



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological evaluation at the Overlook The Swiss Garden, Old Warden Bedfordshire



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Northamptonshire
County Council

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Report 12/11

February 2012

BEDFM.2012.2



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY
FEBRUARY 2012**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT
THE OVERLOOK, THE SWISS GARDEN,
OLD WARDEN, BEDFORDSHIRE**

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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	The Swiss Garden, Overlook	
Short description	An archaeological evaluation investigated the remains of a garden structure called the Overlook at the Swiss Garden, Old Warden, Bedfordshire. The remains of the structure comprise a brick wall with five integral buttresses on either side, retaining a mound of soil to the west. The investigation revealed that originally the mound of soil had been retained at the sides by a wall, most likely of ironstone, which would have prevented the soil from eroding. No evidence was found of any paths or steps leading to the summit of the mound nor was there any evidence of how any superstructure was configured	
Project type	Evaluation	
Site status	Structure unlisted	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Grade II* Registered garden, open to the public	
Future work	Possible renovation to restore structure	
Monument type/ period	Post-medieval	
Significant finds	No	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address	The Swiss Garden, Old Warden, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 9EA	
Study area	The Overlook	
OS Easting & Northing	TL 14880 44725	
Height OD	c 39m above Ordnance Datum	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Liz Lake Associates	
Project Design originator	Joe Prentice (NA)	
Director/Supervisor	Joe Prentice (NA)	
Project Manager	Steve Parry (NA)	
Sponsor or funding body	The Shuttleworth Trust in partnership with CBC	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	January 2012	
End date	January 2012	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	BEDFM.2012.2	Two iron (fe) nails
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)		
Title	Archaeological evaluation at the Overlook, Swiss Garden, Old Warden, Bedfordshire	
Serial title & volume	12/11	
Author(s)	J Prentice	
Page numbers	10 text, 4 figs, 10 plates	
Date	February 2012	

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT THE OVERLOOK THE SWISS GARDEN, OLD WARDEN, BEDFORDSHIRE

Abstract

An archaeological evaluation investigated the remains of a garden structure called the Overlook at the Swiss Garden, Old Warden, Bedfordshire. The remains of the structure comprise a brick wall with five integral buttresses on either side, retaining a mound of soil to the west. The investigation revealed that originally the mound of soil had been retained at the sides by a wall, most likely of ironstone, which would have prevented the soil from eroding. No evidence was found of any paths or steps leading to the summit of the mound nor was there any evidence of how any superstructure was configured.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Shuttleworth Trust is proposing to restore the Overlook at the Swiss Garden, Old Warden, Bedfordshire. This structure, which appears to be the surviving part of an earlier feature, is at present little understood but may have comprised a viewing platform entered from the west, and perhaps supported on posts on the east side of the surviving brickwork wall. The structure is not individually Listed, but lies within a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden (EH 1999). The archaeological evaluation of the remains of the structure was requested by Liz Lake Associates, who are Landscape Consultants acting on behalf of the client, the Shuttleworth Trust who are responsible for the up-keep of the site in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC).

The focus of this stage of investigation was limited to the surviving brick wall and mound of earth which lies immediately adjacent on the western side. Two trenches were opened by hand to investigate the presence or otherwise of former structural elements which may help in determining to original form of the structure, how it was accessed and when it was constructed. The trench locations were proposed by Liz Lake and agreed at a site meeting with Northamptonshire Archaeology (Joe Prentice) on 1 November 2011. This information, along with a written methodology was submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council in the form of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, NA 2011).

The fieldwork was undertaken in mid January 2012. An Accession Number (BEDFM 2012.2) was allocated by the Keeper of Archaeology, Bedford Museum.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and geology

The Swiss Garden lies on the north-eastern side of the registered area comprising Old Warden Park to the east of the village of Old Warden (Fig 1, NGR TL 14880 44725). The Swiss Garden, a 3.74 hectare component of the larger c172 hectare park, is bounded on the north by the Old Warden to Biggleswade road. To the immediate east lies the Shuttleworth Collection, an aeroplane and veteran vehicle museum. The mansion which forms the centrepiece of the Shuttleworth Estate lies to the south-west.

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising either Lower Greensand or sands and gravels (superficial geology) over Kellaways formation and Oxford Clays (bedrock geology).

2.2 Historical background and setting

The Ongley family bought the Old Warden estate in the late seventeenth-century, and it appears to have been Robert, second Lord Ongley, (inherited in 1785) who was initially responsible for laying out the park c1800-05 (EH 1999). In 1814 another Robert, third Lord Ongley, inherited and it was he who created the Swiss Garden during the 1820s and 30s. He is thought to have been inspired by J B Papworth's *Hints on Ornamental Gardening* (1823) and P F Robinsons *Village Architecture* (1830). Robinson was employed to construct the Swiss Chalet c1825 and the garden was further added to and became much commented upon during the nineteenth century.

In 1872 Lord Ongley sold the estate to Joseph Shuttleworth (1819-1883) the part owner of a successful engineering firm, Clayton and Shuttleworth, which specialised in building steam engines and agricultural machinery. He added features to the Swiss Garden and the wider estate, employing Henry Clutton to re-build the main house between 1875 and 1888. Joseph had two sons, Alfred and Frank; Alfred worked in the family business and Frank, as the younger son, served in the 7th Hussars becoming a Captain in 1877 and Major in 1882. After serving in India for four years he returned to England to run the estate. He married quite late in life, in 1902 at the age of 57, to the 23-year-old daughter of the Vicar of Old Warden. They had a single child, a son named Richard (1909-1940). Shortly after in 1913, Frank died and his widow, Dorothy re-married in 1914 to Brigadier General William McClaren Campbell with whom she had a daughter. The Brigadier died in 1924 leaving Dorothy a widow for the second time, and she spent the remainder of her life attending to the needs of the estate, the village and its tenants.

