



Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological strip, map and record

on land at 25 High Street,

Stagsden, Bedfordshire

October 2009

Accession number: BEDFM:2009.46



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November 2009

Report 09/166

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Northamptonshire
County Council



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
NOVEMBER 2009**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP, MAP AND RECORD
ON LAND AT 25 HIGH STREET
STAGSDEN, BEDFORDSHIRE**

NOVEMBER 2009

ACCESSION NUMBER: BEDFM:2009.46

REPORT 09/166

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological Strip, Map and Record on land at 25 High Street, Stagsden, Bedfordshire.	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological Strip Map and Record on land proposed for residential development to the rear of 25 High Street, Stagsden, Bedfordshire. Documentary evidence had indicated that a Tithe Barn, possibly of medieval date once stood in the area. The foundations of two barns were located in the northern part of the development area close to the High Street. Archaeological remains dating to earlier than the 19th-century were present. Much of the site had been subjected to extensive modern ground disturbance.	
Project type	Strip map and record	
Site status	None	
Previous work	Trial Trench evaluation (Burrow 2009)	
Current land use	Garden	
Future work	No	
Monument type/period	19th-century barns	
Significant finds	None	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Bedfordshire	
Site address	25 High Street, Stagsden, Bedfordshire	
Study area	4383m ²	
OS Easting & Northing	49831 24903	
Height OD	57.6m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Bedford Borough Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Jim Burke	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	T C Newton & Sons Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	12th October 2009	
End date	26th October 2009	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	BEDFM:2009.46	Modern ceramics
Paper		Site context sheets, indexs, HER notes
Digital		Text, photographs, digitised plans & sections
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological Strip, map and record on land at 25 High Street, Stagsden, Bedfordshire.	
Serial title & volume	09/166	
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Report cover: The Stagsden Village Sign in old Norman; *Stachedene*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP MAP AND RECORD
ON LAND AT 25 HIGH STREET, STAGSDEN
BEDFORDSHIRE**

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out archaeological strip, map and record on land proposed for residential development to the rear of 25 High Street, Stagsden, Bedfordshire. Documentary evidence and previous trial trenching had indicated that a Tithe Barn, possibly of medieval date once stood in the area. A dry stone wall and surface remained of a previous building or wall which was truncated by the foundations of two 19th-century barns which were located in the north-west part of the development area close to the High Street. Parts of both barn walls still exist showing their construction. A cobbled surface was present to the south-east of the stripped area, but had been subjected to extensive modern ground disturbance and was undated.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological strip, map and record excavation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) on behalf of T C Newton and Sons Ltd, on land to the rear of 23-25 High Street, Stagsden, Bedfordshire (NGR: SP 9831 4903; Fig 1).

The work was undertaken as a condition of planning consent for five residential dwellings and detached garages on the land (07/3087/FUL). The excavation met the requirements of a specification prepared by NA (2009) in response to a brief issued by Bedford Borough Council (BCCHEs 2008, v2 2/7/2009).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and geology

The development site is located in the historic core of the medieval village of Stagsden, within the valley of the Great Ouse, which flows to the east of the village. The area of the excavation lies to the south of the High Street, within the gardens of two individual properties and includes a pond located at the south-easterly corner of one of the properties. To the north-west, across the road is St Leonard's Church. The land slopes gently to the south, at an elevation of c57m aOD.

The underlying geology comprises Rowsham association with gley clays overlying gravel and loam drifts (www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm).

2.2 Archaeological and historical background

The development area lies within the historic medieval core of the village. It is situated directly to the south of the main village crossroads, opposite St Leonard's Church, a Grade 1 listed building with Norman origins. The village has a long history highlighted by its mention in the Domesday Book when it was called *Stachedene* (Williams and Martin 1992, 634). Four major landowners held

land within the village, namely Countess Judith, Hugh de Beachamp, the Bishop of Bayeaux and Count Eustace.

By the 13th century there were four moated sites in the parish, with the Mordant family acquiring more property in the 15th/17th-centuries (BCAS 1998, 5). The parish was predominantly open fields until its enclosure by Act of Parliament in 1828 (CRO MA53). The estate was bought by the Crown Commission of Woods and Forests in 1873 and was sold at auction in 37 lots in 1921 (see 3.4).

Limestone was quarried in the area (HER 7288, 7289), most notably for the 13th century church of St, Leonard's. Clay was extracted from behind Broadmead Farm (HER 7290), from a field known as "Claypits". Almost all the limestone used in the construction of local buildings would have been quarried locally.

Very little previous investigation has taken place within the centre of Stagsden, although the bypass to the east of the village identified substantial remains belonging to the Iron Age and Roman periods (Dawson 2002).

2.3 Historic Environment Record

The Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) lists a number of sites within a 1km radius of the site dating from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods (Table 1). A series of cropmarks have been identified by aerial photography (HER 16348, 16349, 16520, 16521, 16524, 16527 and 16553), and subsequent archaeological evaluation and excavation on some of these sites have proved they are Late Iron Age and Roman enclosures and settlements situated on a south facing slope overlooking a minor tributary of the River Great Ouse (Dawson 2002).

The ploughed-out remains of medieval settlements lie to the east of the village (HER 2558 Fig 1) and 1km to the west, at North End (HER 1844). A number of other medieval sites, defined by moated enclosures, include Wick End (HER 80) 1km to the north of the village and Bishop Odo's manor (HER 2556), 1.5km to the west. Within the application area a medieval tithe barn is recorded (HER 7273 Fig 2) in the southern part of the walled garden of 25 High Street.

The results of the HER search are tabulated below with those illustrated on Figures 1 and 2 highlighted in bold.

Table 1: Historic Environment Record

HER NO	NGR (SP)	DESCRIPTION	References
80	9877 5006	Moated site located at Wick End.	
96		Generic number for ridge and furrow within Bedfordshire. Ridge and furrow noted around the village.	
1481	9856 4892	Site of Chalybeate Spring, Spring Lane immediately east of historic core of Stagsden village.	VCH 3, 1912, 96
1844	972 494 973 495	Extensive earthworks west of Stagsden at North End. Comprised house platforms with some houses shown on Jeffrey's map of c1765. Four dwellings shown on 6' OS map of 1881.	Jeffrey's map of c1765 6' OS map of 1881
2556	9655 4908	Moated site of considerable area located in Up End Wood. Triangular-shaped earthworks and minor enclosure to north-east. A considerable quantity of stone roofing tiles were recovered during an excavation in 1923. Moat associated with Bishop Odo's manor.	

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HER NO	NGR (SP)	DESCRIPTION	References
2558	990 486	Site of medieval (pre-Domesday settlement), shrunken way leading to probable house (??moat) platform. Area now ploughed flat. Rectangular pond centred at 988 488.	1828 Enclosure map CRO MA 53
3537	9870 5016	Site of fishpond, located to the north of Wick End, Stagsden, slightly above stream, rubble spread, bank and dam.	
4998	9810 5066	Site of Burdelys Manor, Wick End, Stagsden. Held by the Beauchamps, surrounded by a moat (see HER 3554).	
5393	9825 4910	St Leonard's Church, 14th-century chancel, south aisle and lower part of tower with 15th-century north chapel and south porch	
6939		No 23 High Street, Stagsden. 19th-century estate building.	
6940		Church Rooms, dated 1898	
7267	983 502	How Wood, Stagsden, listed as Ancient Woodland which originally encompassed a larger area.	
7273		Tithe barn (site of) including yard and paddocks.	Reference in Arthur Mee, <i>Kings England, Bedford and Huntingdon</i>, 1939, page 45. Describes church in use with old thatched barn in ruins. Ref: CRO X67/383 describes sale catalogue for tithe barn.
7288	9815 4925	Site of quarry, field name shown as 'Edsons hole'. Believed to be source of stone for St Leonard's Church.	1828 Enclosure map CRO MA 53
7290	9860 4920	Clay pits (site of), at Brookmead Farm	1828 Enclosure map CRO MA 53
7295		SMITHY. Turnpike map, building shown to south of Church	CRO: MTR 5, Map, 1913 (RW6/76)
7298	9752 4950	Site of quarry near Stagsden North End	
14711	9920 4980	Cropmarks (site of) Late Pre-Roman Iron Age settlement situated on south facing slope overlooking minor tributary of the Ouse. Investigated during 1998 evaluation of the site (Stagsden golf course) described enclosures, settlement ditches and surfaces, possibly yards.	South Midlands Archaeology 22, 1992
14712	9910 4960	Cropmarks (site of) Late Pre-Roman Iron Age settlement situated on south facing slope overlooking minor tributary of the Ouse. Investigated during 1998 evaluation of the site (Stagsden golf course) described enclosures, settlement ditches and surfaces, possibly yards.	South Midlands Archaeology 22, 1992
15068		Grade 2 listed Cottage 19th-century	SBC10853 – Index: 1987. DoE North Beds 45th List of Buildings of Special Architectural Interest.
16115	978 485	Cropmarks (site of) to south of village core. Watching brief revealed ditch and pit.	South Midlands Archaeology 22, 1992

HER NO	NGR (SP)	DESCRIPTION	References
16348	994 494	Cropmarks (site of) to north-east of village, comprising rectangular enclosure on ridge investigated during archaeological study of golf course.	BCAS 1998/21
16349	991 489	Cropmarks (site of) to north-east of village, comprising rectangular enclosure on ridge. Comprised prehistoric activity in addition to Iron Age and Roman settlement.	
16520	975 483 977 488	Cropmarks (site of) to south of village, comprising Iron Age and Roman settlements investigated during Stagsden bypass excavation. Enclosures and other possible cropmarks located on ridge between two valleys.	Dawson, M, 2000 <i>Iron Age and Roman settlement on the Stagsden bypass</i> , Bedfordshire Monograph 3
16521	983 484	Cropmarks (site of) to south of village, Investigated during Stagsden bypass works. Comprised oval enclosure with south-east facing entrance.	
16522	979 486	Cropmarks (site of) to south of village, Investigated during Stagsden bypass works. Comprised small sub-square enclosure with north-east entrance and other linear ditches on ridge top.	
16523	974 490	Cropmarks (site of) to west of village, comprised trapezoidal enclosure on slight ridge.	
16524	980 497	Cropmarks located between Stagsden and Bury End. Two fairly large 100+m conjoined rectilinear enclosures.	
16525	978 506	Cropmarks located west of Burdeleys Manor, c 50m irregular-shaped enclosure.	
16553	992 505	Possible group of cropmarks comprising irregular conjoined enclosures, though very indistinct.	
16929	983 490	Medieval core of Stagsden.	

2.4 Historic maps

A search of the historic maps was carried out using the Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council Online Archives and the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Record Service as well as secondary online sources (see bibliography for details).

Estate Map of 1799-1800 (Fig 3)

The earliest map consulted was the Stagsden Estate Map. This pre-enclosure map shows a number of buildings within the development area, fronting the High Street to the south of St Leonard's Church. A long, narrow structure set back a little from the road shows the development of previous buildings on the plot. The land to the south of the buildings, labelled 'West End Field', was open fields.

1828 Enclosure Map (Fig 4)

The parish was enclosed by act of Parliament in 1828 (CRO MA53; Dawson 2002, fig 4) and the village was sub-divided, with many plot boundaries extending south off the High Street.

