, 0.27-0.56m subsoil, 0.56m+ natural geology
9	18.7	1.6	0.50	0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.48m subsoil, 0.48m+ natural geology
10	19.0	1.6	0.58	0-0.37m topsoil, 0.37-0.55m subsoil, 0.55m+ natural geology
11	12.6	1.6	1.20	0-0.77m made ground, 0.77-0.99m subsoil, 0.99m+ natural geology. [PI. 2]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	53	pit	19th-20th century	pottery

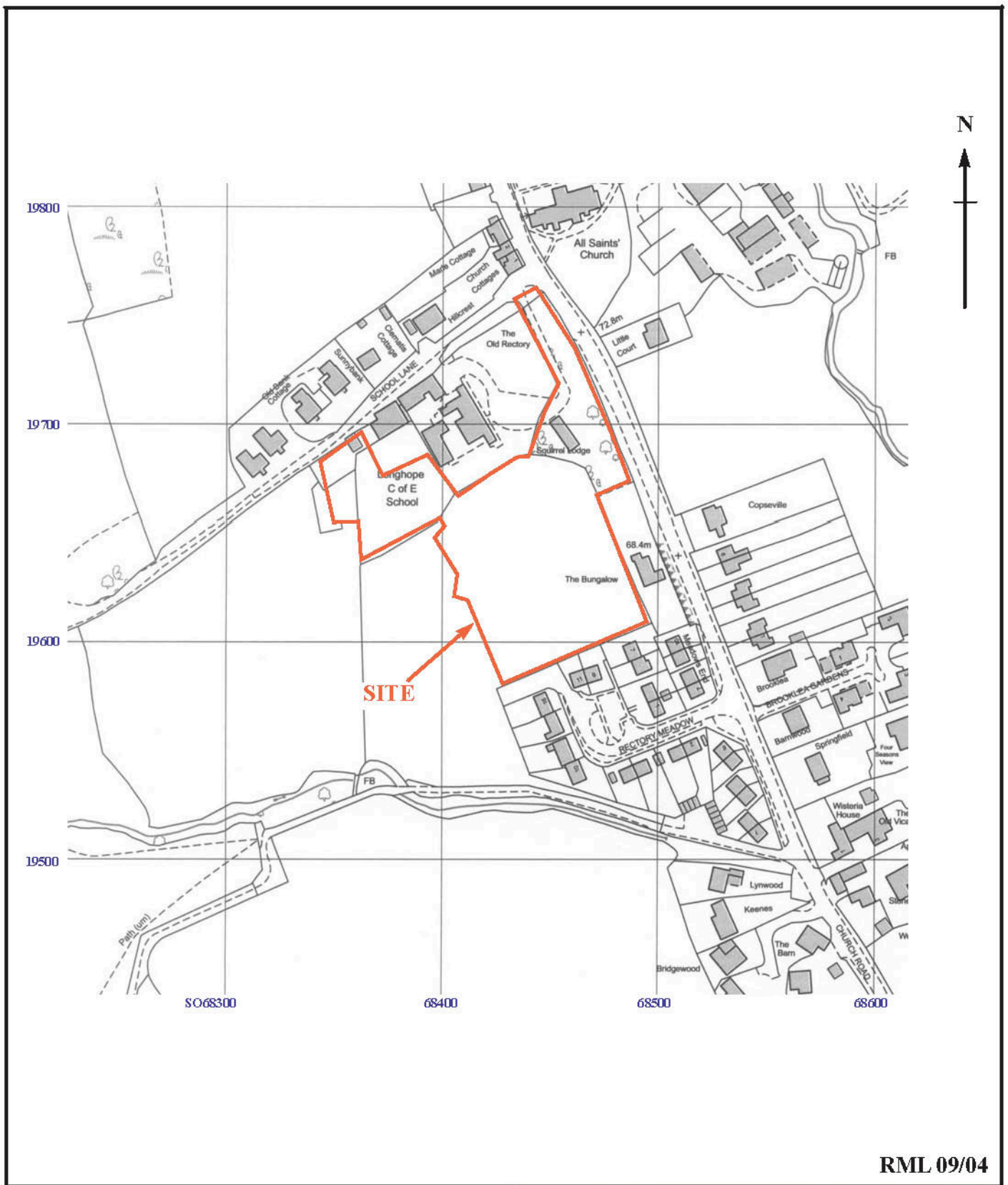


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Figure 1. Location of site within Longhope and Gloucestershire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off School Lane.