Her son, Richard, was an avid collector of cars and had a successful racing career winning the first British Grand Prix at Donnington Park in 1935. He also raced abroad, and was badly hurt in South Africa at the Grand Prix there and retired from car racing, but took up flying instead as he regarded this as safer. When the Second World War broke out in 1939 he joined the RAF and was killed in August 1940 during a training exercise. His death understandably devastated his mother and also left the estate without a male heir, but she made the mansion available as a convalescent home for injured airmen and created a small chapel dedicated to Richard. In 1944 she created a charitable Trust (the Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth Remembrance Trust) in memory of her only son, to be kept as a single entity and used for the purpose of agricultural and aviation education, both interests dear to his heart. Since 1976 the Swiss Garden has been administered in partnership with Bedfordshire County Council, now Central Bedfordshire Council.

The Swiss Garden lies on gently undulating ground, crossed by meandering paths with many small, separate, vistas achieved by careful planting of trees and shrubs in what is actually a relatively small space. Artificial ponds with islands are located at the northern end of the garden which is liberally sprinkled with small buildings, urns, ornamental ironwork and stonework (Fig 2). The undulating nature of the garden is almost entirely man-made, the low hillocks most likely being created with the up-cast of soil from the creation of the ponds, and perhaps even the much larger lake to the west, along with other localised landscaping where some areas have been reduced in level and others built up. The friable nature of the soils used means that these artificial hillocks, banks and dells in many places need their slopes revetting to prevent erosion, and this has been undertaken with a mixture of natural and artificial stonework along with judicious planting.

The ponds lie at the north-eastern side of the site and comprise serpentine linked bodies of water with artificial islands in each. The northernmost pond, known as Middle Pond is overlooked by the Indian Kiosk a circular timber building with a thatched roof (Listed Grade II*, dated 1829-30). Towards the centre of the garden is the Swiss Cottage, an

ornate two storey octagonal building also with a thatched roof set on a small mound (Listed Grade II*, dated 1825, designed by G F Robinson). Papworth (see above) recommended that some buildings in picturesque settings should be sited in just such a situation. The other principal building is the Sunken Grotto and fernery of cruciform plan with an iron and glass dome at the intersection and decorated with Pulhamite rockwork of the 1870s (Listed Grade II*, dated 1830-03 with later work). Distributed around the garden are numerous other structures and a number of iron rose arches, bridges and urns. A raised terrace, The Broadwalk, extends for 80 metres to the south of the Upper Pond. The garden is enhanced by notable trees and shrubs, many of which are now mature and at their best. They include varieties which were planted as specimens and there are also a number of exotics.

The Swiss Garden is a rare and important survival of this type of designed landscape (in part a English Regency 'Picturesque' version of the *Jardin Anglais*) and is remarkably complete due in part, perhaps, to the change in ownership in the 1870's when the Shuttleworth family brought new momentum to the estate and added to what was already there. The loss of Richard Shuttleworth during the Second World War and the creation of the Trust in his memory almost certainly secured the estates survival, particularly after the War when an enormous number of landed estates were broken up and their houses demolished due in part to the loss of heirs and also crippling death duties placed upon them.

The buildings within the garden are a mixture of the simple and elaborate, but nearly all are complete and are now in an excellent state of repair due to careful repair and maintenance over the last few years. One of the least complete and little understood is the Overlook which, as it currently stands, comprises a brick wall with five double attached piers on each face retaining a steep bank of soil. Its original completed form is unknown, but it is thought that originally the steep bank, situated on the west side, allowed access to a platform which either lay at the top of the slope, or possibly comprised a raised platform (balcony style) projecting outwards from the wall on the eastern side although prior to the present investigation no plans or photographs have been found which could confirm this. No other structural remains are currently visible. It lies close to the north-east of The Chapel, a small single-cell structure of brick with rendered external wall, and leaded windows at either end (Plates 1 and 4). Close by the entrance to the Chapel is a short flight of steps which leads up a low bank which probably passed between two yews, only one of which now survives as a large tree, although a stump indicates the location of its now lost companion. From that location it is possible that a path turned eastwards to the west side of the Overlook which from this aspect presents the appearance of a steep mound of soil (Plate 2).

Dense planting of laurels suggest that this mound was intended to be partly screened, although they have now become etiolated due to the dense high canopy of the large trees planted close around them. The mound of soil bears little or no vegetation since the canopy permits too little light to support undergrowth or grass, and as a consequence the soil is bare and has become extremely denuded and washed away from the brick wall which forms the eastern face of the structure (Plate 3). There is currently no indication of revetting to either side of the rear of the brick wall.

To the south of the Overlook a ridge along the top of the mound which lies to the eastern side of the Chapel leads to the northern end of the Aerial Walkway (Plate 4). This comprises an ironwork arched bridge founded on brick abutments which have been faced with ironstone on either side of an artificial narrow defile which creates a view towards the Swiss Cottage.

3 OBJECTIVES

In order to examine the archaeological resource of the site with the aim of aiding restoration, the objectives of the field evaluation were to:

- ◆ Record the structure as it stands, (photographic and descriptive only) prior to any investigation. To identify, investigate and record all archaeological deposits exposed during the trial trenching evaluation.
- ◆ Hand cleaning of the ground surface in the vicinity of the structure and recovery of any artefacts.
- ◆ Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of burial of any archaeological deposits by the hand excavation of trenches (total area of 6sqm) up to 0.5m deep.
- ◆ To provide information as to the archaeological potential within the site, and to provide for further effective archaeological investigation or mitigation in advance of proposed construction phases in the form of a written and fully illustrated report on the findings of the evaluation exercise.
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

The aims of the evaluation were set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted to both the client and Central Bedfordshire Council prior to the commencement of the fieldwork.

4 THE EVALUATION

Prior to the commencement of the excavation the area was photographed to record the disposition of the site on arrival. Judicious pruning of low-level branches was undertaken with permission of Kevin Hilditch, Head Gardener at the Swiss Garden, in order to improve visibility and access as well as for Health and Safety reasons, in order to try to prevent accidental eye injuries. After this the surface of the ground was carefully cleared of leaf debris in order that any surface finds could be identified; none were found. All photographs were taken using a flash since the density of the tree and shrub canopy made the area excessively dark, a situation not helped by the overcast nature of the weather and time of the year of the evaluation. Within the trenches small roots were removed to facilitate the excavation, but all roots with a diameter of more than 20mm were left intact.

