

**Preshute Garden Cottage,
Manton, Wiltshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
For Marlborough College**

by James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code PGM 08/121

January 2009

Summary

Site name: Preshute Garden Cottage, Manton, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 17920 68435

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 27th November–9th December 2008

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: PGM 08/121

Area of site: c. 250 sq m

Summary of results: Two undated pits were identified during groundworks

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

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Preshute Garden Cottage, Manton, Marlborough, Wiltshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 08/121

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Preshute Garden Cottage, Preshute Lane, Manton, Wiltshire (SU 17920 68435) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr S B Eveleigh on behalf of Marlborough College.

A planning consent (K/58495/F) has been granted by Kennet District Council to demolish the existing cottage on the site and erect a pair of larger semi-detached houses to provide staff accommodation for Marlborough College. The consent is subject to a condition (8) relating to archaeology which requires a programme of archaeological work to be carried out on site. This is to take the form of a detailed archaeological monitoring, recording and potential excavation of archaeological features during the ground works.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Vanessa Clarke, Assistant County Archaeologist of Wiltshire Archaeology Service, advisers to the district on matter relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor, Sean Wallis and James McNicoll-Norbury between 27th November–9th December 2008 and the site code is PGM08/121.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Devizes Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the outskirts of the village of Manton, lying to the west of Marlborough and south of the A4. The site is contained within an existing walled garden to the south of Preshute House; the garden was previously occupied by a small cottage which at the time of the works described here, had been demolished to make way for the new buildings (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is Valley Gravels (BGS 1993) which was observed in the base of the footings, and the site lies at c.135m above Ordnance Datum. The ground slopes down from the south end of the site.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief prepared by Wiltshire County Archaeological Service (Clarke 2008). In summary, the site is potentially located within the medieval village of *Prestcheta* which was first recorded in AD1185. Evidence of the medieval settlement seems to be located at the eastern edge of the village in the form of earthworks. In more general terms, the site lies within an area from which a range of finds of various periods have been recorded. Prehistoric and Roman stray finds have been recorded nearby as well as a large assemblage of Saxon pottery retrieved from the construction of a tennis court to the north of the site. However no archaeological finds or features were recorded during a watching brief carried out at Barton Dene, also to the north of the site (Wallis 2006).

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 involve examination of any areas of topsoil/overburden removal, ground reduction and trenching for foundations and services. An area strip was to be monitored for the footprint of the new structures.

Results

The ground was reduced by 0.5-0.8m using a 360° machine and the footings were dug using a mini-digger with a toothless bucket. The footings were dug to a depth of c. 1.00m and ranged between 0.70–1.70m in width (Fig. 3). The stratigraphy of the footings consisted of 0–0.43m clean dark brown grey subsoil overlying 0.34m of mid orange brown silty clay with occasional gravel which in turn overlay the natural gravel.

Two possible pits, 1 and 2, were disturbed by the trenching, both of which cut the mid orange brown silty clay layer (Fig. 4). Neither was well-defined. Ephemeral pit 1 contained no finds. Pit 2, on the south edge of the footings, contained one heavily corroded iron lump (80g) and a very corroded nail, 55mm long, but neither pit contained any close dating evidence. There is no reason to suspect they are of any great antiquity. Sherds of late post medieval pottery (transfer printed ware), brick fragments, and several small lumps of iron corrosion product were recovered from the subsoil. The footings for the previous cottage on the site were uncovered in the north-west corner of the site.

