

Henley Baptist Church
55-57 Market Place
Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



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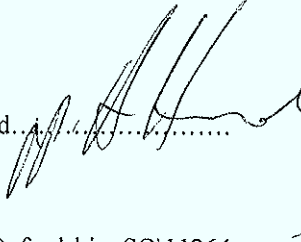
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**Henley Baptist Church,
55-57 Market Place,
Henley,
Oxfordshire**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	2
1 Introduction.....	2
1.1 Scope of work.....	2
1.2 Location, geology and topography.....	2
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	3
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	3
2.1 Aims.....	3
2.2 Methodology.....	3
3 Results.....	4
3.1 Description of deposits.....	4
3.2 Finds.....	6
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains.....	7
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	7
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory.....	9
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References.....	10
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	10

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
- Fig. 2 Plan of works
- Fig. 3 Sections
- Fig. 4 1826 plan of site
- Fig. 5 1877 plan of site
- Fig. 6 1925 plan of site

Front cover: South elevation of the church

SUMMARY

Between November 2009 and February 2010, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Henley Baptist Church, 55-57 Market Place, Henley, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 7591 8257). The work was commissioned by the Stephen Birch Practice Ltd in advance of the construction of a new single storey building and extensions to the main hall. The watching brief revealed a well, brick paths and brick foundations associated with the sites previous usage as a malthouse during the 19th century. No evidence for any earlier activity on the site was encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Between November 2009 and February 2010, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Henley Baptist Church, 55-57 Market Place, Henley, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 7591 8257). The work was commissioned by the Stephen Birch Practice Ltd in advance of the construction of a new single storey buildings and side and rear extensions to the main hall.

1.1.2 Richard Oram, the County Planning Archaeologist, part of the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (OCAS), produced a brief specifying the work required (OCAS 2009).

1.1.3 OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) showing how it would meet these requirements (OA 2009).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.1.4 The town of Henley is situated approximately 7.5 km north of the city of Reading (Fig. 1). The church is located on the south side of Market Place which runs east-west across the northern edge of Henley.

1.1.5 Market Place slopes to the east running from 48 m above OD at its western end down to 36 m as it approaches the River Thames. The church lies at approximately 44 m OD. Market Place would have been centrally placed within Henley during the medieval and early post-medieval periods, but 19th-and 20th-century developments have displaced the centre of the town southwards.

1.1.6 The church and the development area was formerly commercial property, including a malthouse. The site of the new build had been used as gardens prior to construction starting.

1.1.7 The underlying geology of the application site is Thames floodplain alluvium over gravels and Upper Chalk (Geological Survey of England and Wales, sheet no 254).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI (OA, 2009) and is reproduced below.

- 1.1.8 The proposed site lies within an area of burgage plots south of the market place, an area that was part of the medieval planned town. The building itself is grade II listed and dates to the C18th (PRN 10311). The street frontages also mainly date from this period but would certainly have been built up by the 15th century. The site is located 60m SW of the site of the medieval Guildhall which was rebuilt in 1487, evidently with shops under it (PRN 9470)(SU 7593 8262). Medieval foundations have been recorded south of the Market Place to the east of this application site (PRN 26015) (SU 7612 8259). This proposal may therefore affect archaeological deposits within the burgage plot that may be associated with frontage development dating from the medieval and post-medieval periods (OCAS 2009).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 1.1.9 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 1.1.10 To preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits that may be disturbed or destroyed during the course of any groundworks.
- 1.1.11 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 1.1.12 The watching brief was undertaken as a series of site visits during those works that were likely to impinge or damage any potential archaeological deposits or features. These works included the reduction of ground levels, excavation of foundation pits and trenches and the excavation of associated service trenches.
- 1.1.13 A plan showing the extent of any excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2, Site plan) and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 (Fig. 3, Sections). All excavations, any features and any recorded sections were photographed using digital photography, colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Section 1

- 1.1.14 This was located approximately 2 m north of the standing outbuilding, measured 0.8 m square and was excavated to a depth of up to 1.1 m below the current ground level.
- 1.1.15 The undisturbed natural, an orange-brown clay silt (6) was encountered at a depth of 0.95 m below the current ground level (Fig. 3, Section 1).
- 1.1.16 Overlying this was a 0.15 m deep layer of brown clay silt containing many pebbles (5). This was overlaid by a 0.5 m deep layer of light brown clay silt (4). Built directly upon this layer was a brick floor (3) constructed of a mixture of two types of hand moulded bricks measuring 0.22 m x 0.106 m x 0.06 m and 0.231 m x 0.11 m x 0.07 m respectively. The bricks were laid on a bed of lime mortar. This surface was overlaid by a 0.2 m deep layer of demolition debris including bricks and corrugated iron sheeting (2). A 0.3 m deep layer of dark brown silt loam containing bricks and corroded iron objects (1) completed the section.