4.1 The brick wall

The brick wall comprises a standard nine inch wall with the brick laid in what is best described as English Garden Wall bond (Frost 1954). However, the presence of five integral and closely spaced attached piers which project from each face precludes the bricks being laid in un-interrupted courses and therefore in a pure version of the bond. These piers project further on the back (west) side of the wall than on the front (east) side (Figs 3 and 4, Plate 3). The length of projection on the back is 230mm (9 inches) which equates to one full brick length and 110mm (4½ inches) on the front which equates to half a brick length. This variation in projection presumably relates to the fact that it was felt less visually appealing to have deeply projecting piers on the front side of the wall whilst the deeper projections at the rear would have been originally covered by soil and therefore not seen. The piers, which originally were thought to be equally

spaced along the length of the wall, were found on closer inspection to be 600mm (2 feet) apart at the two opposing outer ends and only 530mm (1 foot 9 inches) apart on either side of the central pier. The bricks are exclusively buff/pale yellow in colour in the lower, main part, of the wall with occasional red bricks restricted to the upper three or four courses. All are 235-240mm x 70mm x 110mm (9-9½ x 2¾ x 4¼ inches) in size and were originally laid in creamy white lime mortar. The bricks are not frogged.

The foundations of the wall were not exposed during the evaluation, and the maximum exposed height of the brickwork was 3.4m.

The top of the wall is finished with brick on edge coping although this top course, and probably the top three courses of the whole length of the wall, has clearly been re-built. Not only are the bricks bonded in a hard, grey, Portland cement rather than lime mortar, but the brickwork is less well laid and there are red bricks which are not seen in the main, lower, part of the wall. It is therefore not clear what the original height of the wall might have been due to this rebuilding, or how the top was finished. There is no indication that the wall was capped by stonework or tile and there are no visible mortices, either open or infilled, on either the upper surface or eastern wall plane which might indicate the former presence of timber or metal posts, brackets or stanchions. If these had been present it is assumed that they have been lost when the top was rebuilt. The lack of such evidence makes it almost impossible to determine what was supported by the wall and how any former superstructure was attached. There is no clear evidence to suggest that the wall has been re-built and therefore it appears that if the structure supported another element its method of attachment to the brick wall was minimal.

The only other visible detail is the presence of blue colour wash (perhaps limewash?) on the east and north elevations (Plates 3 and 5). This colour is the same as that present on the Gardeners Cottage and is reportedly known as Shuttleworth Blue, the Estate colour. Its presence here is perhaps slightly unexpected since the only other building within the garden which appears to retain it still is the utilitarian gardener's structure which might indicate that its use reflects the status of the buildings to which it was applied. However, it might also be that it was formerly much more widespread and its survival here is merely an indication of which buildings have suffered more weathering or have been redecorated. The fragmentary survival of the colour wash makes it difficult to be certain whether it originally covered the entire wall surfaces or was restricted to specific areas. At present the colour is present in a band which extends across the centre of the wall on all three exposed sides (south, east and north) but is not present at either the top or bottom of the wall.

4.2 Planting

The planting around the structure comprises mostly laurel in the immediate vicinity to the east and north with some larger trees including yew and a single pine slightly further away to the west. Analysis of the botany of the area and the date of its planting lies outside the remit (and skill-base) of this evaluation. However, the use of evergreen species and the size of the trees in particular, suggest that they, at least, are likely to be contemporary planting and should therefore be considered as being integral to the original scheme.

4.3 Trench 1

This trench was located at the top of the slope on the west side of the Overlook wall and was positioned perpendicular to the wall (Figs 3 and 4). The eastern end of the trench was located adjacent to the west face of the wall, and the width of the trench located between two stumps of laurel planted at the top of the slope (Plate 6). At this end of the trench there was no topsoil, and the core of the mound was visible on the surface. This comprises an orange, sandy soil visible throughout the garden and presumably a

degraded form of the natural Greensand geology. This sandy matrix contains few inclusions, though where present they mostly comprise small angular flints, less than 25mm in size. The soil has almost no natural binding quality and appears to be particularly susceptible to erosion by rain. There were no visible indications of layering within the soil which was clearly thrown up against the west face of the wall following the construction of the latter. Towards the western end of the trench there was a thin deposit of topsoil which thickened the further west the layer was observed, and appears to be either the partly eroded topsoil layer which must have been artificially introduced above the core material, or was the naturally occurring wedge of material which has resulted in this topsoil being washed down the slope over a period of time (Fig 5, section 1).

No indications were found of any surface dressing such as gravel, crushed brick or stone which might indicate the presence of a path, nor were there any indications of steps in the form of an irregular profile in any part of the section on either side of the trench.

At the western end of the trench a sondage was excavated to test whether there was any change in the make-up of the core material, but none was seen suggesting that this clean, un-contaminated soil was brought here direct from its source. No finds were recovered.

4.4 Trench 2

This trench was an L-shaped trench located against the north end of the Overlook wall (Figs 3 and 4). Originally intended to extend further west of the wall plane, this could not be undertaken due to the presence of a laurel which, although pruned to allow closer access, was left *in situ*. The principal aim of this trench was to investigate whether or not there was any indication of any contemporary structures, no longer visible, which might have been associated with the surviving wall. The eastern arm of the trench was extended eastwards in line with the northernmost pier in order to test this theory. Beneath a dark brown organic topsoil the same orange core material was observed that had been identified in Trench One (Fig 5, section 2).

The horizon between the two layers was extremely clear which further supports the theory that both are introduced and neither are natural to this location. This is further supported by the fact that the core material abuts the wall foundation in such a way as to indicate that the wall had been built first and the soil heaped against it. If the orange soil was present first and the wall added later there would have to be a construction trench in which to build the wall; none was observed. The core material sloped gently downwards away from the wall indicating the original profile intended here, and in this location the layer of topsoil mirrored this degree of slope indicating that there has not been the same degree of erosion noted at the slope on the west side of the wall. The reasons for this are likely to be twofold; firstly the angle of the slope in Trench Two is much less steep, and secondly, there has probably always been more shelter from planting.