Finds

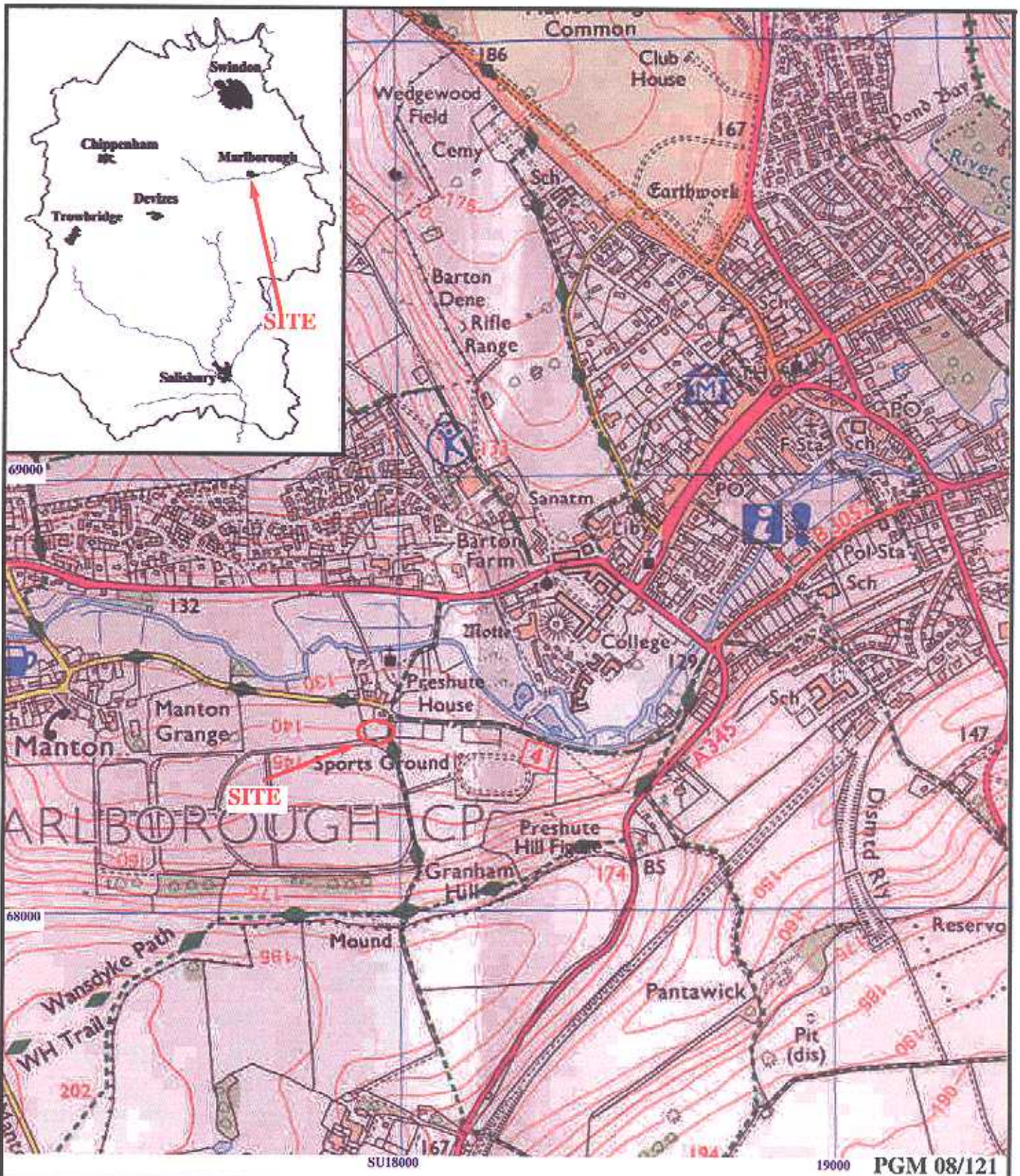
Two pieces of iron weighing a total of 85g were recovered from Pit 2. Late post-medieval finds from subsoil contexts were not retained.

Conclusion

Apart from the two poorly dated (but post-Iron Age) and ephemeral pits recorded in the footings no other archaeological features were identified during the ground works and the only finds recovered were sherds of late post-medieval pottery and a few pieces of iron (mostly corrosion product).

References

- BGS, 1993, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 266, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Clarke, V, 2008, 'Archaeological detailed monitoring, recording & potential excavation, Preshute Garden Cottage, Preshute Lane, Manton', Wiltshire County Council, Chippenham
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Wallis, S, 2006, 'Proposed new staff houses, Marlborough college, Barton Dene, Marlborough, Wiltshire, an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 06/151, Reading