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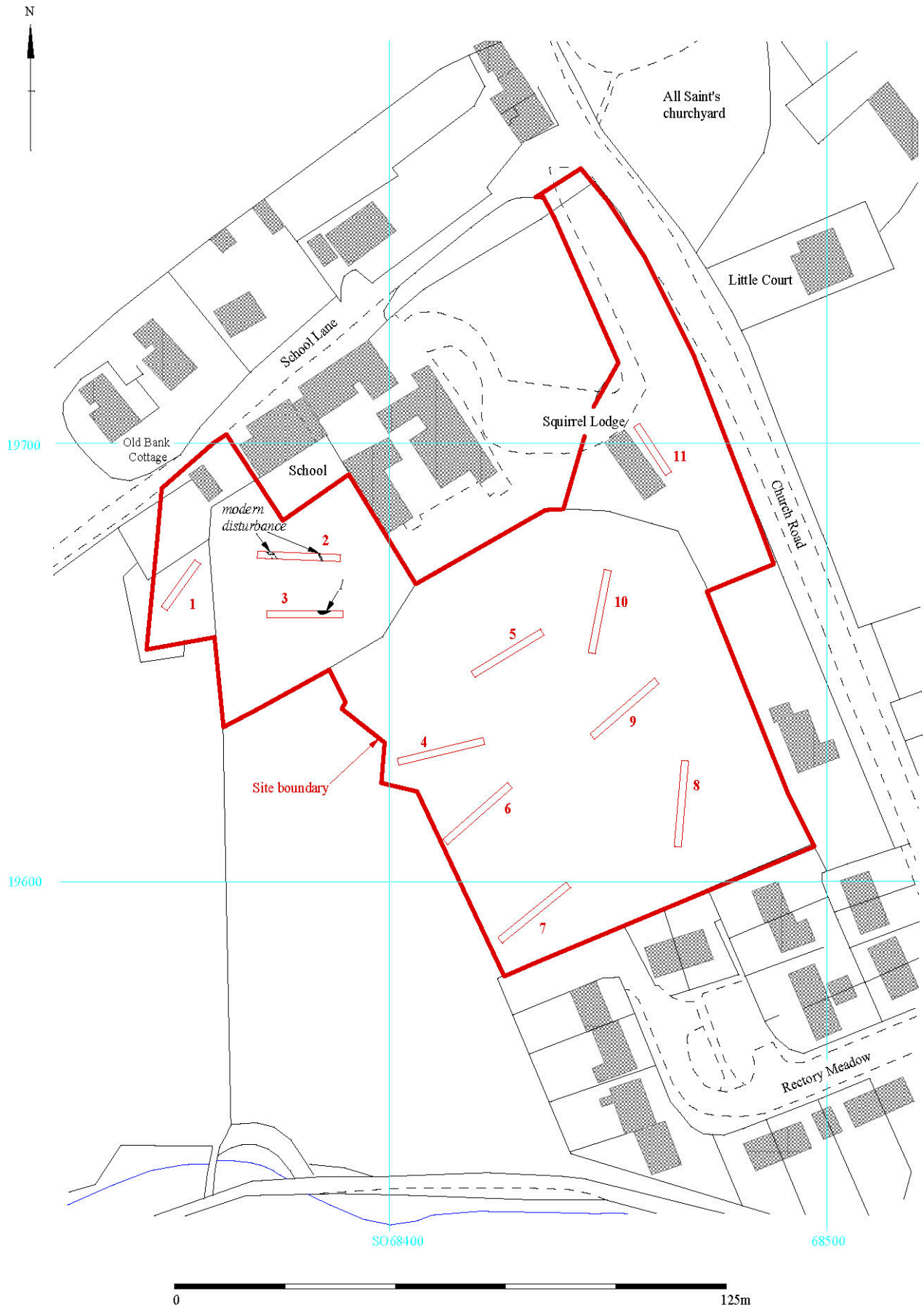


Figure 3. Plan of trenches, showing features.