Close to the east face of the wall, and located roughly between the two north piers a slab of York stone was observed protruding from the ground at a steep angle, the top leaning away from the wall (Figs 4 and 5, section 3, Plate 7). This slab was removed and was found to be carefully smoothed on one side, and regularly dressed along all four edges with the back only being roughly tooled. Although the slab had suffered slight damage it was largely complete and its dimensions were 615mm x 400mm by 50-65mm in thickness (just over 2 feet x 15¾ x 2-2½ inches). The roughly dressed surface, here taken to represent the back or underside, retained irregularly positioned areas of a creamy white lime mortar which suggest that it had been bedded onto an underlying surface at some stage. Similar traces of mortar were also present on the smooth (upper) surface which indicates that some other material was at some stage bonded to that face

(Plate 8). In this instance the mortar was primarily present along one of the short and one of the long edges which appears to suggest that whatever was bonded to it was located along two edges only, although there remains the possibility that there was originally mortar along the other edges and this has either been deliberately or accidentally removed.

The lower edge of the slab lay within the upper fill of a roughly rectangular feature dug into the orange core material and located directly against the east face of the wall (Figs 4 and 5, section 3). The fill of this feature was extremely loose and presented the appearance of leaf-mould which suggests that it was probably not of any great age since there was no degree of compaction. It is not clear of the hole was dug for the disposal of the stone slab, or whether its location partly within it was coincidental, although the latter seems most likely since the hole conforms most closely with a planting pit, perhaps for a plant to be grown against the face of the wall.

The short north arm of the same trench which extended perpendicular to the north end of the wall cut into the steep north slope of the mound of soil located to the west of the wall (Figs 4 and 5, section 3, Plate 9). Beneath a much thicker deposit of topsoil the same orange core soil was located and which displayed an almost perfectly horizontal surface where it abutted the north edge of the wall, and which formed a nearly vertical face where it extended westwards beyond it (Fig 5). This configuration suggests the former presence of a type of revetting structure, particularly the almost vertical face which, given the friable nature of the soil, would not have withstood un-protected weathering for any length of time. It is thought, therefore, that this vertical face effectively represents a vertical 'robber trench' indicating the former presence of a revetting wall. Within the topsoil layer two small fragments of ironstone had been recovered, and were similar to other stone observed throughout the garden in similar locations where they had been used to form a retaining or revetting feature. It seems most likely, therefore, that a similar feature had been built against the north (and almost certainly the south) end of the brick wall to both retain the mound of soil and also present a more naturalistic surface where the feature would be more visible.

It is also possible that the entire brick face was originally faced with similar stone work such as is present still at the Aerial Walkway (Plate 10). The sharply defined horizontal and vertical surfaces suggest that the stonework was deliberately robbed from this location, presumably as part of the deliberate dismantling of the Overlook or at an unknown date after its demolition or abandonment.

The only finds recovered within Trench Two were two iron nails or pins of indeterminate date and a number of bricks which appear to have fallen from the wall. The bricks all retained mortar on their flat surfaces indicating that they had been used, and it seems most likely that they are simply pieces that had fallen off after the structure had fallen into disrepair. The nails or pins might indicate the former presence of timberwork nearby, although they may also be unrelated. There is no indication of nails being used on the wall surfaces such as is often seen where plants have been tied against them.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The surviving element of the garden feature called the Overlook comprises a brick wall with five attached piers on each side and a degraded mound of soil heaped against the west side. Its current incomplete form makes it difficult to extrapolate what its original design may have been since so little now remains. However, the nature of its construction relates closely to other features within the garden, and the sequence (wall built first, with soil heaped against it after) also appears to conform with what is known about how some of those other structures were built.

The bricks used to create the wall are similar, if not identical, to the bricks used in some other Swiss Garden structures, most notably the Gardeners Cottage and Aerial Walkway, although in fact the majority of the bricks measured within the garden are of very similar sizes, a product perhaps not so much of their exact contemporaneity, than the fact that all date to the nineteenth century, a period when brick making had become much more standardised than previously. Their similar sizes, larger than the majority of eighteenth-century bricks, reflect changes made after the imposition of taxes introduced to help fund the military campaigns undertaken during the American War of Independence. This fact whilst making precise dating difficult (coupled with the relative lack of documentary evidence for the dates of construction) does allow a certain degree of confidence to be ascribed to the grouping of various buildings together in phases of construction. Thus it seems likely that the Overlook and Aerial Walkway are contemporary, in this instance most likely exactly so. Not only are they built from the same materials but they link two ends of a raised bank of soil which in one case has been proven to have been raised against the brickwork (the Overlook), and in the other appears to be the case (the Aerial Walkway). The latter retains stone cladding whilst the Overlook shows clear evidence that it was originally treated in the same fashion. What is also of interest is that there is no indication on the Aerial Walkway to suggest that there was any attempt to key the stone cladding to the brick core, and on the Overlook no evidence survives to suggest that form of bonding was present either. There is no indication that artificial stone (Pulhamite) was used in either location.

The type of brick suggests that both features more likely date to the period after the estate was acquired by the Shuttleworth family, ie after 1872. There is, unfortunately, no documentary evidence to suggest what the Overlook may have looked like when completed but it certainly included the brick wall, mound of soil and former stone retaining walls to either side. Although not very high, it seems unlikely that there was not some form of protective railing along the top of the wall to prevent accidental falling-off. It is understood that there has also been speculation that there was a form of raised platform or balcony which lay level with the top of the wall. No evidence has been found to support this idea and there appears to be no evidence of supporting posts, brackets or braces within the surviving fabric which would have been required to support such a platform. The surviving archaeological evidence instead suggests a simple brick retaining wall, most likely formerly clad with stone and with flanking stone walls at the sides. This different use of material would have allowed the sides which may have been more visible when approached to be planted with vegetation, whilst the vertical face retained by the brick wall would be largely obscured when viewed from above. It appears that this mound essentially formed a nineteenth-century version of the prospect mound and afforded views across the garden. There is no evidence to suggest an elaborate or decorated balcony or platform projecting from it.