The map depicts a number of buildings within the site (including plot 218), including what appear to be a number of long structures around the periphery with a larger rectangular building aligned south-west to north-east, with a projecting bay or bays on the south side, in the centre of the plot. A much smaller out-building lies adjacent to the north. This building is probably the tithe barn although no surviving evidence was found for it in the trial trench evaluation. The current excavated area did not extend over the site of this former building and a separate sondage did not encounter any archaeological remains.

A search of the Enclosure Map and awards (MA53 and Awards Book M) states that the name of the proprietor of plot 218 was "The Honorable Henry Trevor and Joseph Rogers Esq. as Devises in Trust in the Will Of John Viscount Hampden deceased". The listing for plot describes it as "Homestead – 1ac 2r 20p".

1884, 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig 5)

This is the first detailed modern map of the village. It shows the village form, plot boundaries and buildings largely as they exist today. The Church Rooms (HER 6940) have been built (1869) on the street frontage. The barns can clearly be seen; the western part of the barn is smaller and narrower than the eastern. The small building to the south is still present. The possible tithe barn is no longer depicted in the centre of the plot.

The building within the adjacent plot has been joined by further structures.

1901, 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1:10,560 (Fig 6)

The basic layout of boundaries in the development area is largely unchanged. The eastern barn is still present, but the smaller western part immediately to the rear of the Church Rooms has gone, presumably demolished. Also gone is the freestanding small building adjacent to the south.

1926, 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig 7)

This shows very little change from the 1901 Ordnance Survey map except for a small extension attached to the eastern end of the barn on the street frontage, and a small freestanding building east of the barn.

1950 Ordnance Survey, 1:10,560 (Fig 8)

There is no significant change from the previous map and the barn is still standing in the early post-war period. Further buildings are shown to the rear of the barn, at the south-western corner. The smaller building to the east of the barn is no longer shown.

1960 Ordnance Survey, 1:10,560 (not illustrated)

The barn has finally been completely demolished. No other significant changes are evident.

2.5 Historical background by Iain Soden

Entry number 7273 of the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) notes the site of a tithe barn including yard and paddocks, citing the reference to Mee (1939, 45). Subsequent research has highlighted a Crown Estates sale catalogue of 1921 which lists Lot 30 as an accommodation property including tithe barn, yard and paddock. The said tithe barn was recorded as a large stone, timber and thatched building with open yard fronting the main street (cited in Burrow 2009, 5). Further research, however, on the muniments of Trinity College, Cambridge (hereafter TCC), suggests these former attributions are doubtful.

The relevant documents fall into three types: Latin of 16th and 17th-century date and written in Court-hand, English of 17th-century date in secretarial hand and English of 18th- to 19th-century date, generally in more varied handwriting. They are bound into a single volume (4 Stagsden 1, subdivided by folio) and a box of loose papers (4 Stagsden 2-9).

In 1539 the farm of the rectory of Stagsden was taken by the Crown from the Prior and monks of Newnham Priory, Bedfordshire and formally conferred upon John Mordaunt, who already held it to all intents and purposes by virtue of a 99-year lease of 20th May 1538, direct from the Priory at a rent of £21 6s 8d and a pension of 40s to the Vicar (TCC: 4 Stagsden 1, fos 2-3). The tithes are not specifically mentioned, but these have to be assumed since the Rector is to be maintained out of the deal and as the previous overlord of the rectory, the Priory would have received these. Mordaunt had almost certainly been a principal benefactor of the Priory and his receipt of monastic lands at the eleventh hour was typical of such panic-leases enacted in the months before dissolution took place. In such a way, monasteries looked after their secular supporters and, in this case, also provided for the secular benefice of Stagsden Church. The work of the Augmentation Office often merely ratified such leases and in this case this seems to have happened, although the subsequent destination of any of the tithes was not dealt with (later to cause problems).

However, it seems that in this case the gift was not fully ratified and in 1546 the Crown gave it to Trinity College, Cambridge, who then assigned a sub-lease to Mordaunt. Herein lay the first seeds of confusion. The Mordaunt claimants and their successors felt they held the advowson by right of the grant of 1538 (not cancelled but not ratified either), while the College felt they held it by right of theirs of 1546, sub-letting to the Mordaunts and their heirs. Who was to wield each responsibility of landlord, lessee or sub-lessee was not discussed at this stage - until such matters came to a head generations later.

Within the 1546 grant the small tithes (hay, wood, wool, lambs) were vested in the College (TCC: Stagsden 1, fol 2). In 1561 a survey of the Rectory (often referred to as the Parsonage) also made note of the rectorial lands or glebe, mentioning a few plots by name. These continue to be mentioned as the glebe in the 17th century:

Brads Close and two closes adjoining (unnamed), 14a (Brays Orchard 1654)

Parsonage Close and a close adjoining (unnamed), 3a

Ash Beds Close, 14a (?15 Acres Piece 1654)

Hangur Hoe, 8a (Hanger Wood 1652 (10a), Hanger Close 1654)

Ashy Wood, 20a (Ash Wood 1652, Astey Wood 1654)

Frithe Wood, 6a (?Prim Wood 1652 (7a), Frithe Wood 1654)

How Wood, 5a (How Wood 1654)

During the 17th century the tithes became a matter of concern and there was a long-running dispute between the Mordaunts and Trinity College over the relative validity of their claims, in which they found numerous points to differ. Seemingly in the middle of that century, there was little clarity over who held the advowson of the church (the right to present the rector) and who might claim either the Great Tithes (cereals) or the Small Tithes (hay, wood, lambs, wool), if even the same person or institution. Rents fell into serious arrears, tithes remained uncollected, perhaps not even offered, and even the vicar claimed to have been ruined by the protracted affair, stating that by 1664 he had not been paid his 40s stipend for 10 years, much of it during the very disruptive period of the English Commonwealth (TCC: 4 Stagsden 1). Indeed the last receipt noted of pension paid was of 20s for a half-year as far back as Michaelmas 1564 (TCC: 4 Stagsden 2).

In the midst of the litigation, claims of private agreements and local custom were rife, although they may often have counted for nothing as they were not backed up by documentation. The whole affair seems to have been allowed to deteriorate to the detriment of the parish, to the point that in 1652 'an old Burgess memo book' marked 'B' noted:

1652 Glebe, given by Burroughs (see above for earlier and near-contemporary correlations in 1561 and 1654)

The house and close adjoining 3a

The other close of about – Sword ground 16a

One other close 16a

One other close of pasture 10a

Lammas Meadow 10a

Ash Wood 20a

Hanger Wood 10a

Prim Wood 7a

Arable 115a

'...Burroughs relates that Mr Farrer' (Thomas Farrer, Gent, demise to him of Parsonage) 'did demolish a great barn upon the parsonage last year 1651 and build a less in the place'...it then notes that the parsonage house was let by the Countess of Peterborough (as heir to the previous Mordaunt claim) and 'several parcels of the land and barn were let out.' (TCC: 4 Stagsden 1, 13).

The results of the litigation, won by the College eventually, never really satisfied all parties and the Rector and the College regularly clashed over the value of tithes and the regularity of payment, despite a series of leases 1770-93 (TCC: 4 Stagsden 4a-d) and legal documents over tithes being drawn up from 1808-38 (TCC: 4 Stagsden 8a-d) to legally establish the responsibilities of lessee and landlord. Old habits died hard, however, and despite it being quite clear that from at least 1770 the Vicar was responsible for the upkeep of the Chancel of the

Church out of the tithes. A College lands survey of the parish in 1808 specifically noted that 'the chancel of the church is much out of repair and the inside is in very indecent order' (TCC: 4 Stagsden 1, 9). More particularly the same observer noted 'There are no buildings or lands belonging to the Great Tythes of the parish. All tythes except the tythes of corn and grain are claimed and enjoyed by the vicar of the said parish (indicating that payment to the College was at best irregular, at worst non-existent).

An earlier survey for the college, in 1783 set out the tithe particulars but then went on 'There does not appear to be any Tithe Barn or any Glebe Lands belonging to this rectory, unless all or some part of the farm in folio 12 (34/4 acres occupied by Thomas Bass be parcel thereof [in a later hand in pencil – 'rather certain pieces in folio 4] 'This has been let with the tithes time out of mind.' (TCC: 4 Stagsden 1, 19).

Rev Thomas Bass was rector there in the late 18th century. Folio 12 [or 4] of the survey notes:

Thomas Bass

Home Croft	3a pasture
Drabb	4a meadow and common
New Close	3a meadow
Becks Ash	10a (5 meadow, 3oats, 2 wood
Child mead	2.5a meadow
Coastons Hole	1a pasture
Oxleys	0.75 a meadow common
Common field	10a of land

These seem to bear no resemblance to the previous surveys of the Glebe so it is very likely that successive Rectors had let out portions and disposed of others, just as the observer noted. The college was seemingly unable to trace its previous holdings.

The value of the tithes and who might have them remained problematic. In 1800 an account was sent to the college 'For the tithes of hay wood, wool and lambs received by the College but due to Rev Edward Stone in the year 1799 and 1800, each year £35 7s 2d' (TCC: 4 Stagsden 3, 6a). In support Thomas Bass wrote to the college, saying that he and his predecessors had been 'claiming tithes of lambs, wool and hay, custom time out of mind' (ie for themselves) as the tenant of the late William Farrer (the Mordaunt claim again) but also that 'I receive composition (compensation) in lieu of tithes of lambs, wool and hay'. (TCC: 4 Stagsden 3, 7a). Farrer, it seems, had taken the tithes and compensated the Vicar in monetary terms (perhaps conflating compensation and stipend); thus the College had lost out again. The Rector had no traditional need for a Tithe Barn and remained at pains to maintain his rights and his lifestyle by claiming the value of the tithes for himself.

In 1815 the college's observations regular on the rectory continued to note, 'The bursar and I supposed that land had been given in lieu of tithes by the Inclosure Act, and that I should have had only to have valued the allotments set out in lieu thereof' (TCC: 4 Stagsden 1, 11). Even the college's own bursar and surveyor, it seems, were unsure of what they owned, or of what control they might exercise, even after so many years of pressing their case and even when they were actually on site and had carried out a survey.

These then comprise a summary of the convoluted circumstances of the succession of lawsuits over who legally held the post-Dissolution advowson in the 17th century. This led to protracted confusion over the value of tithes and the lessee's responsibility in the 18th century. It accounted for the near bankruptcy of the parish and the loss of the tithe barn in 1651, its replacement with a lesser building in the same year, and led twice to the Trinity College surveyors' observations in 1783 and 1808 that no such building for this purpose existed in the parish. There are no records of the College ever having built one thereafter despite much clearer leases being drawn up at that time. Thus any building which may have been sold in 1921 as 'The Tithe Barn', either was built by someone else and had no great age (ie was post-1808), or was wishfully labelled at the auction, perhaps to lend it a spurious authenticity and achieve a greater price.

2.6 Sale Catalogue

A search of the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service found a Crown Estate sale catalogue (CRO X67/383), dated 1921 (Fig 9). Within the development area were two lots, numbers 29 and 30.

Lot 29 is a row of three cottages with gardens located opposite Church Farm. The cottages were recorded as substantially built of stone, with ornamental tiled roofs and chimneys, and were let to Messrs Collins. These still survive today, but as a single dwelling.

Lot 30 was detailed as an accommodation property and included the tithe barn, yard and paddock area. The tithe barn is recorded as a large stone, timber and thatched building with open yard fronting the Main Street, a grass paddock and pond. It was let to Messrs Collins on a yearly rent of £5.