Section 2

- 1.1.17 This was located adjacent to the rear (southern) boundary wall and was excavated to a depth of 1.1 m below the existing ground level.
- 1.1.18 The underlying natural clay (6) was encountered at a depth of 0.85 m below the current ground level. This was sealed by a 0.14 m deep continuation of layer 5. Overlying this was a 0.15 m deep layer of light brown clay silt, a continuation of layer 4. This layer was overlaid by a layer of light red-brown silt clay loam, 0.15 m deep (8). This layer contained fragments of brick and mortar flecking and probably represents a demolition layer. Overlying layer 8 was a 0.2 m deep layer of dark grey-brown silt loam (7), a probable layer of worked soil. This was sealed by a 0.25 m deep continuation of Layer 1. Cutting Layer 1 was a 0.5 m deep foundation trench (9). Built into this trench was a concrete footing supporting the brick and flint boundary wall (10). The remainder of the trench had been backfilled with loose dark brown sandy silt (11).

Section 3

- 1.1.19 This was located along the eastern edge of the new building, and was excavated to a depth of up to 1.1 m below the current ground level.
- 1.1.20 The natural (6) was encountered at a depth of 0.6 m below ground level. This was overlaid with a 0.2 m deep continuation of the earlier worked soil (5). This was sealed by a 0.35 m deep layer of light brown clay silt, a probable continuation of layer 4. Cutting this deposit was a steep sided cut (12), 1 m deep and over 0.8 m in width. This was filled by a grey-brown silt clay (13) containing numerous broken bricks. Sealing this was a 0.1 m deep layer of dark brown silt loam, a continuation of layer

(1).

Section 4

1.1.21 This was located on the inside corner of the new build, measured 0.9 m square and was excavated to a depth of 1.1 m. The natural, (6), was encountered at a depth of 1 m below the level of the current ground level. This was overlaid by a continuation of layer 5, up to 0.35 m in depth. Built on top of this deposit was a brick surface (14). This was constructed using hand moulded bricks 0.23 m x 0.11 m x 0.07 m in size bonded with lime mortar. Overlying this was a 0.25 m deep layer of light brown clay silt, a continuation of layer 4. Sealing this was the present day topsoil (1) 0.3 m in depth.

Section 5

1.1.22 This was located adjacent to the western boundary wall of the plot and was excavated to a depth of 1.1 m below the current ground level.

1.1.23 The underlying natural was encountered at a depth of 0.4 m. This was cut by a small pit, 0.4 m deep and approximately 1 m in diameter (19). The base of this feature was filled by a 0.2 m deep layer of broken brick in a grey-brown silt matrix (18). Overlying this was a 0.2 m deep layer of light grey-brown clay silt containing chalk and lime mortar flecking (17). The pit was sealed by the layer of light brown clay silt (4), 0.25 m deep. This deposit was cut by the 0.25 m deep linear vertical sided foundation trench (15). Built within this cut was the 2 m high western boundary wall (16), constructed using dressed flint blocks bound with a lime mortar. This wall had been repaired using hand moulded brick.

1.1.24 Sealing the foundation trench was the modern topsoil (1), 0.2 m deep.

Section 6

1.1.25 This was located 1.7 m south of the south-west corner of the church building.

1.1.26 The natural (6) was encountered at 0.6 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a continuation of layer 5, 0.15 m in depth. Built directly on top of this deposit was a single layer of bricks (20) laid on a lime mortar bed running north-south across the width of the pit. The hand moulded bricks measured 0.23 m x 0.11 m x 0.07 m. This feature was aligned with the rear door of the church. Sealing this feature was a 0.2 m deep continuation of layer 4. Overlying this was a 0.2 m deep continuation of the modern topsoil (1).

Section 7

1.1.27 This was located on the northern edge of the east wing of the new build.

1.1.28 The red-brown natural clay (6) was encountered at a depth of 0.85 m below the current ground level. Overlying this was a continuation of layer 5, which was 0.35 m deep. Cut into this deposit was a 0.28 m wide by 0.2 m foundation (22), which ran north-south into approximately the centre of the pit. Built within the cut was a stub

wall consisting of hand moulded bricks bonded with lime mortar. As on the rest of the site the bricks measured 0.23 m x 0.11 m x 0.07 m. Butting up to the eastern side of the of the wall was a 0.25 m deep layer of grey-brown clay silt (8) containing numerous fragments of brick.