The removal of the stone side walls has clearly resulted in the on-going erosion of the mound of soil to the west of the wall, exacerbated by the increasingly dense canopy which has reduced daylight (experienced during the evaluation) which has precluded surface vegetation from growing. This has meant that both on the side slopes and the top of the mound all topsoil has become denuded, with a disproportionate build-up

towards the base. This erosion has almost certainly also resulted in the loss of any indication of how the top was reached, although given the steepness of the slope (even if the sides were retained) there would surely have been by steps rather than a sloping path. If these too were shallowly founded or deliberately robbed out when the side walls were removed there would be little chance of evidence for them surviving, and certainly no evidence was found. Another possibility is that any flight of steps could have been made from timber which might explain the iron nails fragments.

The original function of the Overlook seems more certain. An analysis of sight-lines has been undertaken and it appears to be beyond doubt that this structure was carefully positioned to afford a view dead ahead of the Fernery and Grotto, with other subsidiary views to either side of buildings and structures nearby and far-off throughout the garden (Lake 2012, Drawing No: 1329/57). This, in itself, might suggest a date later in the development of the garden as opposed to being at the beginning, and perhaps reflects the new owner's attempts to bring new interest to the garden without having to undergo extensive re-building and the consequent expense. By providing what appears in its simplest form to be simply a raised viewing platform, new vistas could be achieved by virtue of the raised nature of the Overlook and presumably at the time it was created the planting around it was sufficiently low to be viewed over. As its primary purpose appears to be a platform to see from it was probably not considered particularly necessary to make the feature itself overly decorative, and the existing planting almost certainly reflects the original scheme which would have screened it. In this respect it has more in common with the Terrace which is a feature of relatively little appeal when looked at, but whose purpose becomes clear once the raised walk is mounted and the views from it can be appreciated. It may be simply coincidence, but the Terrace too is screened along its back edge with laurels.

In conclusion the Overlook seems most likely to have been a simple edifice, made from a structural wall of brick and faced with stonework along the front and to the sides. This structural element retained a mound of soil, almost certainly provided with a flight of steps, and if so probably timber rather than stone or brick. At the top of the mound the platform was presumably fronted by a railing, and given that no evidence for metalwork survives, this too may have been made from timber. Another advantage of this material is that it would have been much cheaper, and if made from natural branches in the rustic fashion would most likely have been free since it could have been made from timbers taken from the estate. This would have made it simple to build, maintain and would not have made the structure overly obvious within the landscape. The fact that the only finds at the base of the wall (apart from bricks fallen from the wall) were nails might also support the view that any superstructure was of timber. The use of such rustic timberwork is found elsewhere within the garden.

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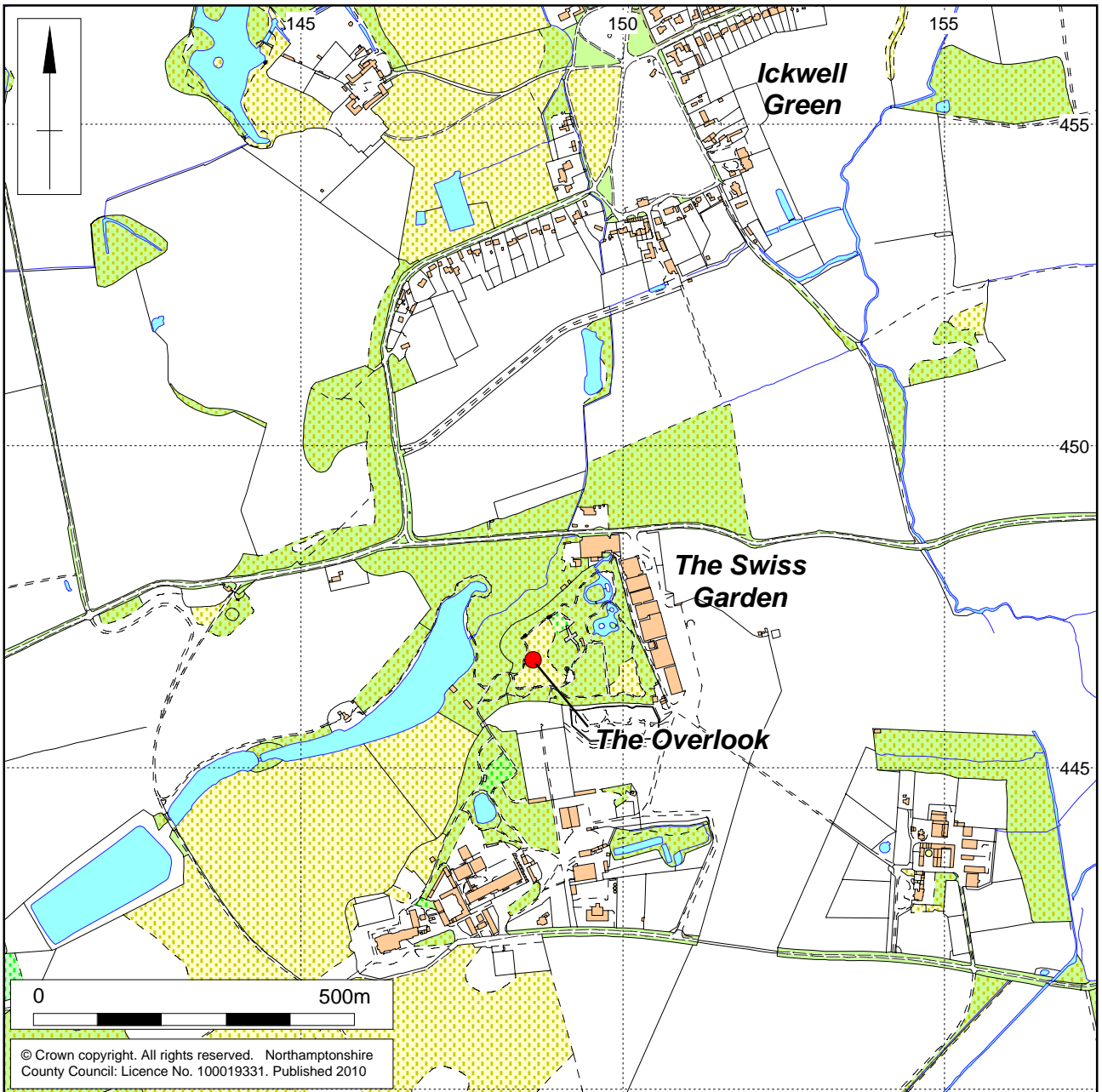
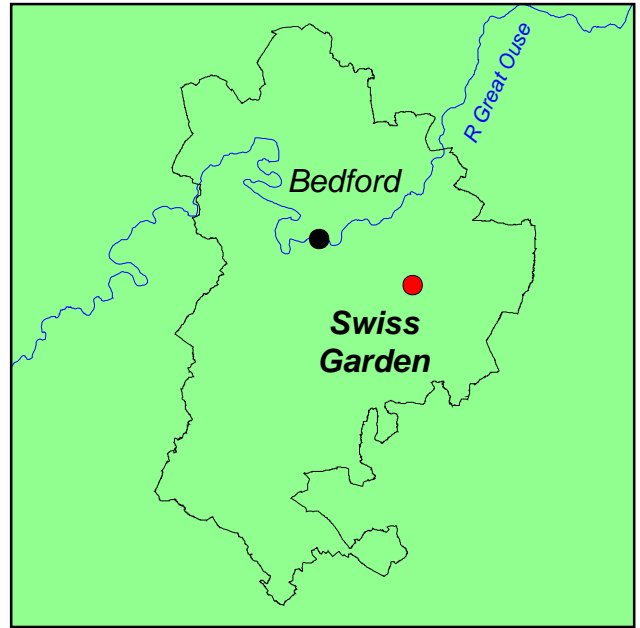
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GLOSSARY