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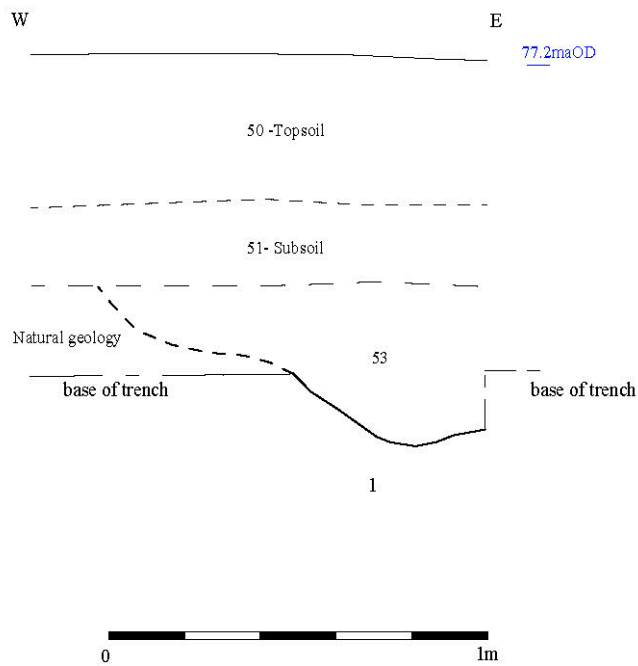
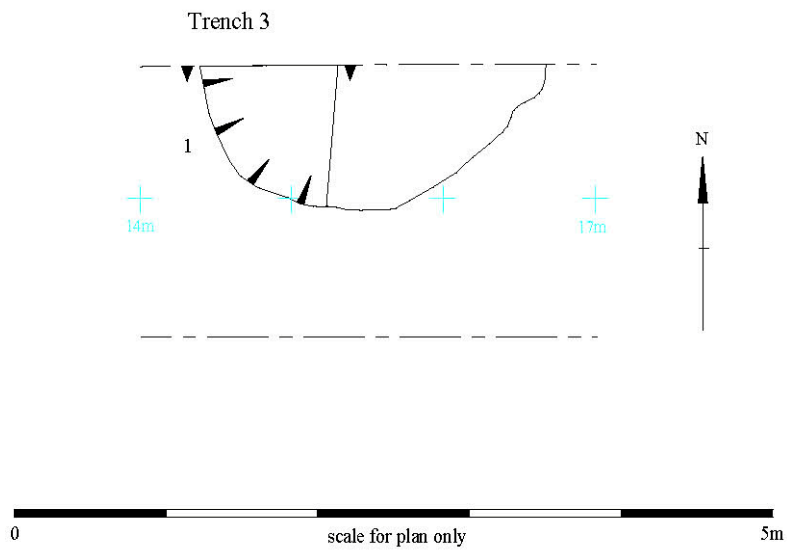
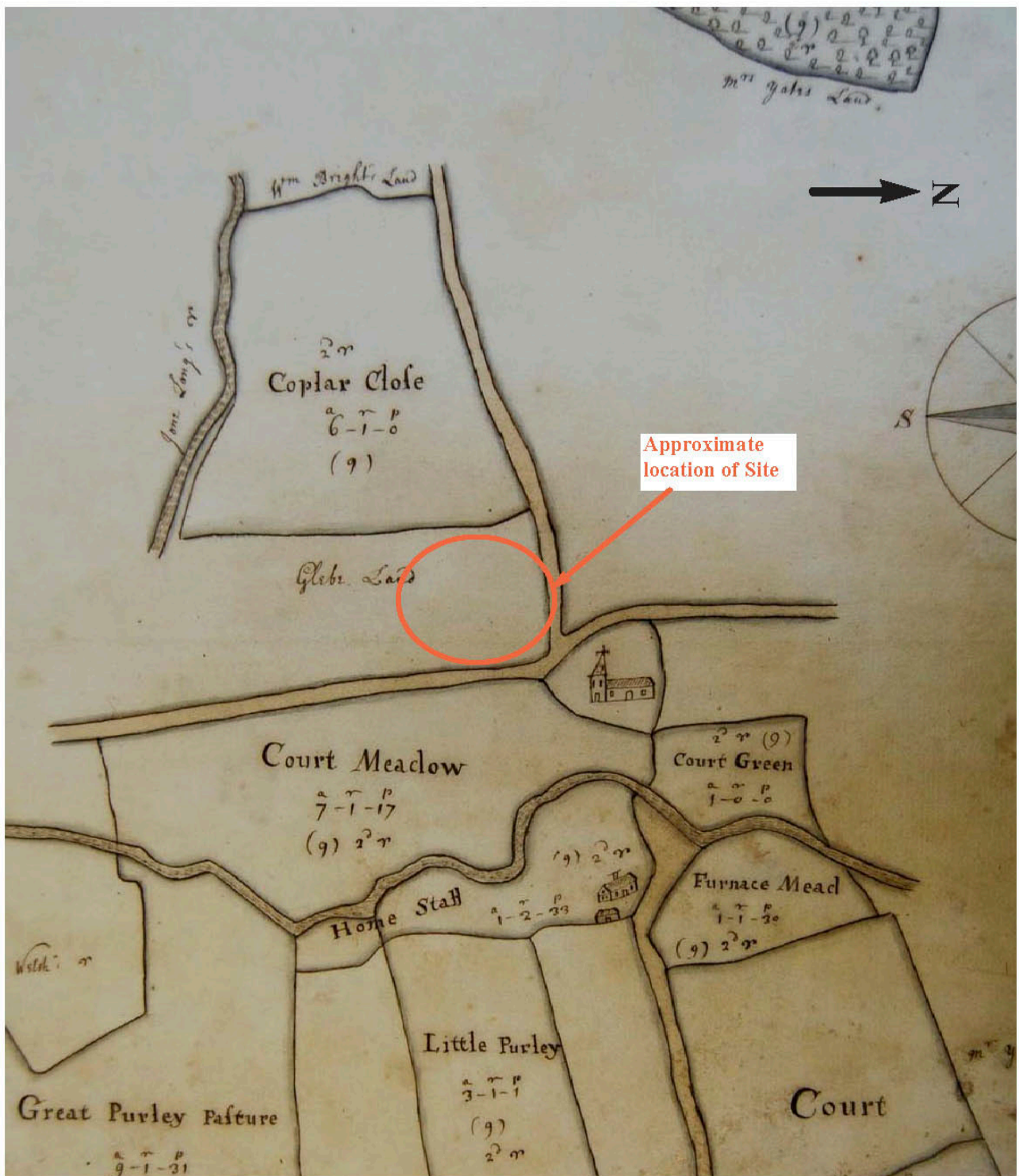