- 1.1.29 Butting up to the western side of the wall was a 0.18 m deep layer of grey-brown clay silt containing mortar flecking. This is a probable continuation of layer 7. Sealing the wall and layers 7 and 8 was a 0.2 m continuation of layer 4. This was overlaid by the modern topsoil (1), 0.2 m in depth.

Service trench excavation

- 1.1.30 A deep trench was dug from the south-east corner of the church building in order to accommodate a new foul water pipe and sewer.
- 1.1.31 The underlying natural clay 6, was encountered at a depth of 0.8 m below the original ground level. Exposed within these excavations were a circular brick built well shaft (24) and an associated brick built square building (25), a probable well or pump house. Both these features had been demolished to a depth of approximately 1 m below ground level and the material used to backfill the well and the base of the well house.
- 1.1.32 The well was constructed using a plain hand moulded red brick measuring 0.231 m x 0.11 m x 0.07 m laid tangentially 2 bricks thick to form a vertical circular brick shaft approximately 1.6 m in diameter. Butting up to the well shaft was a roughly 2 m square building. This was built using similar bricks to the well laid using English stretcher bond and lime mortar. Both these structures were backfilled with a mixture of dark grey-brown clay loam and demolition debris (23). This was sealed below a 0.5 m deep continuation of the made ground (4), overlaid by the garden soil (1).

3.2 Finds

- 1.1.33 The majority of the dating evidence observed consisted of hand moulded red bricks, which can be divided into two size groups, 0.220 m x 0.106 m x 0.06 m and 0.231 m x 0.11 m x 0.07 m. These bricks probably originate in Nettlebed, 8 km to the north-west of Henley. The brick sizes give an age range from the late 18th to 19th centuries.
- 1.1.34 Fragments of stoneware and creamware pottery and moulded bottle glass were observed within the garden soils (Layers 1, 4 and 7). These can be dated to the 19th and early 20th centuries. Metal artefacts such as corrugated iron sheeting, iron pipework and window furniture were recovered from both the garden soils and the demolition layers (Layers 2, 8 and 23).
- 1.1.35 All the dating evidence recovered could be dated between the 18th and 20th centuries. The presence of these artefacts was recorded, but they were not retained.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 1.1.36 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the

course of the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 1.1.37 The results from the watching brief need to be considered in relation to known historical evidence. A map regression of the site from 1826 to the early 20th century (Figs. 4, 5 and 6) shows that the site has undergone several changes over the years.
- 1.1.38 The 1826 map (Fig. 4) accompanying the leasing contract from T and R Tyrell to William Dobson shows a long building (labelled as a “malthouse”) running down the length of the western edge of the site, from the rear of the original house up to the end of the timber framed building (still standing on site). This building (scaling from the present day dimensions of the site) was approximately 31.7 m long by 4.6 m wide.
- 1.1.39 The construction of the malthouse is unknown. If this structure had been of brick construction the number of foundation pads dug alongside the western boundary wall should have impacted on the foundations, or at least the robber trench if these had been grubbed out. The absence of this evidence suggests that it may have been a wooden structure, possibly resting on pads (either brick or stone) which were subsequently removed. It is possible that Pit 19 may represent one of these robbed out pads.
- 1.1.40 Straddling the present day southern boundary of the site is an un-labelled building approximately 9.2 m square. The north-west corner of the site is occupied by an “L” shaped building, measuring 11.2 m by 8.1 m, enclosing the yard of no 55. Butting up to the rear of this structure are two out buildings.
- 1.1.41 The disappearance of the square building and the construction of the boundary wall between the 1826 and 1877 maps gives a time frame for the construction of wall 10. As with the malthouse the absence of foundations for the square building suggest that it may also have been of wooden construction. A comparison of the plans suggests that the brick pier 21 is in approximately the right position to have supported the north wall of the structure. The layer of demolition debris 8 is possibly associated with its demolition. This event appears to be sealed by layer 4, which also seals surface 14 suggesting they are contemporary.
- 1.1.42 By 1877 when the site was conveyed from J. Sharp to Samuel Gestase for the sum of £590 (Fig. 5), the square building has disappeared and the present day southern boundary has been established. The malthouse is still in place, and the function of the outbuildings attached to the house has been defined. It is probable that the kiln used for drying the grain and stopping the malting process would have been built of brick and would have been of two storey construction. The building containing the cistern (a large stone tank used to steep the barley) and the couch (a flat area where the wet barley was stored until it germinated) may have been of either brick or wood framed construction. The “L” shaped building’s function is shown as a “screening room”, where the malt was sieved to remove the grain shoots from the malt, and would have been fed directly from the kiln. The two outbuildings butting up to the rear of this building have been replaced by two smaller constructions centrally placed against the

wall.