Attached piers Integral projecting brick- (or stone-) work bonded to a main wall or partition to provide additional strength. They may also be constructed for aesthetic reasons, to break an otherwise plain wall surface, and often the two functions are combined. Double attached piers are those which are built on both faces of the same wall, usually opposite each other.

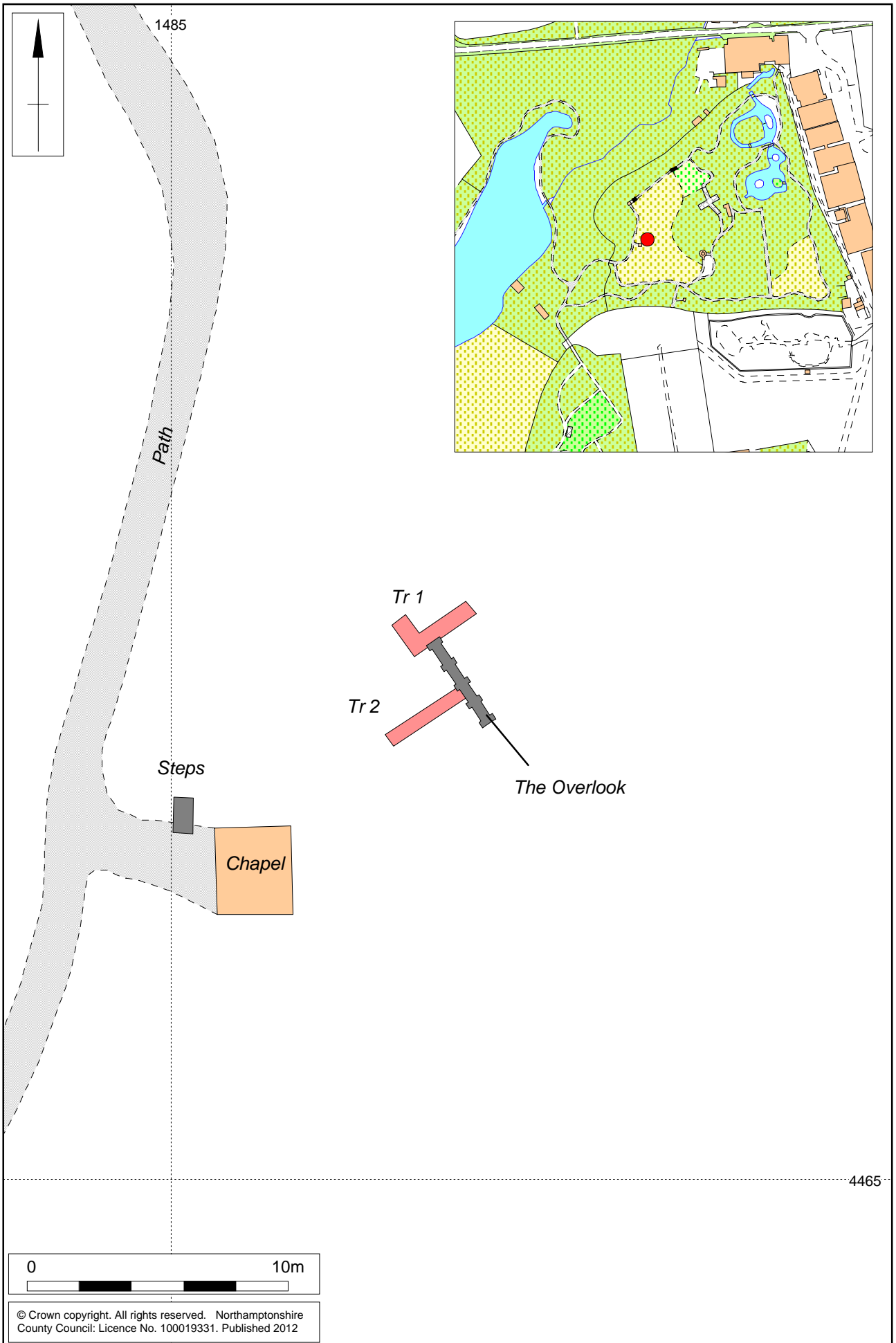
Frogged An indentation on one of the long faces of the brick in order to reduce volume and therefore improve the efficiency of firing and also to improve bonding qualities by creating a pocket for mortar

Pulhamite An artificial form of rockwork invented and produced by James Pulham (1793-1838), the first of four generations of James' to run the business. The 'rockwork' which comprised a brick core with a cement render could be made in a variety of sizes, shapes and colours to suit gardens of all sizes (and budgets).