2.7 Historic photographs

Two wall-mounted photographs were kindly supplied by the current resident of the Church Rooms, showing the property and its surrounds at two different periods of time.

The earlier photograph (Fig 10) was taken from the Church Yard, looking south-east. It dates from between the building's construction in 1869 (the date is visible on a plaque on the front wall) and its renovation and enlargement in 1898 (see Table 1 HER 6940). The barn can clearly be seen behind the Church Rooms as a large structure with a steeply-pitched thatched roof. The fact that the roof of the barn sits almost directly behind the Church Rooms suggests that the western section still existed at this time, supported by the historic map evidence which shows that the western part of the barn was demolished sometime between 1884 and 1901.

A later photograph (Fig 11) post-dates the large-scale extension to the Church Rooms in 1898. The western section of the barn is no longer roofed, but part of the north wall is still standing, seen to the left, behind the house. Unfortunately the photograph does not show the condition of the eastern end of the barn.

A third photograph (Fig 12), also undated and this time taken from a location to the south-west of the Church Rooms appears to show the truncated eastern barn, its western gable end weatherboarded and with a thatched roof.

2.8 The Census returns

The Census returns of 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901 confirm that the address of 25 High Street, Stagsden were residential premises for workers and their families.

1871	William White	Head	Wood Cutter
	Mary White	Wife	Dress Maker
1881	John Carr	Head	Agricultural Labourer
	Alice Carr	Wife	Lace Maker
	Charles Carr	Son	Agricultural Labourer
1891	No entries for the address		
1901	Albert Freeman	Head	Publican
	Rebecca Freeman	Wife	Waiter
	Willie Freeman	Son	Railways
	Arthur Freeman	Son	Agricultural
	Walter Freeman	Son	Agricultural Labourer

And four other sons aged 12,10, 8 and 5.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The objective of the project, as outlined in the brief issued by Bedford Borough Council, was to:

- Establish the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site
- Establishing the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding contemporary landscapes
- Recover artifacts to assist in the development of the type series within the region
- Recover palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions

The position of the excavated area was determined in consultation with the Bedford Borough Consultant Archaeologist, and was informed by the earlier trial trench evaluation (Burrow 2009).

3.2 Methodology

The excavation, which covered an area of 355m², was excavated using a JCB 3CX digger fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket, operating under archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation proceeded as far as the surface of the natural substrate or the first archaeologically significant layer.

The excavated area was related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Ordnance Datum using survey-grade GPS equipment (Leica Systems 1200). Archaeological information was recorded on *pro-forma* sheets, with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit and feature. Sections and plans were drawn at an appropriate scale. A photographic record comprising both 35mm monochrome negatives, with associated contact prints, and colour transparencies was maintained, supplemented with digital photographs. All records were compiled into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive. The archive will be deposited with the Bedfordshire Museum under the archive number BEDFM:2009.46.

All works were carried out according to the IfA Code of Conduct (2008) and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation (IfA 2008), and all procedures accorded with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

4 THE STRIP, MAP AND RECORD EVIDENCE

The natural substrate comprised yellow/grey clay with orange sand patches. No original subsoil was present on the site except in the north-western corner. The site had been subject to extensive ground disturbance. Some areas were reduced in level, and other areas had substantial dumped deposits.

4.1 A dry stone wall and a surface

The remains of a dry stone wall (630) (631), together with a roughly laid limestone surface (633), were located near the centre of the excavated area, they are undated but predate the 19th-century barn (Fig 13). The wall was better preserved east of the partition wall (614) of the 19th-century barn (Fig 14, Section 12). To the south-east of this wall was a roughly laid limestone and flint cobbled surface (633) (Fig 16). This sloped to the east, probably to assist drainage. Only a small amount of this surface survives. Several test holes were excavated around the surface to determine the extent of what survived, but only the area shown survived (Fig 13). Two ditches lay close to the boundary of the Church Rooms at the north-west corner, a fragment of 13th-century pottery found within the fill would indicate that this ditch was backfilled at the same time and probably have been a boundary ditch (Figs 13 and 15, Section 7, 619, 621).

Mapping evidence from the Enclosure map 1828 (Fig 4), shows buildings that are on a similar alignment to the dry stone wall.

4.2 Cobbled surface

The remains of a cobbled surface (604) lay in the southern corner of the excavated area (Fig 15, Section 19). It had been extensively truncated by

modern ground disturbance (Fig 13 and Fig 17). The cobbles, between 100–190mm in diameter, lay within a natural clay matrix and were tightly compacted, with smaller limestone cobbles replacing missing cobbles. A group of nails associated with a spread of charcoal were retrieved from the cobbled surface. The nails had been used, their points were hammered down at the same length (50mm), indicating the thickness of the timber through which they were fixed. Fragments of iron crooks (Fig 18) for the thatched roof were also found in this area, suggesting that this surface was still in use when the western barn was demolished, or has been disturbed with the modern ground disturbance.

4.3 The 19th-century barn

The foundations of the barns, present in the northern part of the excavated area, were orientated south-west to north-east, (Fig 13). The photographic evidence indicates that this was one large barn, whereas the excavated evidence shows that the barn was broader at the eastern end than the western. These are described as Western and Eastern parts. Part of the walls remain as part of the boundary to the current property and the Church Rooms, the later internal wall (614) that divided the barns part survives as the garden wall that divide the plots of the current development area.

4.4 The western part of the 19th-century barn

This building was at least 15.0m long and 6.0m wide. The foundation trenches, [634], and [659] which cut the natural clay and measured 0.65m wide and 0.4m to 0.5m deep had vertical sides and a flat base, (Figs 13 and 15, Sections 13, 15 and 17). The wall foundations measured externally in length (610) 5.2m, (611) 4.8m and (613) 7.1m and were constructed of roughly cut and un-dressed limestone, up to 0.4m long, within a matrix of compacted yellow lime mortar. A large rectangular slab of limestone on the corner of the foundation wall (610) and (611) may have been a post-pad for a structural timber post.

The entrance to the western barn (612) was 3.0m wide and had a foundation which was different to the wall footings on either side, comprising a darker mixed yellow-grey clay with limestone pieces and yellow mortar. Alternatively, it may have been the backfill of a robber trench dug to remove the entrance stones following the demolition of the barn.

Remains of two *in situ* wooden posts (Fig 13, 623 and 637) on either side of the entrance to the barn measured 0.1m from the outside of the barn walls. Two further wooden posts on the outside of the barn entrance marked the possible bays of the barn, in-filled with limestone and lime mortar. One further posthole was visible central to the barn wall (611) but had been reused for a modern post in the present garden; only fragments of the post and the mortar survived. No dating evidence was recovered from the barn foundations.

Part of this barn survives as part of the current boundary wall for the Church Rooms (Fig 25) this was viewed and photographed from the Church Rooms and has been rebuilt from the point the photograph was taken. The surviving part of the wall indicates that the barn was 6.0m wide

The floor of the western barn (609) was mottled clay mixed with yellow sand and chalk fragments throughout, mortar fragments were also embedded in the floor from the demolition of the barn. Modern disturbance had cut into the floor (planting beds) as part of the previous garden layout.

4.5 The eastern part of the 19th-century barn

The eastern barn foundation wall (616) only survives as far as the present dwelling. This wall has been truncated by modern drainage near the centre of the two barns (Fig 13). The construction of this barn was more substantial with limestone blocks for foundation footings (Fig 14, Section 10 and Fig 22). The limestone blocks had been roughly faced and varied in sizes 0.3m to 0.4m in length 0.2m to 0.3m in width, a course of thinner limestone stone lay on top on the foundation blocks 0.3m to 0.4m in width and 0.05m to 0.15 in thickness.

The entrance to this barn was located at 7.4m from the southern corner (614). This part projects slightly to the south of the remainder of the wall plane the barn wall, and the limestone pieces had been laid aligned north to south, edgeways on top of the west to east wall and is of a similar construction to the western barn. Whilst the eastern end of the barn was not excavated, it is estimated from map evidence to have been c20m long and 8m wide.

Part of this eastern barn survives above ground as part of the current boundary wall at the rear of the Church Rooms (Fig 23). Two oak posts remain *in situ* on limestone post-pads (the post-pads were flat slabs of limestone used to support the weight of the post). The western post is in alignment with the internal wall of the two barns with the eastern post probably suggesting the width of a bay of the barn. This wall has been retained as part of the garden boundary wall (Fig 26). An area of re-build further to the east probably indicates the position another post which would indicate the position of a third bay (Fig 13).

Each of the bays are spaced at 3.0m intervals, the two posts that remain *in situ* are made of oak with mortised slots cut into the sides, each of the posts are 0.30m square in section . As the posts are *in situ* and within a private yard only limited observations were carried out.

The floor surface in this barn (629) was the same as (609) in the western barn.

4.6 Partition wall of the 19th-century barn

The partition wall (614) that separated the two sections of the barns had been constructed on the clay floor and had no foundations. This part of the wall survives as the current garden boundary wall, it measured at its original width 0.45m (Figs 13 and 14, Section 11)

The partition wall probably supports the weatherboarded gable seen on the photograph showing the west end of the barn (Fig 12). This is the only known photographic plate that shows that the eastern barn survived the western barn.

4.7 The modern garden

The garden and development area to the west and south of the current dwelling (Fig 2) has undergone several changes. A machine dug sondage was excavated outside the stripped area to determine the build up of deposits in the modern garden. Overlying the natural clay, which occurred at a depth of 0.45m below the garden level, were all re-deposited building and domestic rubbish layers. A second sondage (Fig 13) showed the natural clay was encountered at a depth of 0.30m and was overlaid by re-deposited soil, containing large quantities of modern refuse including glass, tile, brick, and plastic (disturbed ground).

Within this layer were iron crooks varying in sizes from 0.23m to 0.36m in length (Fig 18, see below, section 5.4).

The ground has been disturbed to such a degree that no one layer could be determined except for the modern garden soil. This would indicate that the ground had been leveled to create a modern garden.

Local residents and members of the parish council have mentioned that the previous owners of the property had garden open days, and regular changes and additions were added to the garden's appearance on a yearly basis.

4.8 Additional information

The deposits that covered most of the archaeology were laid down within the last century since the barn was demolished and the gardens established.

Investigating possible surfaces within the development area had shown the extent of modern disturbance on the site. More recent disturbances to the rear of the current dwelling including a large underground water storage tank, septic tanks, domestic gas tank, drainage pipes and armoured cable which had been dug into the ground to provide electricity around the garden.

5 THE FINDS

5.1 Bricks by Joe Prentice

The sample contains two complete bricks from the sondage to the south-east of the eastern barn (Fig 13):

A brick with a single vitrified header with a dark red/purple body containing large inclusions (up to 10mm), 220mm x 105mm x 68mm (8.75 x 4 x 2.75 inches). It is highly fired and is typical of the type of brick used in 18th/early 19th-century walls which utilised such bricks to form patterns, either randomly or pepper-pot fashion. It is not closely datable. It has been used as there are traces of mortar on five of the six faces.