Figure 4. Detail of feature in Trench 7.

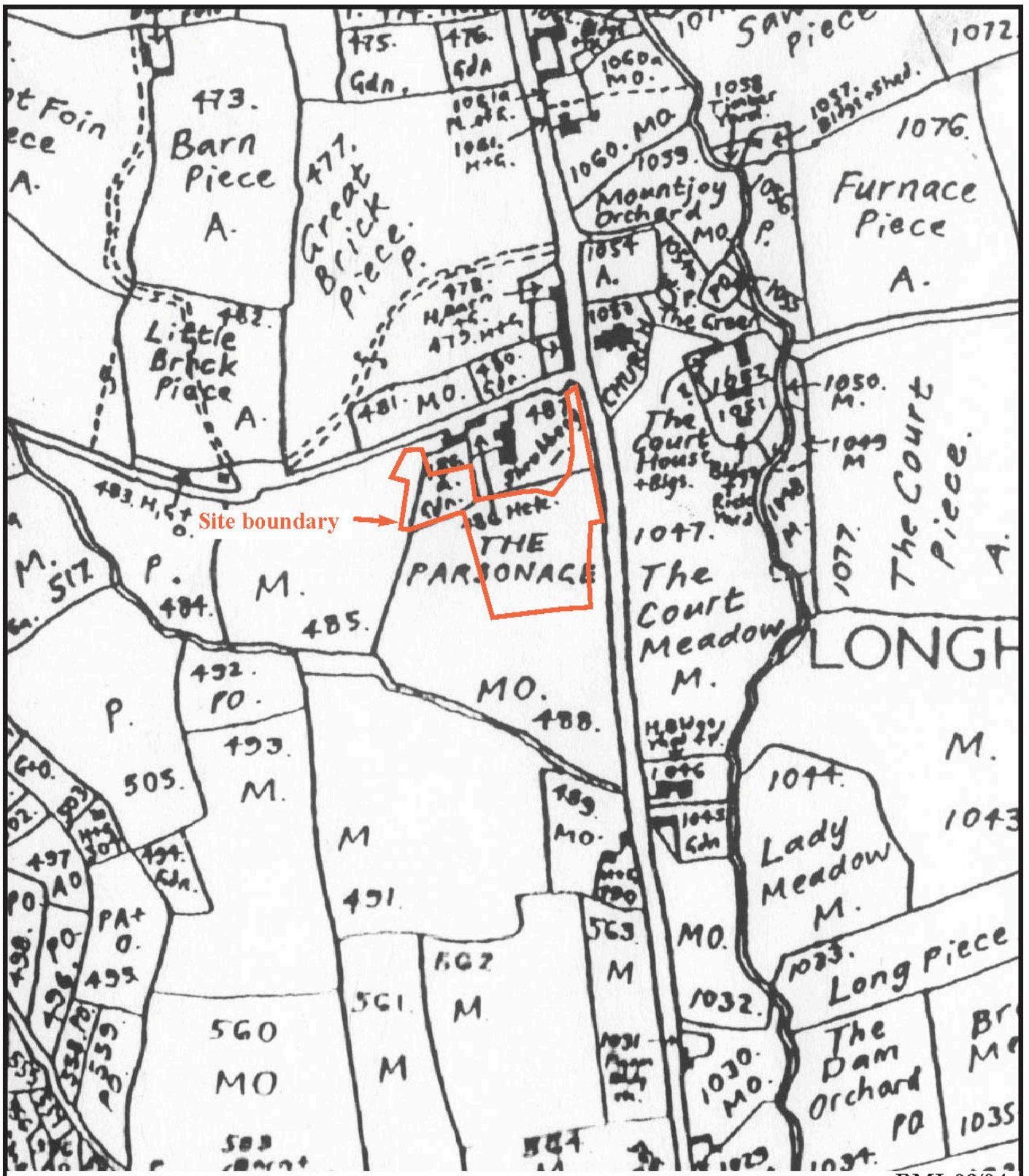


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Figure 