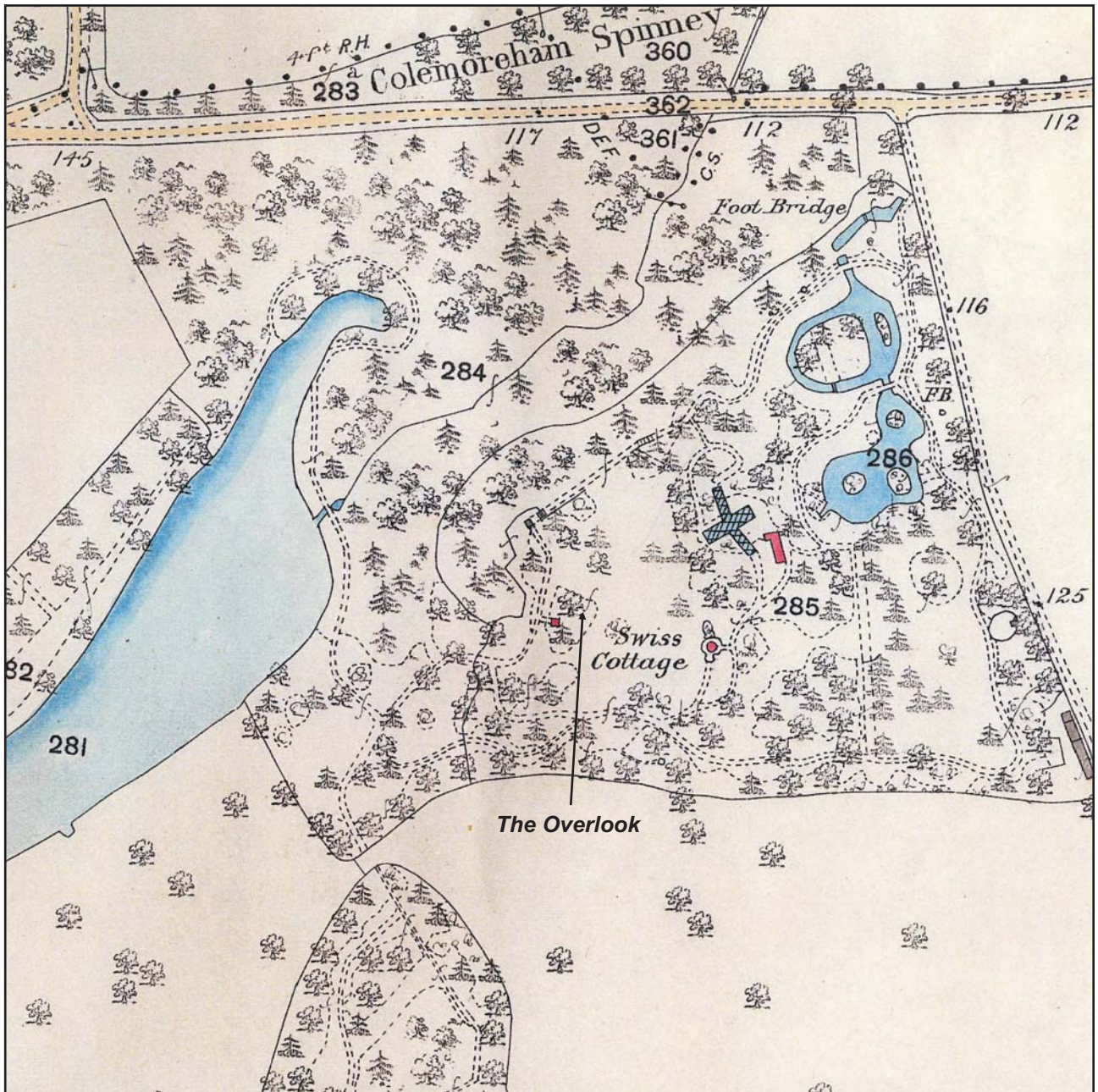
Scale 1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1