A bullnose single with a pale red/orange body with small inclusions (2-5mm) measures 220mm x 105mm x 65mm (8.75 x 4 x 2.5 inches). This type of brick was used to form the arris of a door, window jamb, wall corner or pier and has one curved corner so that animals (or people) were less likely to injure themselves on the sharp edge. They are predominantly found in agricultural buildings, but are also used in domestic structures. It has a horizontal skintling mark on the opposite side to that of the curve, and all faces apart from the curved face bear traces of mortar. Both the horizontal skintling and bullnose form indicate a 19th century date, most likely between c1820-1890.

Two fragments are of the same fabric as the vitrified header.

All are likely to have been made locally as this part of the county had many small brick kilns and disused brick pits remain close by, indeed, the HER for Stagsden (No 7290) lists a clay pit at Broadmead Farm c150m to the east of this site.

5.2 Pottery by Iain Soden

A total of 58 sherds in eight types and weighing 1.246kg were recovered from four contexts, spanning from the medieval period to the early 20th century, mostly at the end of this period. The types recovered, related to the former Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service Type Series (BTS) are as follows:

BTS B07	Shelly ware (source unknown- medieval), including five joining fragments of a single roof ridge tile.
BTS P02	Glazed red earthenware (c1500-1700)
BTS P03	Midland Blackware (c1600-1800)
BTS P36B	Nottingham stoneware (c1700-1900)
BTS P50	Miscellaneous English stoneware (c1880-1920)
BTS -	Unglazed flower pot (stamped 'Sankey and Bulwell Nottingham' c1850-1950)
BTS P45	Underglaze blue transfer-printed earthenwares (c1800-1900)
BTS P55	Miscellaneous glazed earthenwares (c1800-1920)

The pottery found by context is as follows:

Table 2: Pottery by fabric, context and weight (g)

Type/context	604	605	618	633
B07	9 / 273g		6 / 65g	1 / 8g
P02	4 / 114g			
P03	1 / 209g			
P36B	1 / 10g			
P50	13 / 218g	5 / 132g		
Flower pot	1 / 43g			
P45	7 / 81g			
P55	9 / 83g	1 / 10g		
Context	c1900	c1900	13th-century	13th-century
TPQ				

This small assemblage is not significant and has no intrinsic value. Ditch [619] and cobbled surface (633), on the basis of pottery alone, may date from as early as the 13th century, unless the stratification dictates otherwise. However, layers (604) and (605) appear to contain secondary dumped material, accumulated during the early 20th century.

This material confirms the results of earlier evaluation, that there is little evidence for domestic occupation before the 19th century, although some dumped secondary material derives from earlier. Its source is unknown. There is the merest background of medieval material including part of a single roof tile; this is in very small quantities indeed.

5.3 Ceramic tile by Pat Chapman

Roof tile

There are three examples of ceramic roof tile, weighing just 310g. The largest sherd, broken into two, comes from posthole (611). It is c12mm thick, made from a hard coarse sandy orange fabric with occasional small grog and rare tiny calcareous inclusions. One surface has streaks and a lump of mortar, further mortar adheres to the old broken edges. This could be dated as early as the 15th century, although as a style it could be as late as the 17th century.

From cobbled surface (604), come two sherds. One sherd, broken into three pieces, is 13mm thick, made from a harsh sandy fabric fired to a pinkish brown skin with purplish coarse surfaces and a broad black core, with inclusions of dense flint and calcareous material up to 3mm. There is remnant mortar along the edge. The second sherd is quite different. It is 12mm thick, made from a fine silty clay fired to pinkish-orange with a thin dark grey core and occasional fine calcareous inclusions. The surfaces are very smooth, one has fine white streaks, the other has been covered with a black slip. These tiles are probably 17th century in date at the earliest, and could be as late as the early 19th century.

Floor tile

The corner of one quarry tile, from cobbled surface (604), is 23mm thick, made from very hard dense slightly fine clay fired to dark reddish purple with dark purple brown surfaces, the top surface is very smooth and shiny.

Pipe

This small sherd, from (604), is 20mm thick, has a shallow curve and is manufactured in hard white clay with frequent tiny grit, and coated with a dark brown glaze. It was originally a drain pipe.

These two items are 19th to 20th century in date.

5.4 Ecofacts by Karen Deighton

Three samples were collected by hand during the course of the excavation. This material was assessed to ascertain the presence, nature and level of preservation of ecofacts. The potential contribution to the understanding of the site was considered.

The samples were processed using a modified siraf tank fitted with a 250micron mesh and flot sieve. Any resulting flots were dried and examined under a microscope (10x magnification).

Plant remains were preserved by charring only and were fragmentary and abraded. The taxa present are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Ecofacts by sample and context

Cut/fill	639	638	641
Sample	1	2	3
Feature	Posthole		Posthole
Date			
Volume	10	20	10
Charcoal*	4	2	5
Indet weed		1	1
Molluscs	5	2	1

*Key for Charcoal: 1= present, 2=2-10, 3=10-20, 4=20-50, 5=50-100, 6=100-200, 7=200-300, 8=300-500, 9=500-1000, 10=1,000+

The small amount of charcoal and coal present and its fragmented nature suggests the samples to represent "background" i.e. material washed or blown into features from activities taking place elsewhere. Molluscs were too few in number and taxa to provide any reliable evidence concerning the environment of the site.

Assessment has shown a small amount and limited range of poorly preserved ecofacts. Therefore further work would be of limited value and none is recommended.

5.5 Crooks (Thatching Pins) by Jim Burke

The iron thatching pins, also called crooks, would have been made by a local blacksmith. Most of the farms within the local area had its own blacksmith's workshop, and a village blacksmith's workshop was also on the main High Street, Stagsden. This is labelled as a *smithy* (HER 7295, Figs 1 and 6) another name for a local blacksmith.

The crooks vary in size from 0.23m to 0.36m in length. The crooks were hammered to a pointed at one end, with a forged right angle hook on the other, and were used to hold the sway (a hazel or steel rod) to secure each batch of thatching material as tightly as possible to the rafters, crooks are still in use today.

6 DISCUSSION

The foundations and surfaces dating from the 19th century survive only in a small section of the development area. This has been subjected to the construction of the 19th and 20th-century buildings and groundworks relating to garden layout within the development area.

Previous trial trenching indicated the remains of an agricultural building within the development area, and subsequent excavation confirmed that two barn foundations survived in the development area. Dating evidence from around the barns indicated that these were probably of late 18th century date. Although the wording in the 1921 Crown Estate Sale Catalogue refers to a Tithe Barn on the site, this appears to have been used in name only, since documentary evidence suggests that no tithe barn was present in the village after 1651. No other archaeological features dating to earlier than the 18th century were present in the excavated area, though pottery indicates the presence of human activity on or close to the site from the medieval period. However, this material comes from disturbed leveling layers and it cannot be certain that the soil has not been imported.

Historic information relating to the barns and surrounding property indicates that they were present from at least 1783 and predates the 1828 enclosure of the property boundaries of Stagsden.

The evidence from the historic maps shows that the smaller western end of the barn was demolished at some point between 1884 and 1901. Both the photograph in Figure 13, taken after 1867, and the 1884 Ordnance Survey map clearly show the barns extending to the south of the Church Rooms. Although this western part of the barn was demolished first, its foundations remain largely intact. Mapping from 1901 onwards show only the larger eastern section of the barn remained.

The final demolition of the eastern barn occurred between 1950-1960, based on historic and artefactual evidence and corroborated from anecdotal knowledge from Stagsden villagers who still remember the barn standing.

The site has been subject to extensive modern groundworks, relating mostly to the demolition of buildings and the construction of the existing houses.