5. The manor of Longhope, 1717

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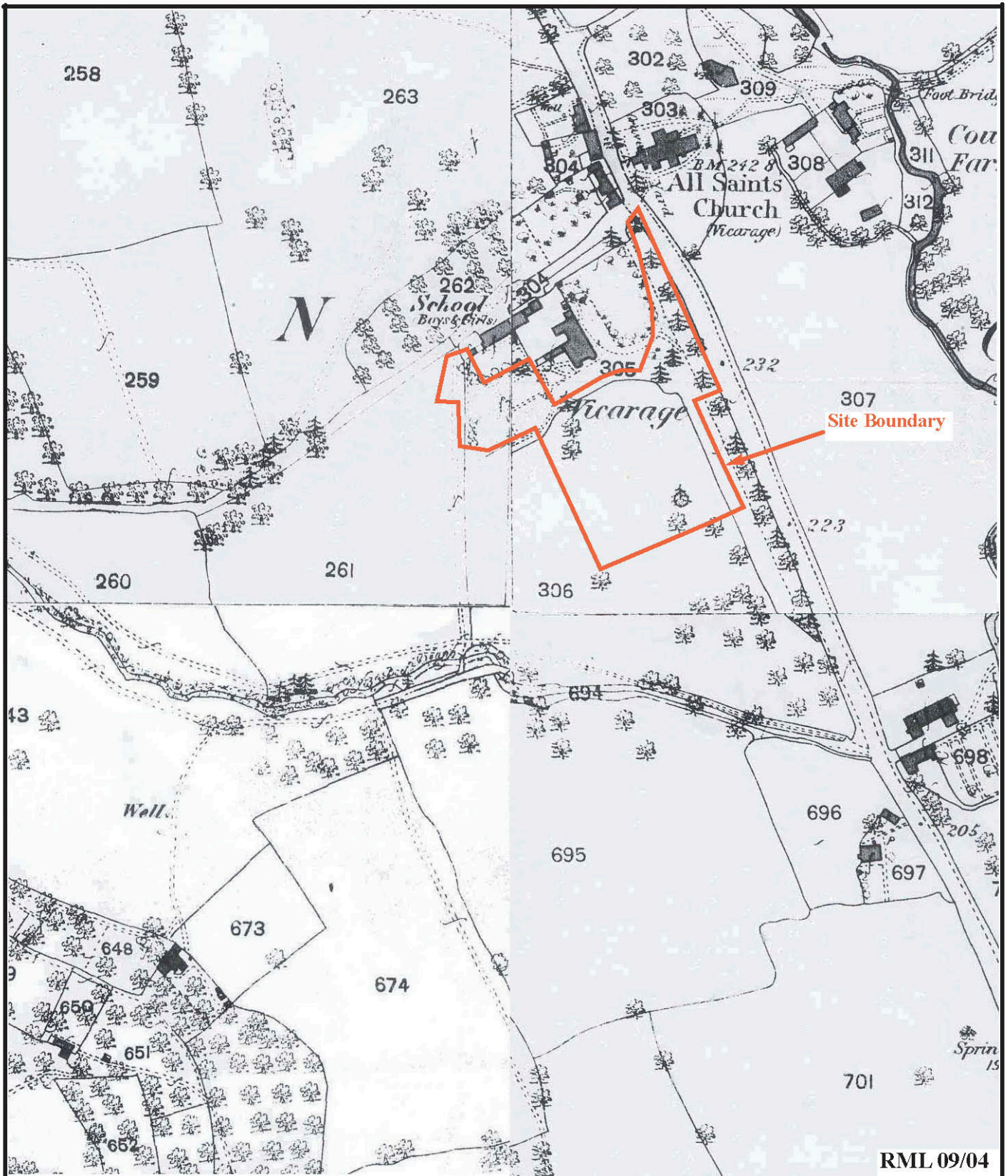