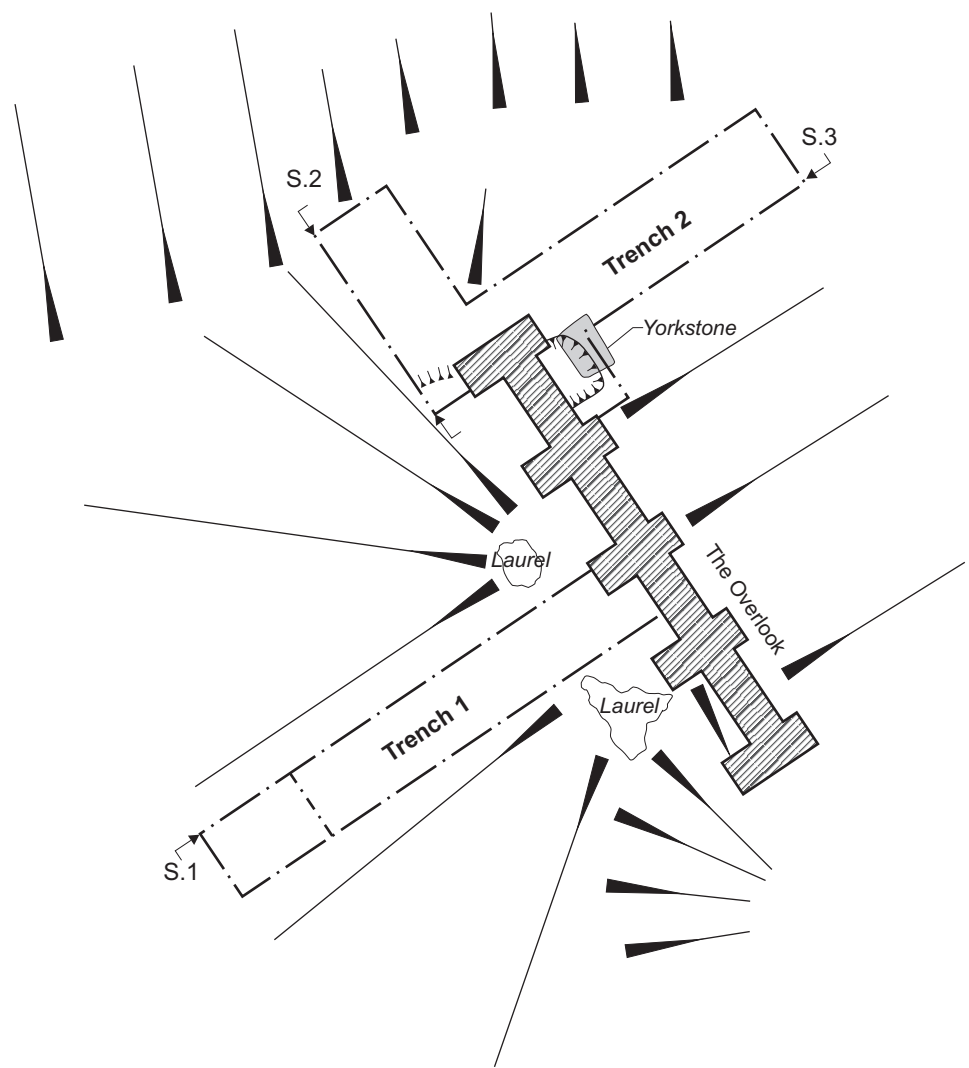


Scales 1:200, inset 1:500 (A4)

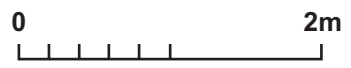
Trench location plan Fig 2



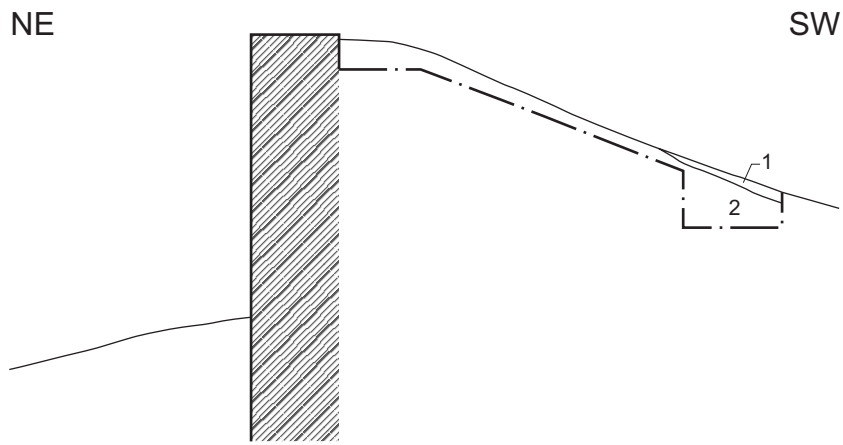
1883 First Edition Ordnance Survey map Fig 3



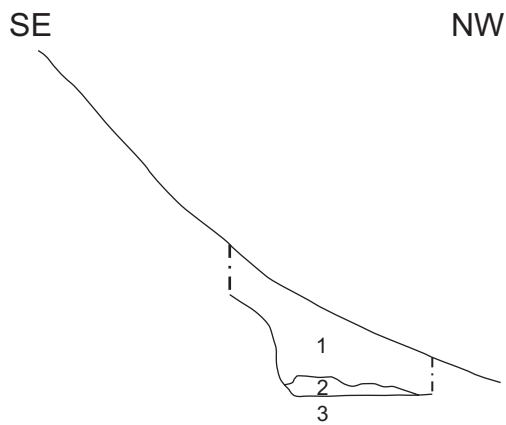
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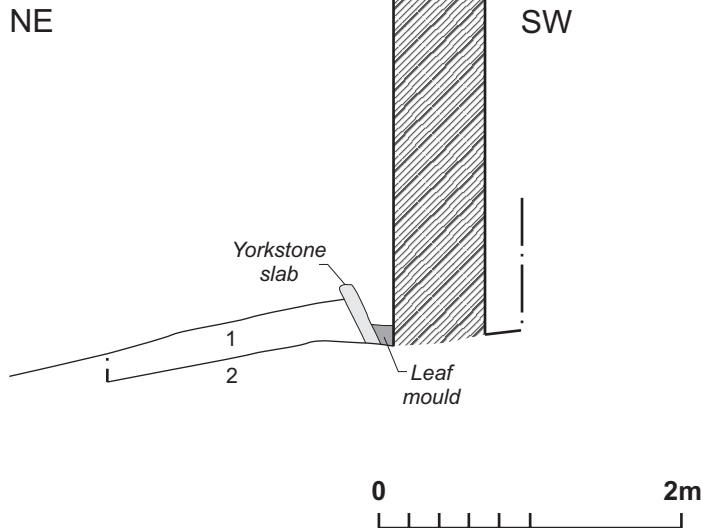
Section 1, Trench 1



Section 2



Section 3





The Chapel with ironstone steps leading to the Overlook beyond, looking east Plate 1



The Overlook mound, looking south-east Plate 2



The east face of the Overlook wall, looking west Plate 3



The ridge linking the Overlook and Aerial Walkway, looking south with the Chapel to the right (west) Plate 4



The north end of the Overlook wall showing the blue colourwash, looking south Plate 5



Trench One, looking east Plate 6



Trench Two, the eastern arm of the trench, looking south Plate 7



The top surface of the stone slab showing mortar remnants Plate 8



Trench Two, the northern arm, looking west Plate 9



The Aerial Walkway showing the stone facing of the brick core, looking south Plate 10



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