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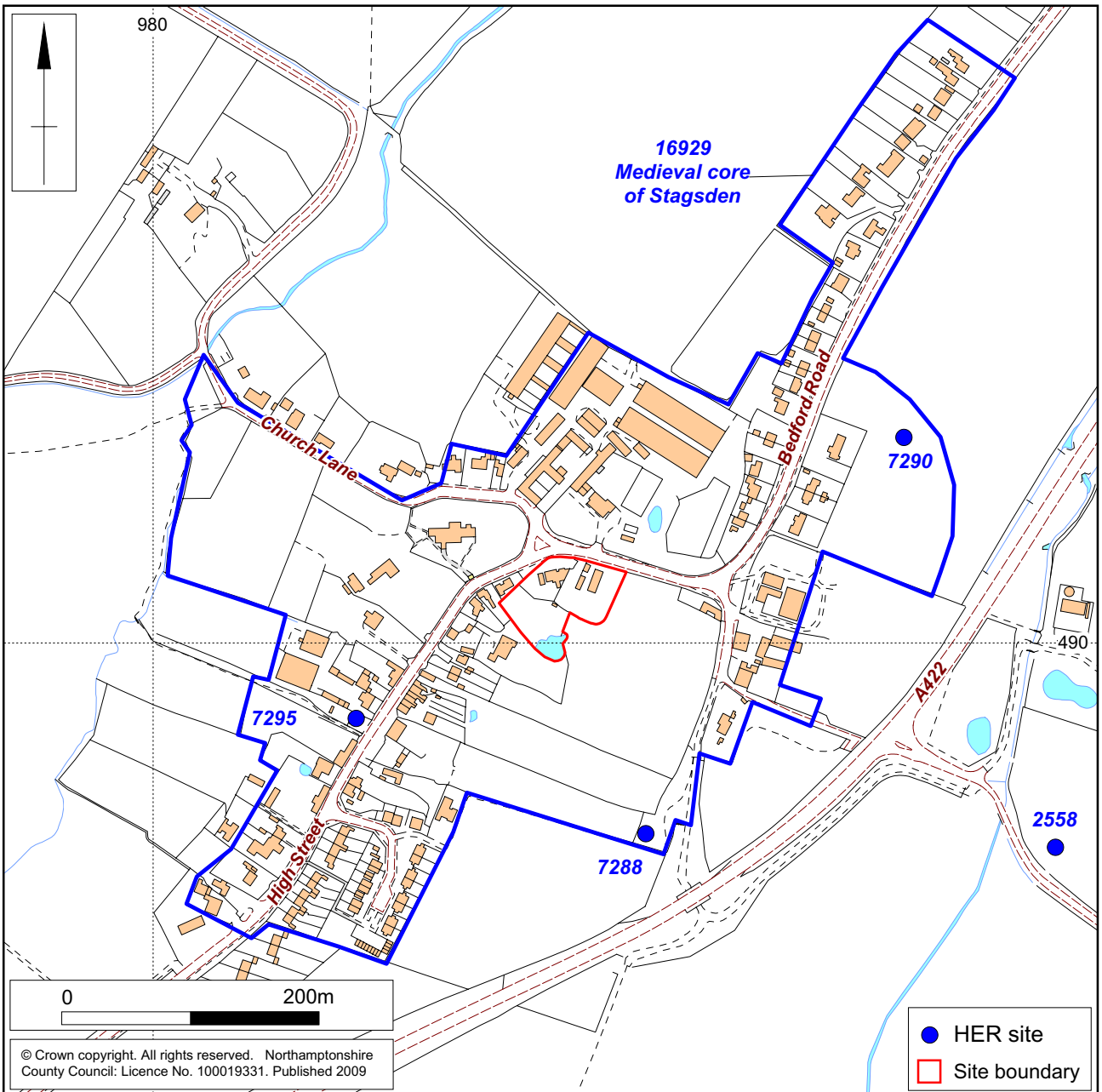
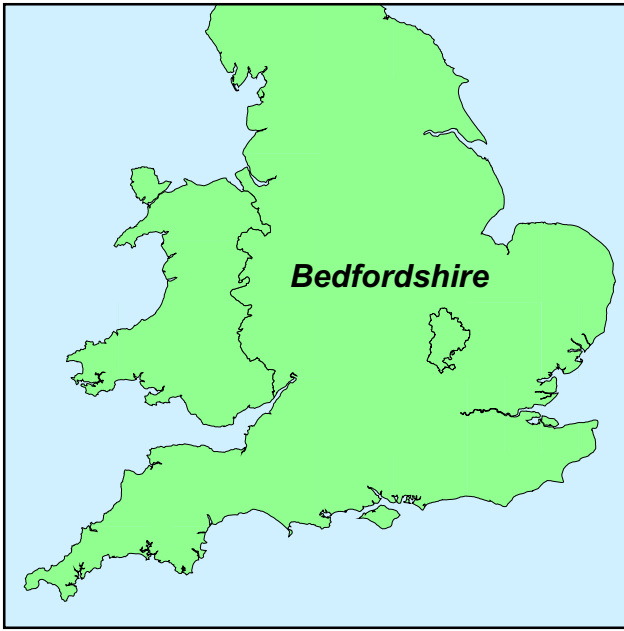
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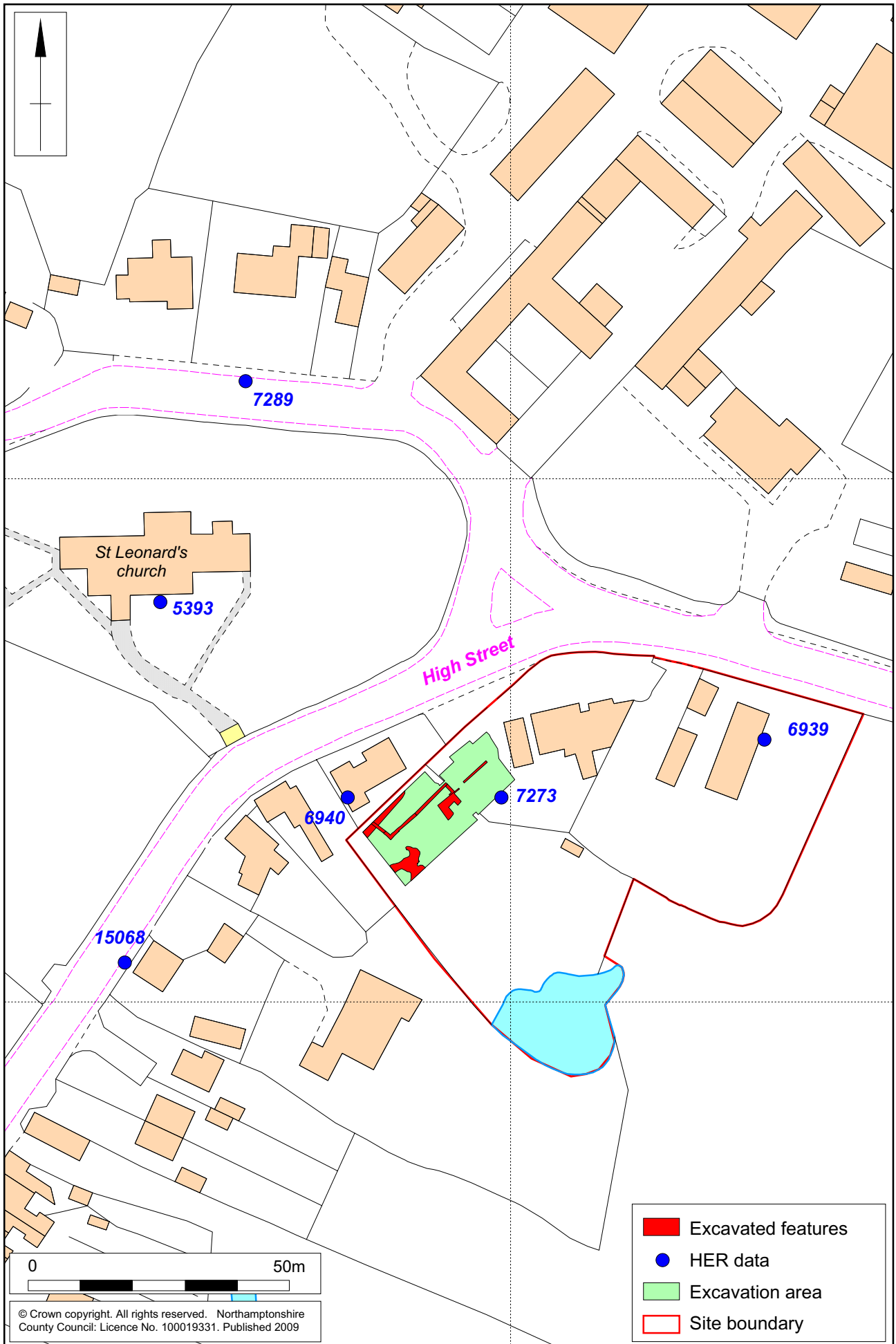
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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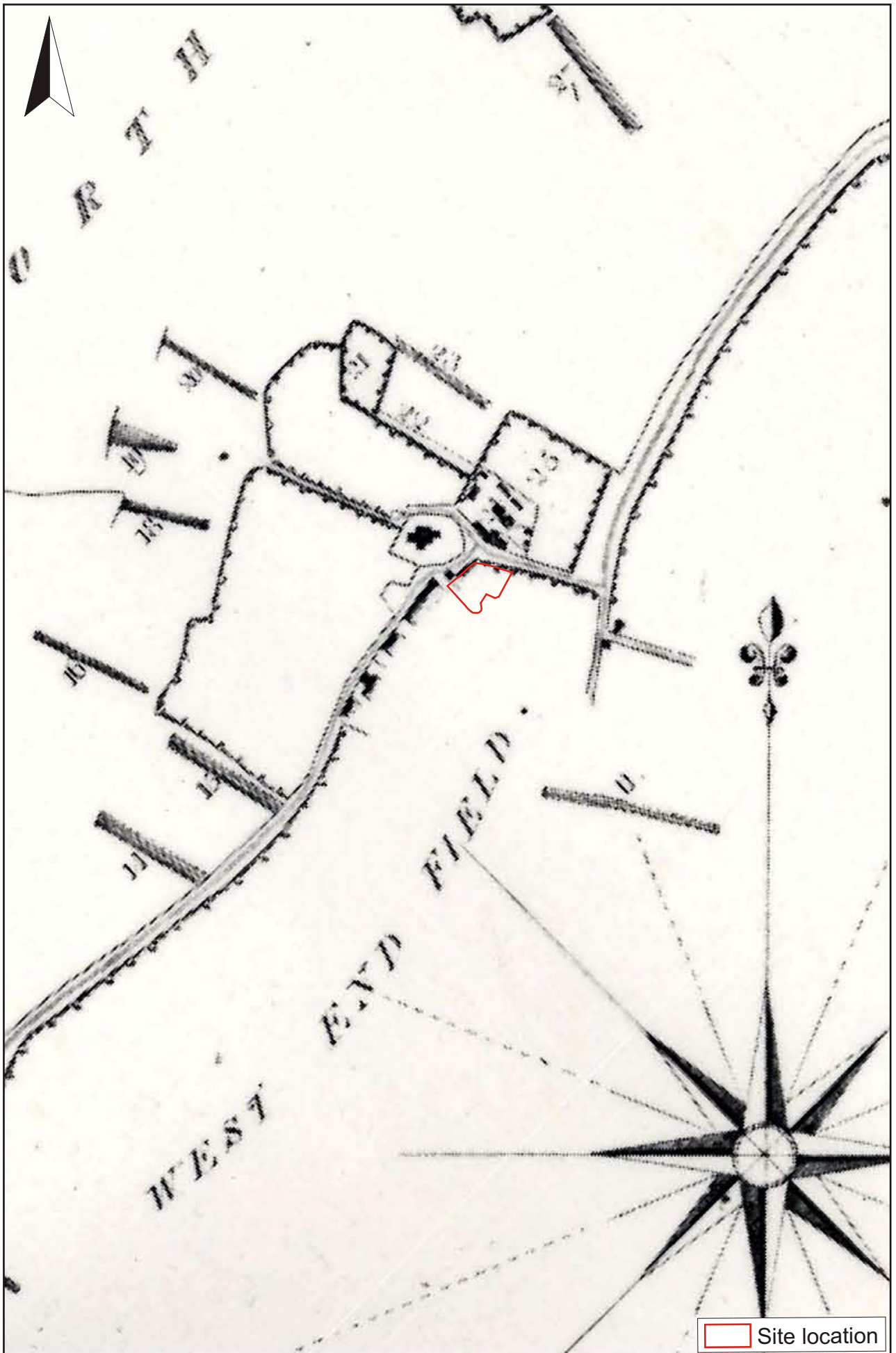
Site location and Historic Environment Record (HER) Fig 1



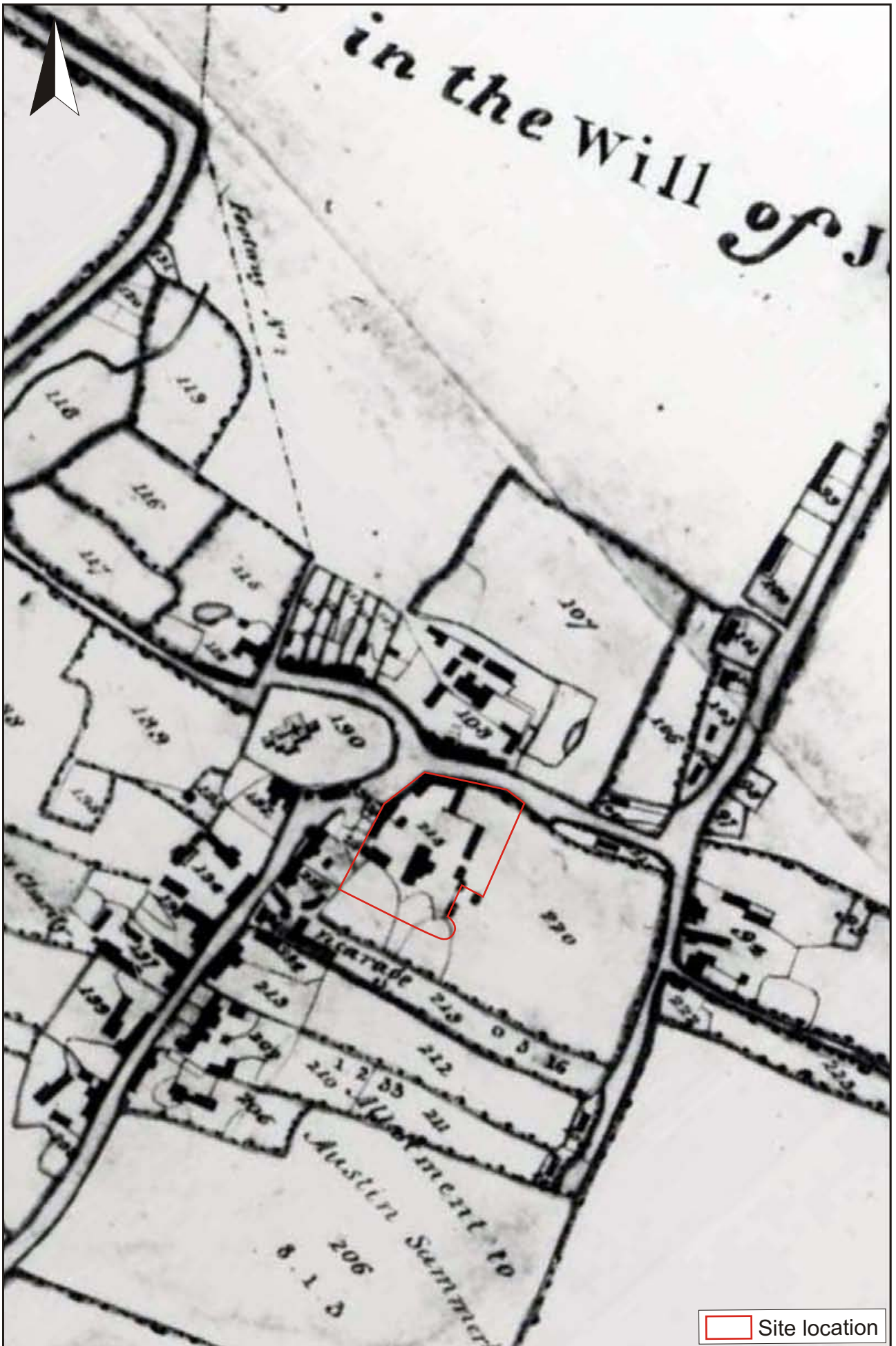
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Historic Environment Record (HER) Fig 2