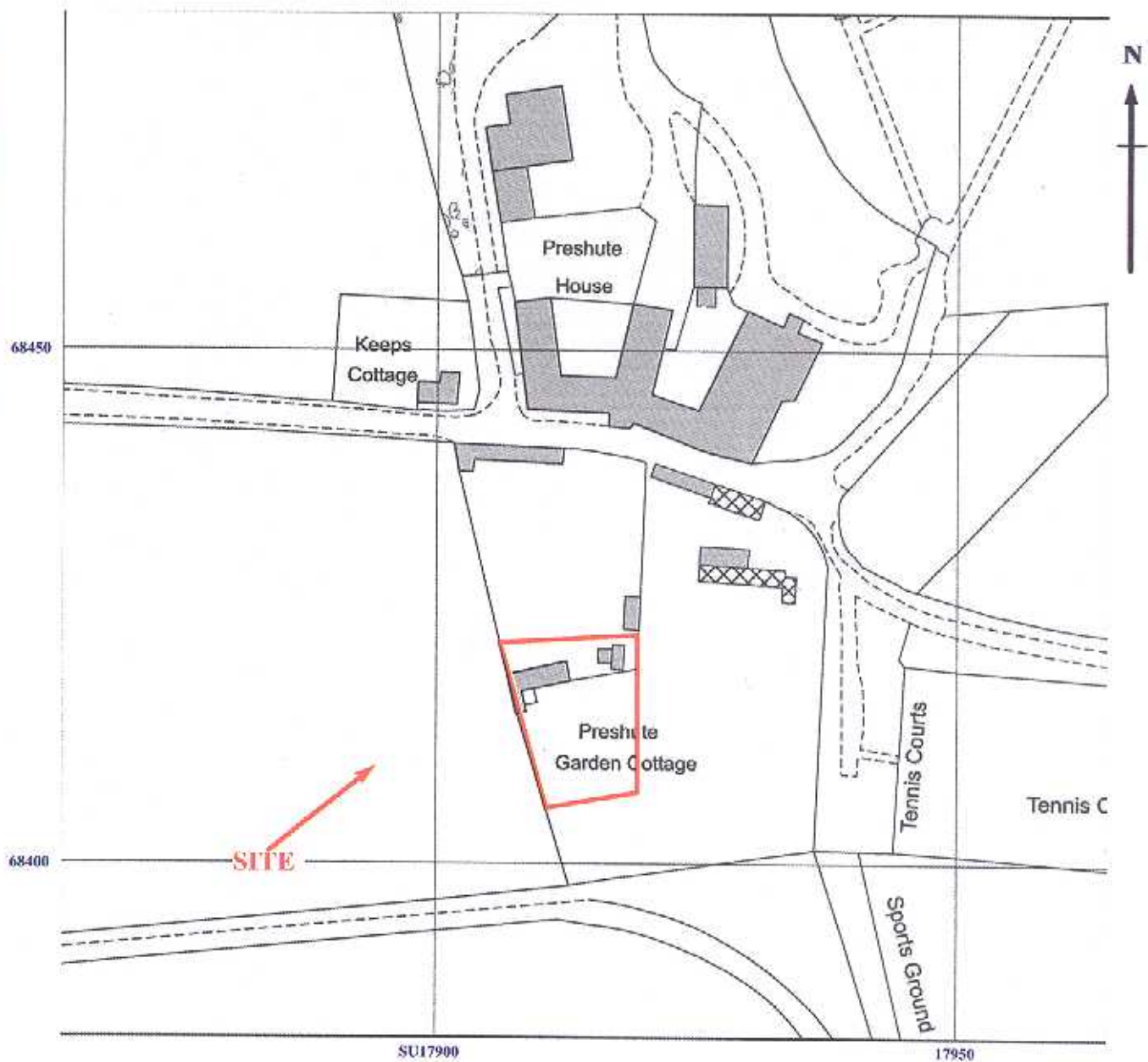


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Figure 1. Location of site within Marlborough and
Wiltshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Preshute Lane.