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Figure 6. Tithe map, 1838.

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Figure 7. 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 1879-1882

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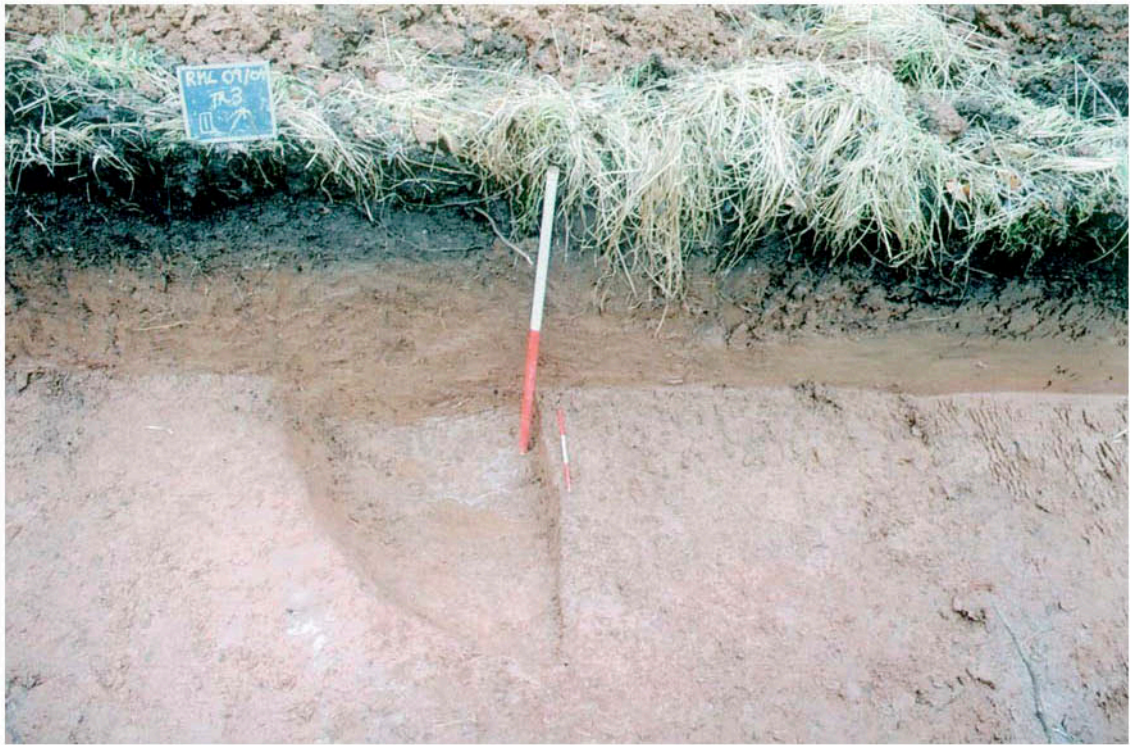


Plate 1. Trench 3, pit 1, looking north, scales 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 10, looking north, scales 2m and 1m.