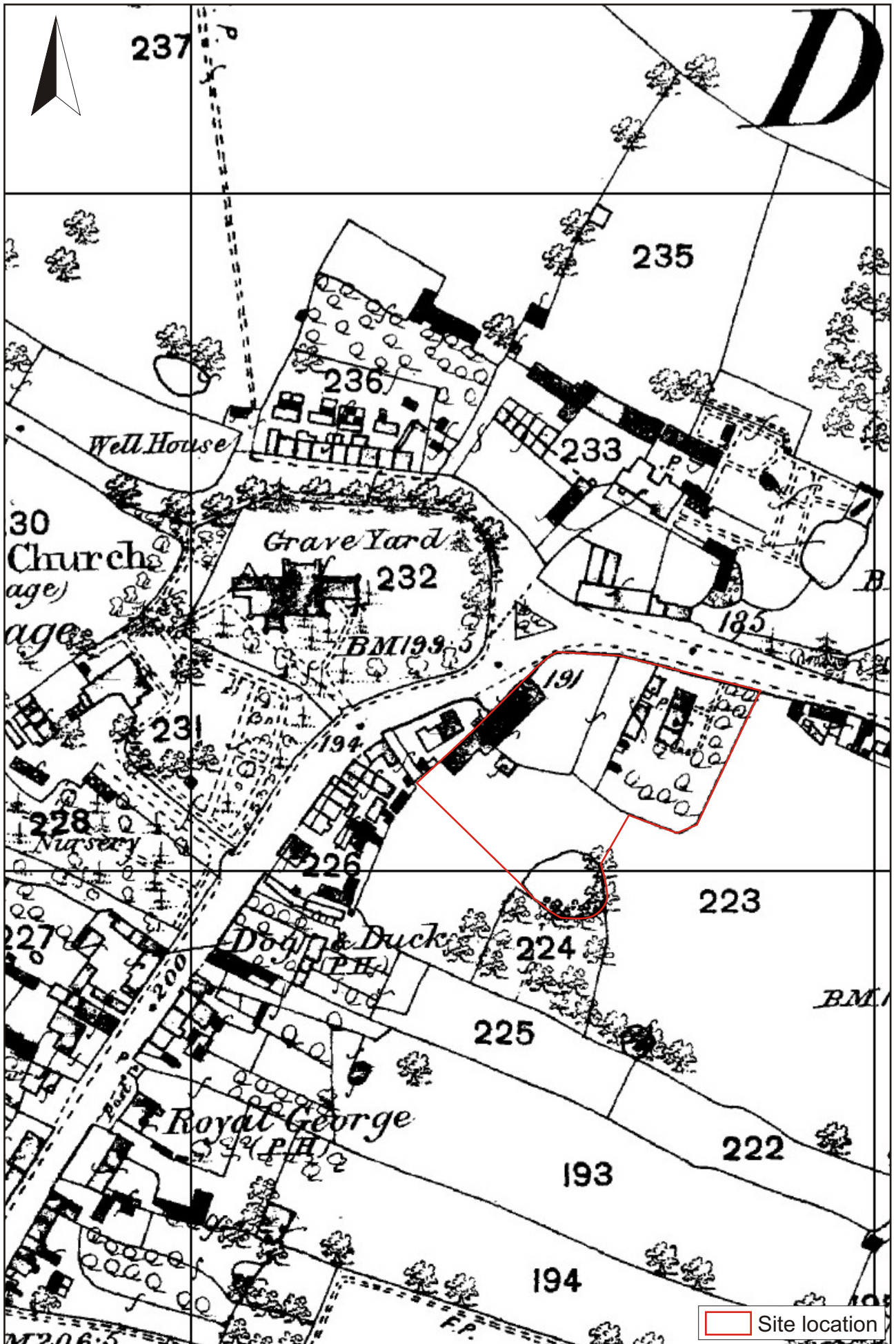
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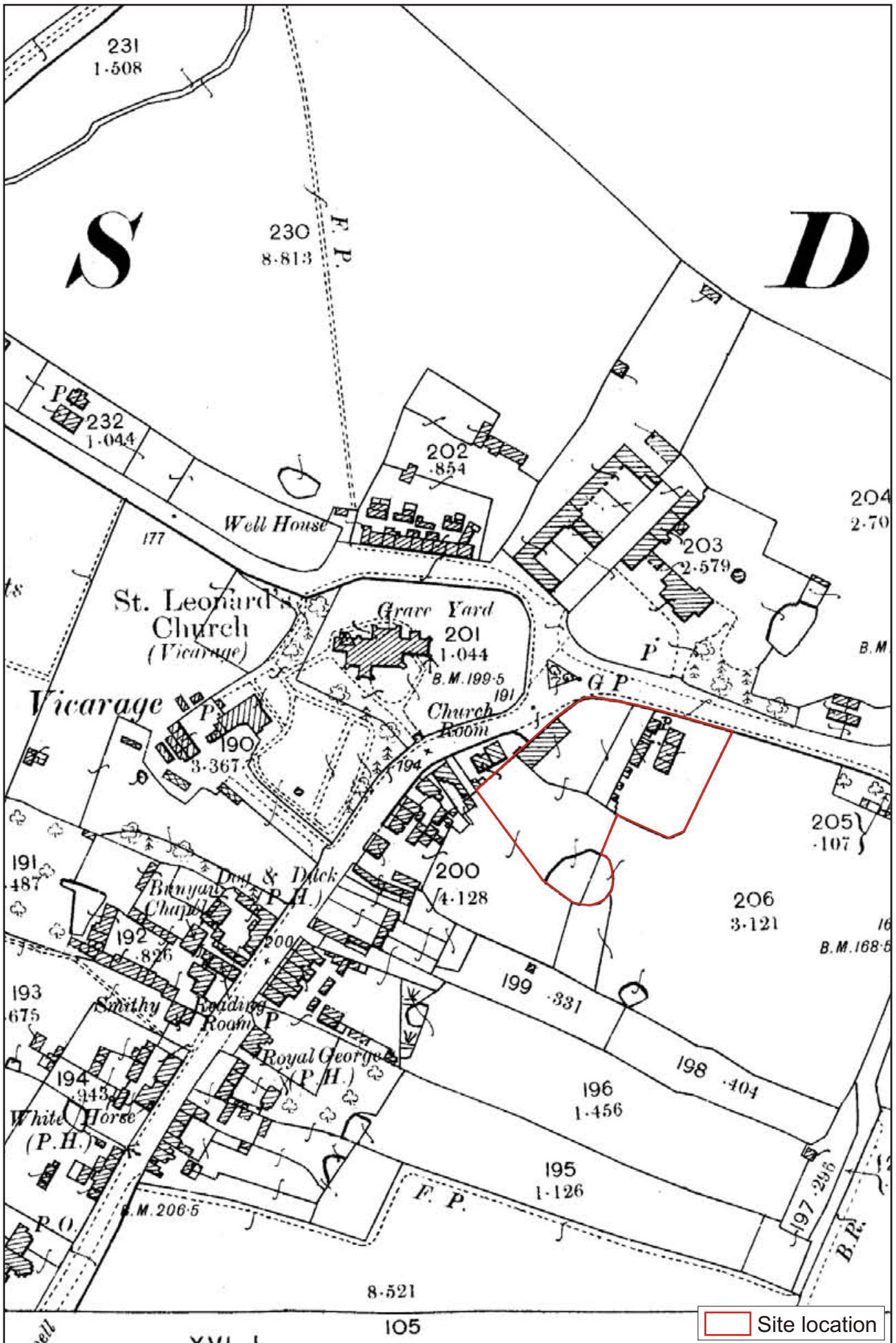
Detail from Estate Map of 1799-1800 Fig 3



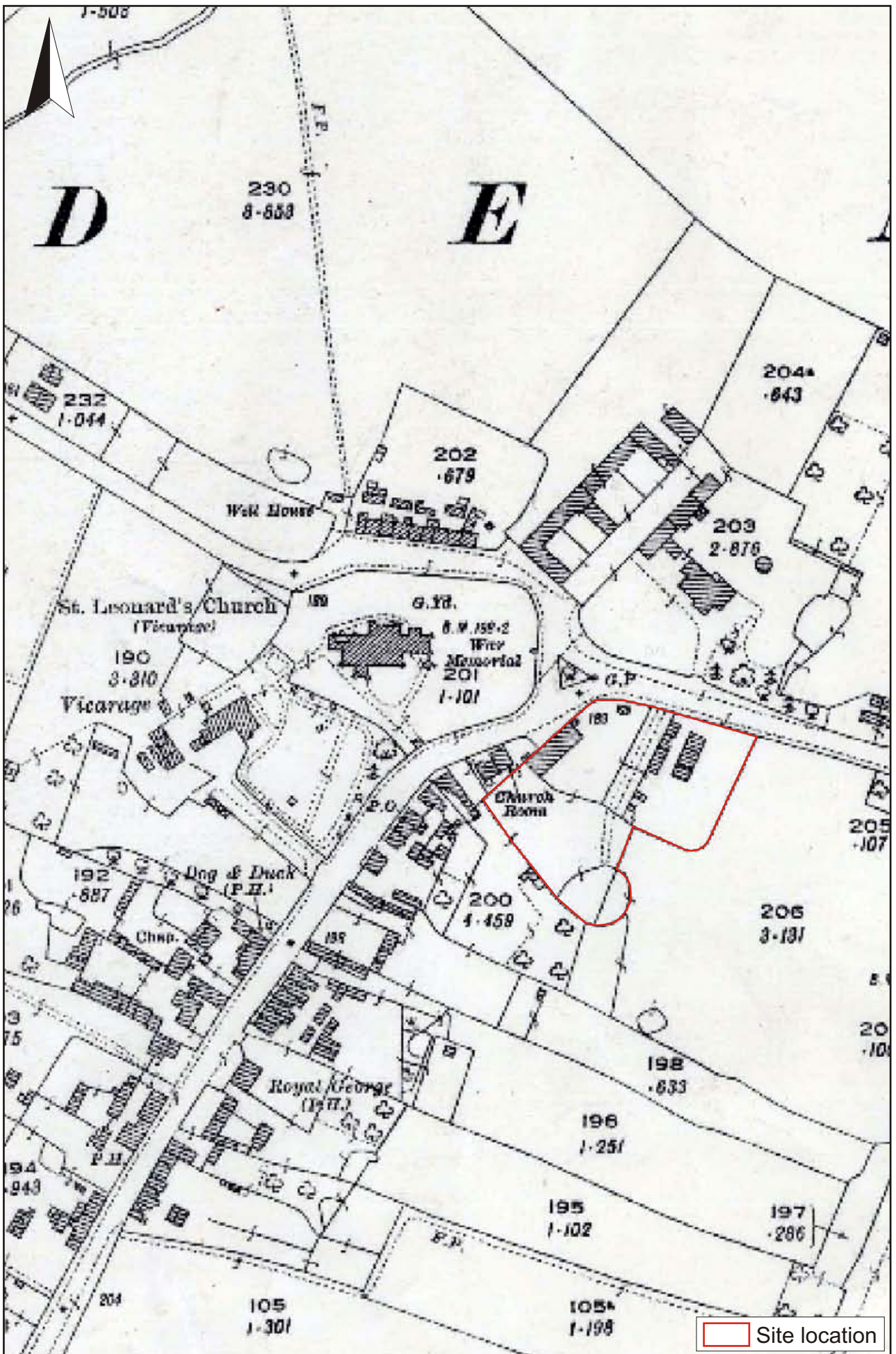
Detail from enclosure map of 1828 (CRO MA53) Fig 4