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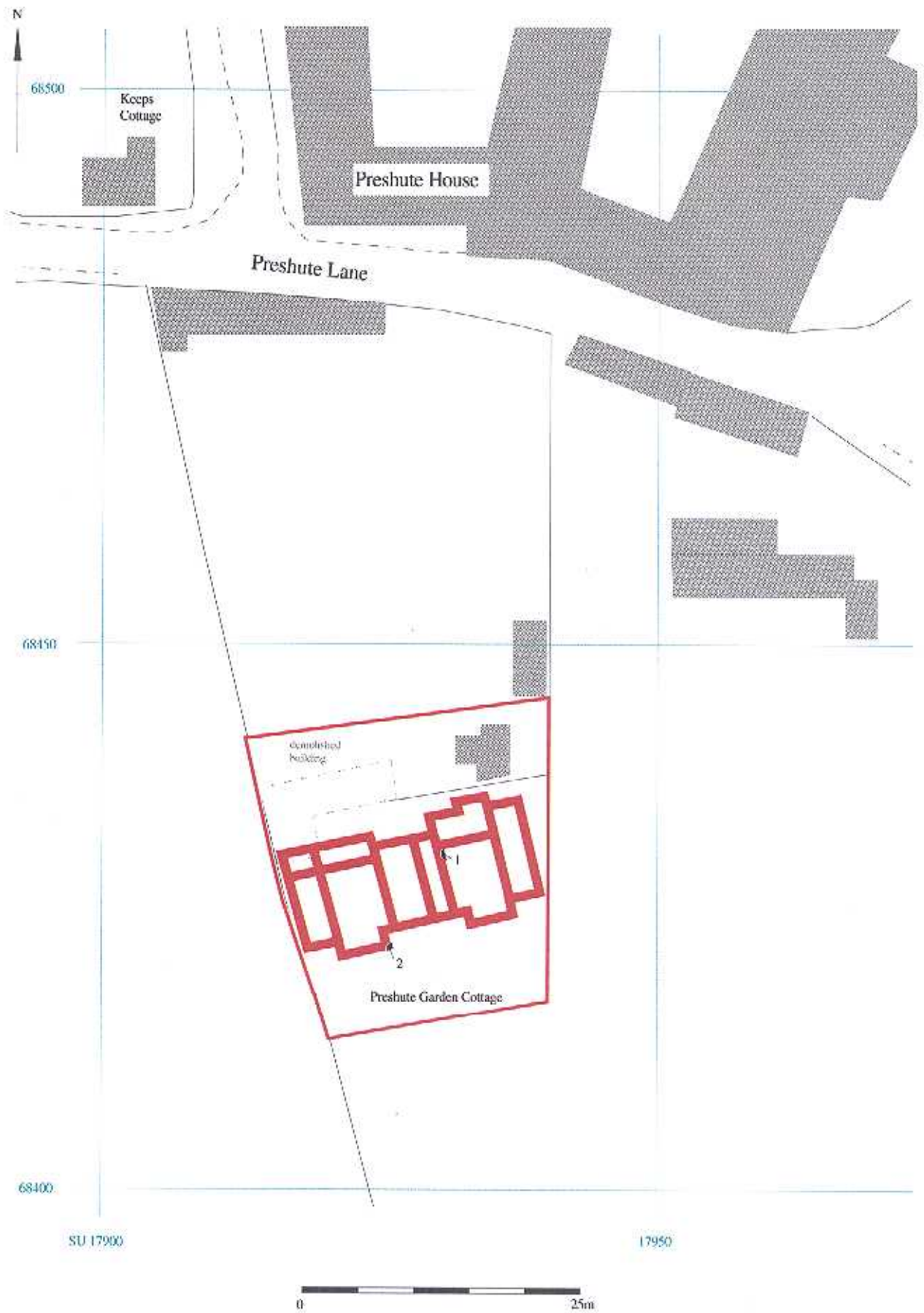


Figure 3. Location of areas observed during watching brief

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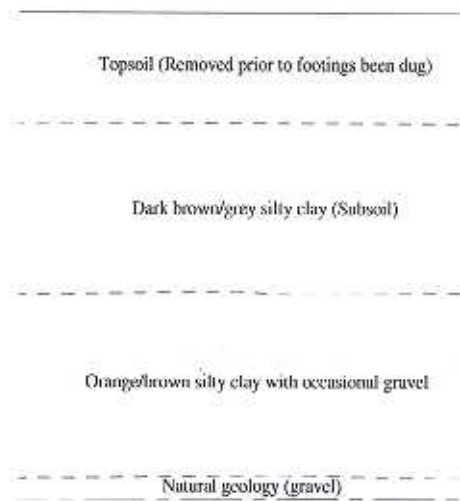
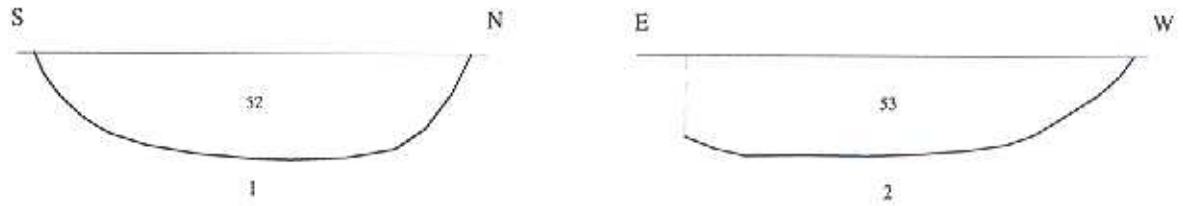


Figure 4. Sections of two pits and representative section of the trench stratigraphy.