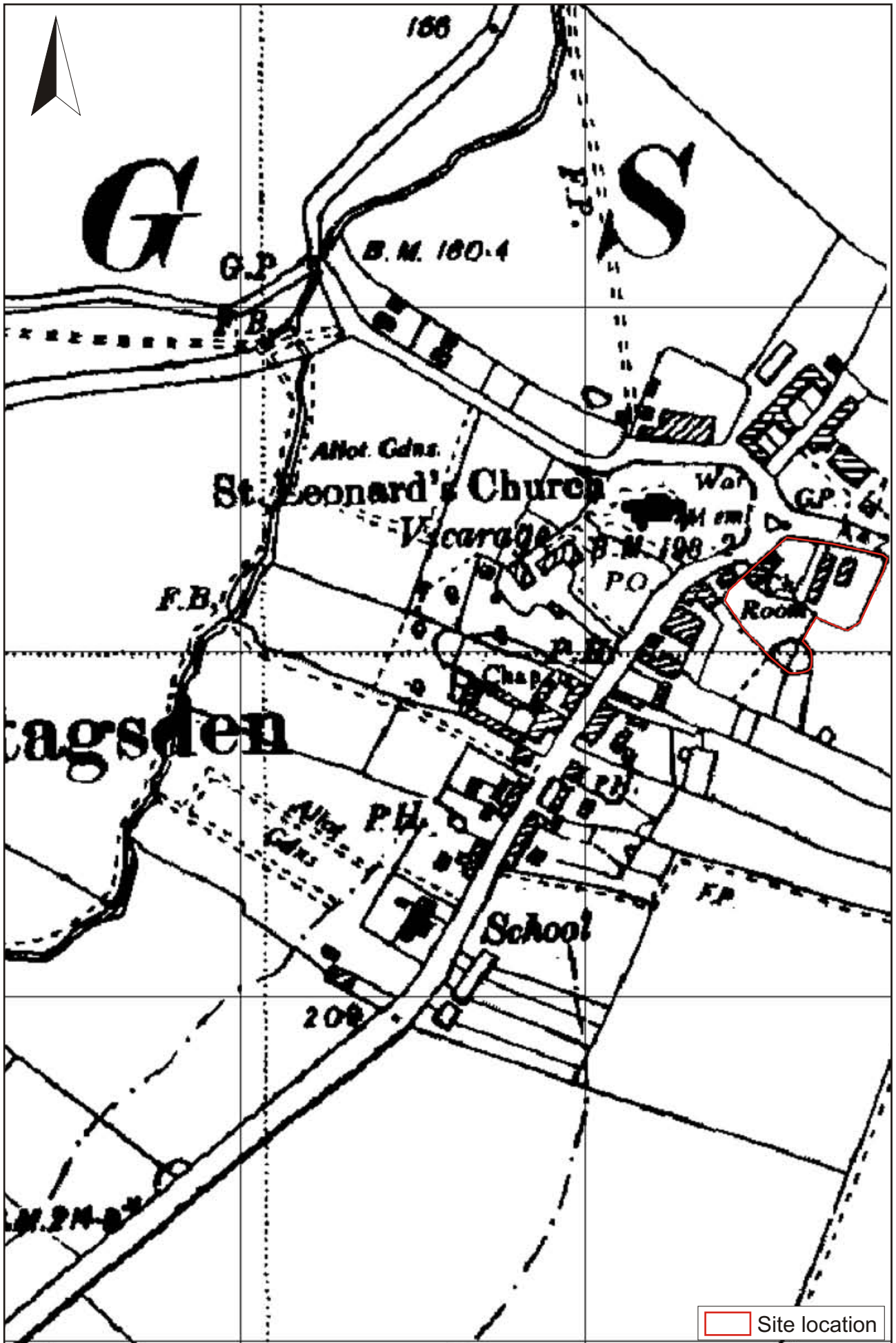
Detail from 1st edition Ordnance Survey map 1884 Fig 5



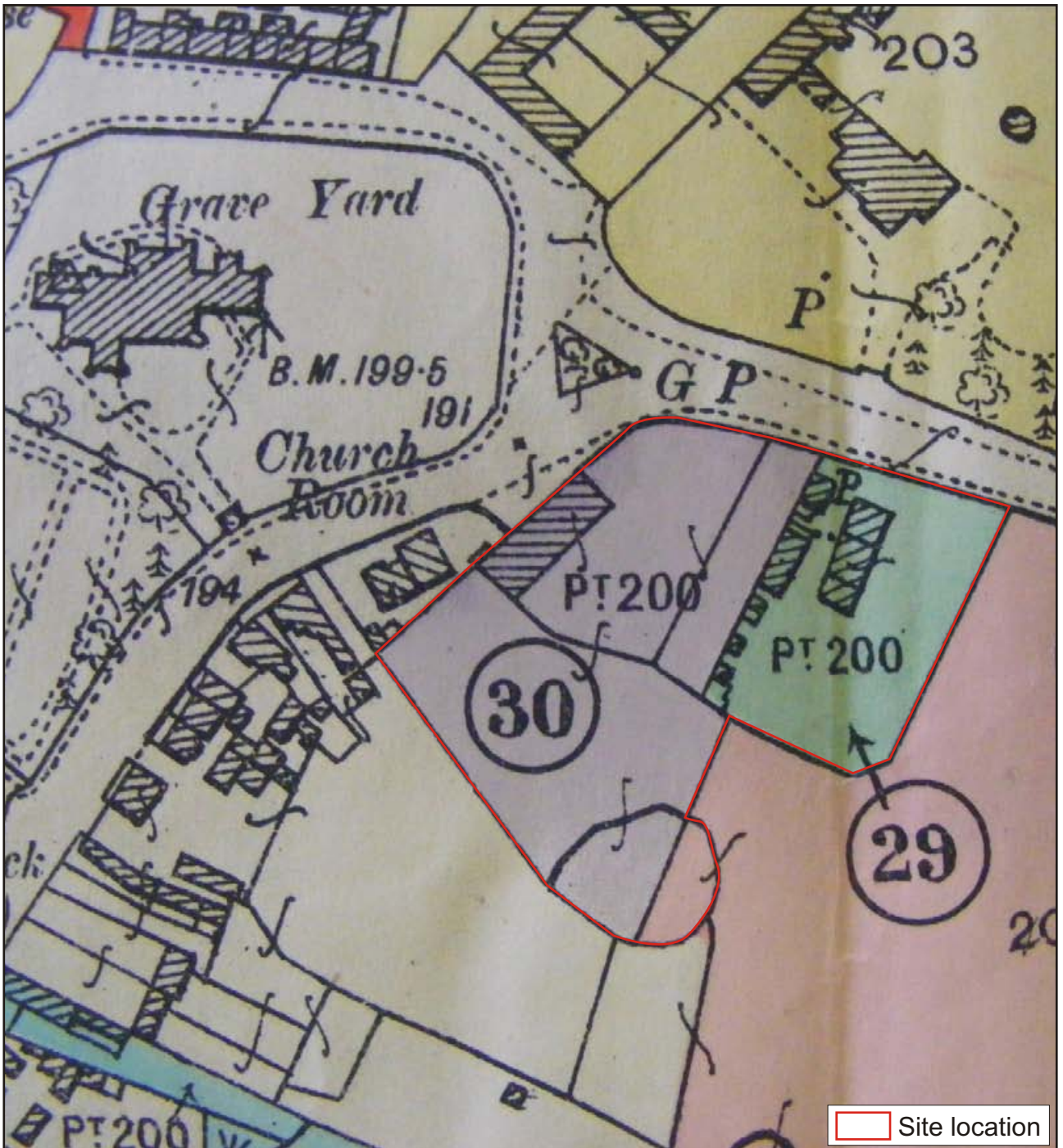
Detail from 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map 1901 Fig 6



Detail from 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map 1926 Fig 7



Detail from Ordnance Survey Map 1950 Fig 8



Detail from 1921 Crown Estate Sales Catalogue Fig 9



Photograph of the Church Rooms , with the barn in the background
late 19th-century (pre 1898)

Fig 10

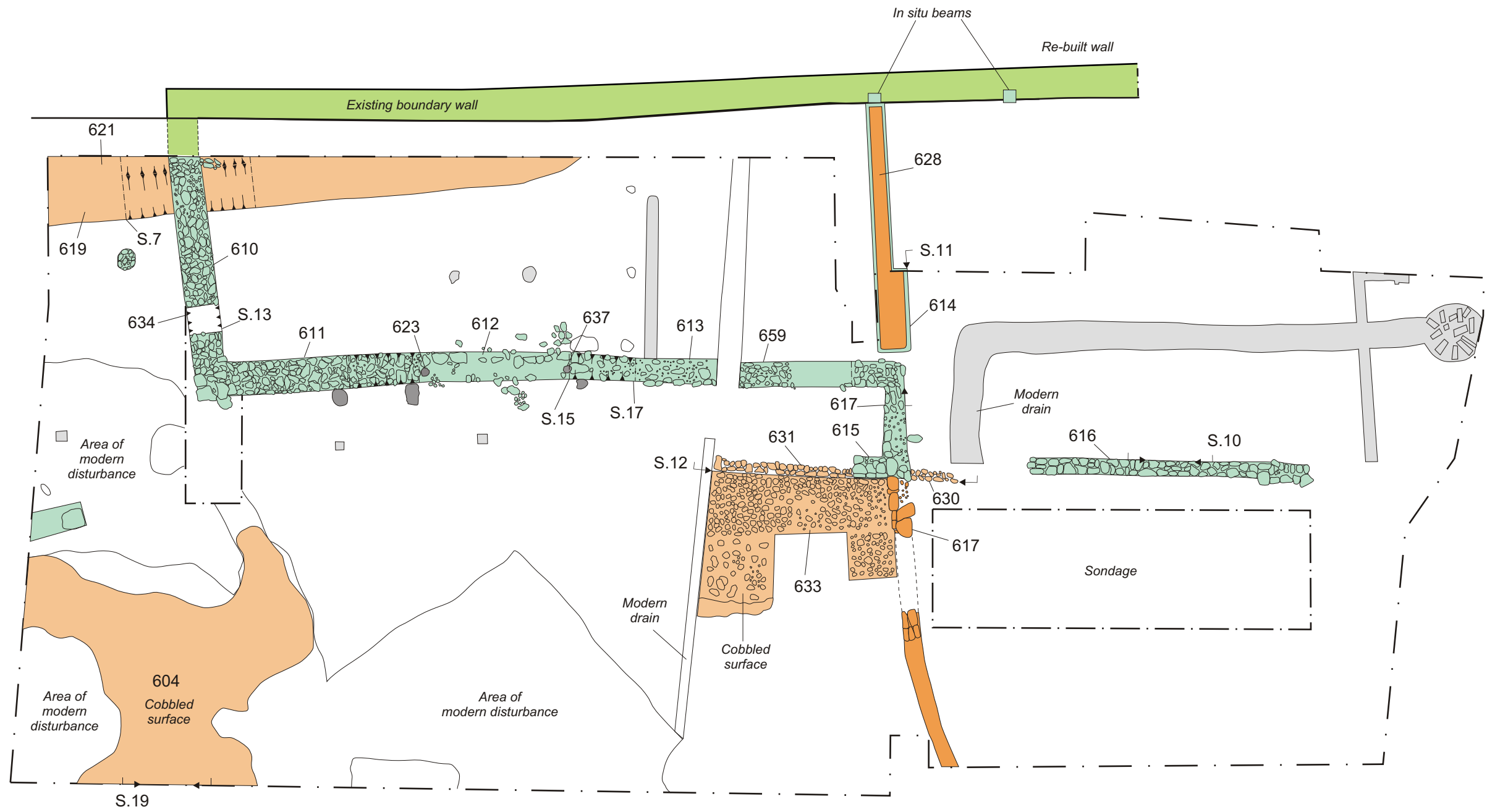


Photograph of the Church Rooms taken after the extensions in 1898
probably 1940s or later. The Western barn is no longer present

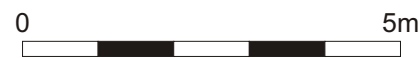
Fig 11



The eastern Barn can clearly be seen right, with the church rooms left, Fig 12
the date of the motorbike is around 1940

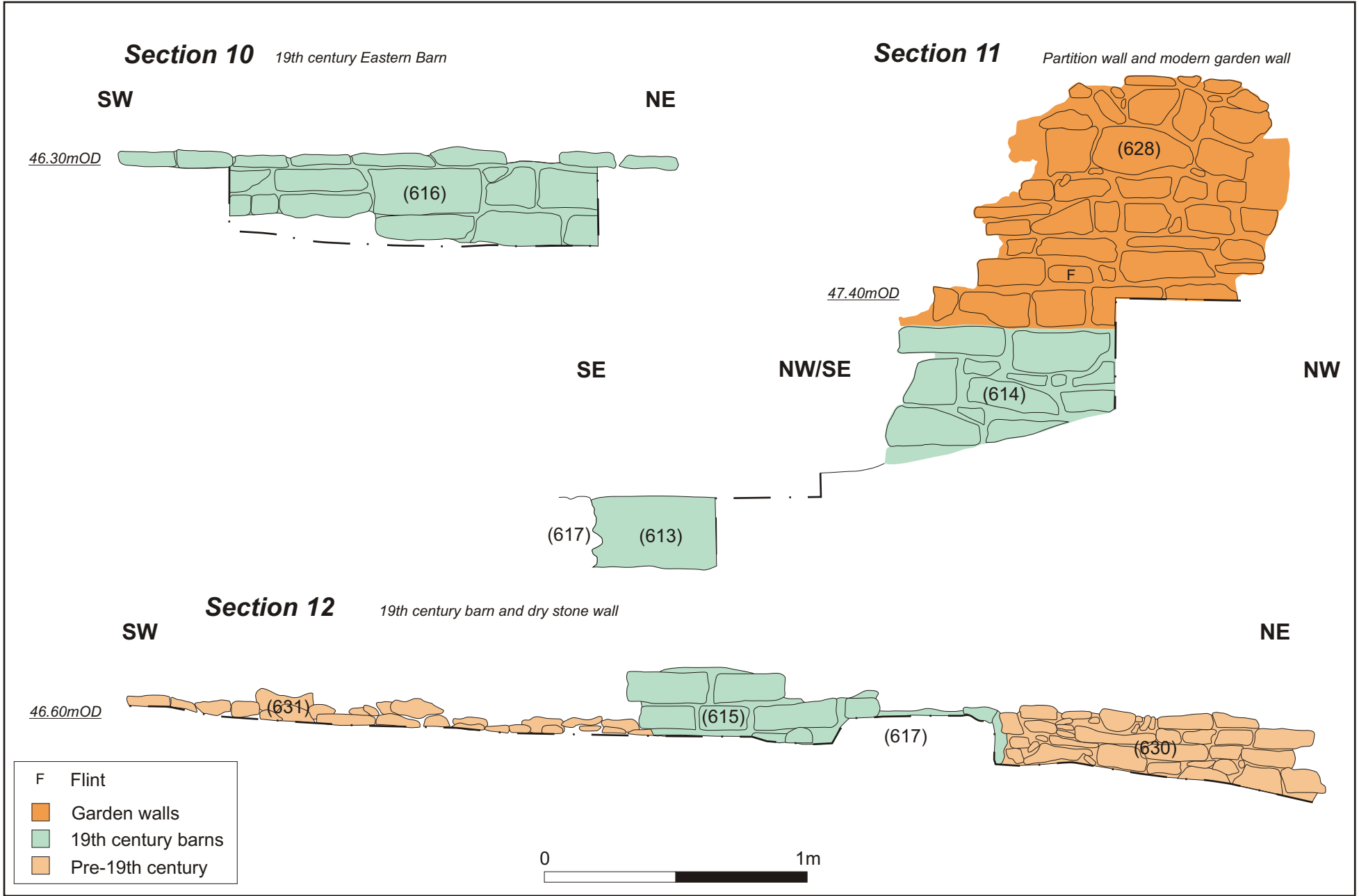


- Existing boundary wall
- Garden walls
- Modern
- 19th century barns
- Pre-19th century

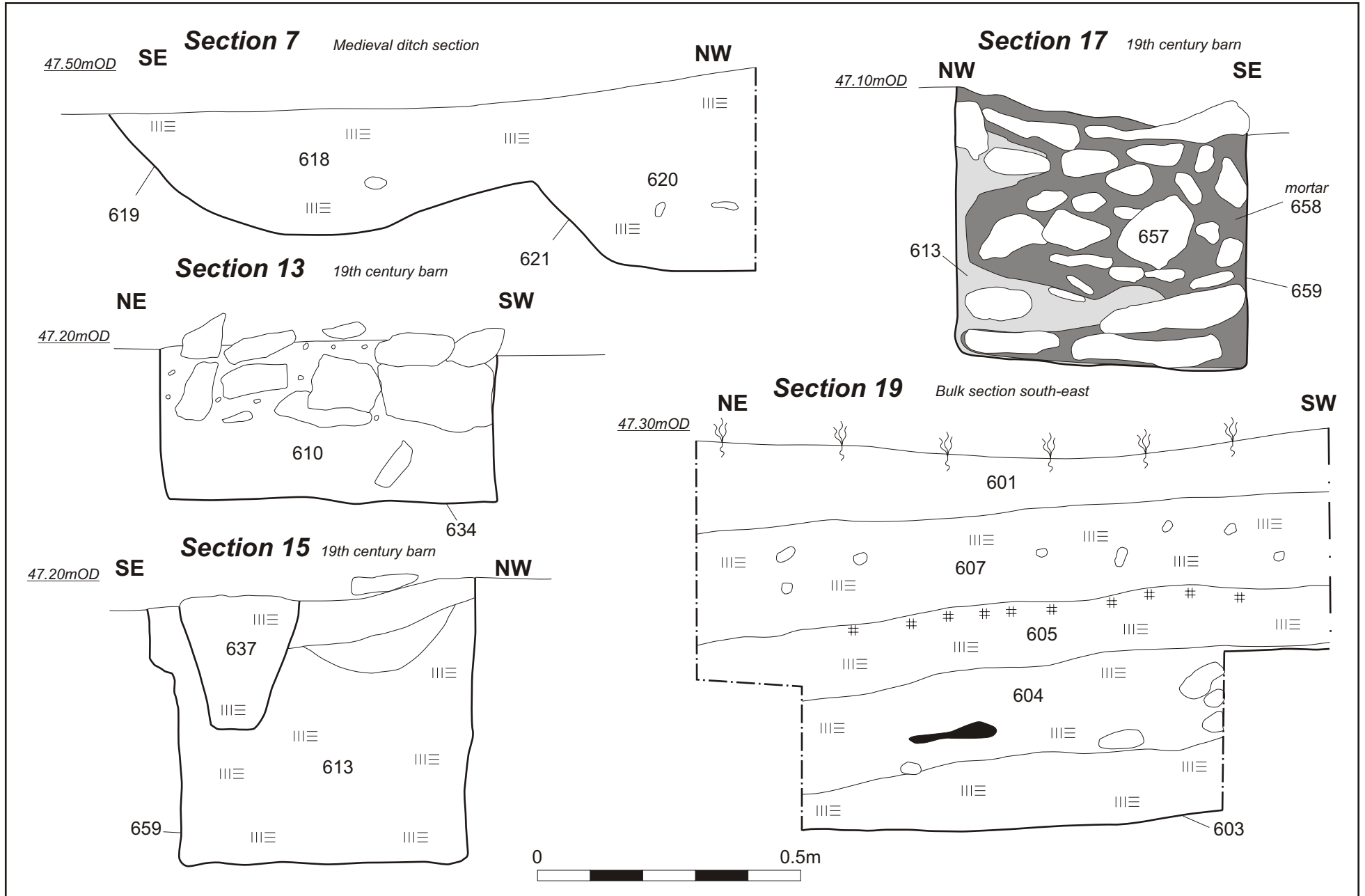


The excavated barns Fig 13

Sections 10, 11, 12, showing wall elevations Fig 14



Sections of medieval ditch, barn wall foundations and cobbled surface Fig 15





Dry-stone wall (631) and cobbled surface (633), looking north-west

Fig 16



Cobbled surface (604), looking north-west

Fig 17



Thatching pins (Crooks)

Fig 18



19th-century barn foundations, western end, and ditches [619] and [621]

Fig 19



General view of 19th-century barn foundations looking west

Fig 20



General view showing the alignment of the earlier wall (630,631) and the later foundations (615) looking south-west

Fig 21



19th-century barn foundations (616), (Fig14 Section 10) looking north-west Fig 22



Surviving wall of the 19th-century barn, viewed from the Church Rooms, looking south-east Fig 23



The eastern barn second bay from development site looking north

Fig 24



Surviving wall of the 19th-century barn viewed from Church Rooms looking south

Fig 25



The eastern barn third bay and wall rebuild from the development area, looking north-west

Fig 26



Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology



The Stagsden village sign in old Norman; Stachedene

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