- 1.1.43 By the time of the 2nd Edition OS survey of 1925 (Fig.6) The malt house, along with the couch, cistern and kiln has gone and the screening room has been replaced by the church building, which also covers the back yard of no 55. This probably happened soon after the site was acquired by the Baptist church in 1879.
- 1.1.44 A comparison of the church building's footprint with the previous map shows that the new building was larger than the screening room and the earlier outbuildings removing the potential for determining their construction. The well, 24 and wellhouse, 25, appear to be associated with the church and butt up to the rear wall of the church. It is possible that they were demolished when mains water became available.
- 1.1.45 Path 20 appears to lead towards the rear door of the church and may be contemporary with the original construction of the church, as is the soakaway pit 12.
- 1.1.46 Layer 4 appears to be an overall worked soil deposit and post-dates the church's construction.
- 1.1.47 Layer 5 is a probable layer of worked soil which predates the construction of the malthouse and the associated buildings, although no dating evidence was recovered from this deposit.
- 1.1.48 Surface 3 appears to be a later pathway alongside the standing timber framed barn. The layer of demolition material 2 may represent a later corrugated iron structure built within the south-west corner of the yard. Layer 1 is the present day topsoil.
- 1.1.49 No evidence, either in the form of features, deposits or residual finds was encountered for any activity predating the late post-medieval period.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.3 m	-	Present day topsoil	Brick, glass, iron	C20th
2	Layer	0.2 m	-	Demolition debris	Brick, slate, iron	C19th/ C20th
3	Surface	0.1 m	> 0.8 m	Brick floor	Brick	C19th
4	Layer	0.5 m	-	Buried soil horizon	Brick	C19th
5	Layer	0.15 m	-	Subsoil, Earlier worked soil	-	-
6	Layer	> 0.2 m	-	Natural clay	-	-
7	Layer	0.25 m	-	Earlier garden soil	-	C19th ?
8	Layer	0.15 m	-	Construction/demolition layer	Brick	C19th ?
9	Cut	0.5 m	0.6 m	Construction cut	-	C19th
10	Wall	2.35 m	0.28 m	Southern boundary wall	-	C19th
11	Fill	0.25m	0.25 m	Backfill of Cut 9	Brick	C19th
12	Cut	1.1 m	0.7 m	Modern soakaway pit	-	C20th
13	Fill	1.1 m	0.7 m	Fill of Pit 12	Brick	C20th
14	Surface	0.12 m	> 1 m	Brick pathway	Brick	C19th
15	Cut	0.25 m	> 0.3 m	Foundation trench	-	C18th/ C19th
16	Wall	2 m	> 0.3 m	Western boundary wall	-	C18th/ C19th
17	Fill	0.2 m	> 0.5 m	Upper fill of pit 19	-	C19th
18	Fill	0.2 m	> 0.5 m	Primary fill of pit 19	Brick	C19th
19	Cut	0.4 m	> 0.5 m	Small pit, Robbed out foundation pad ?	-	C19th
20	Surface	0.12 m	> 1 m	Brick pathway	Brick	C19th
21	Wall	0.25 m	0.35 m	Truncated base of wall	Brick	C19th
22	Cut	0.25 m	0.2 m	Construction cut	-	C19th
23	Layer	0.25 m	> 0.5 m	Possible demolition debris	Brick	C19th
24	Structure	> 2 m	1.5 m dia	Well built well shaft	Brick	C19th
25	Structure	1 m	1.5 m	Brick built well house	Brick	C19th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA 2009 *Henley Baptist Church, 55-57 Market Place, Henley, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

OAU, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

OCAS 2009 *Henley Baptist Church, 55-57 Market Place, Henley, Oxfordshire - Design Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Tomlinson J.B, 1854 *Cyclopedia of Useful Arts and Manufactures* 111-121

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Henley Baptist Church, 55-57 Market Place, Henley, Oxfordshire

Site code: HEBACH 09

Grid reference: SU 7591 8257

Type of watching brief: Machine excavation of foundations and new drainage trenches

Date and duration of project: November and December 2009, 6 site visits

Area of site: 300 m²

Summary of results: The watching brief exposed evidence of the sites previous use as a malthouse during the 19th century. No evidence for any earlier activity was observed during the course of the watching brief.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course under the following accession number: OXCMS:2009.106



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Figure 1: Site location

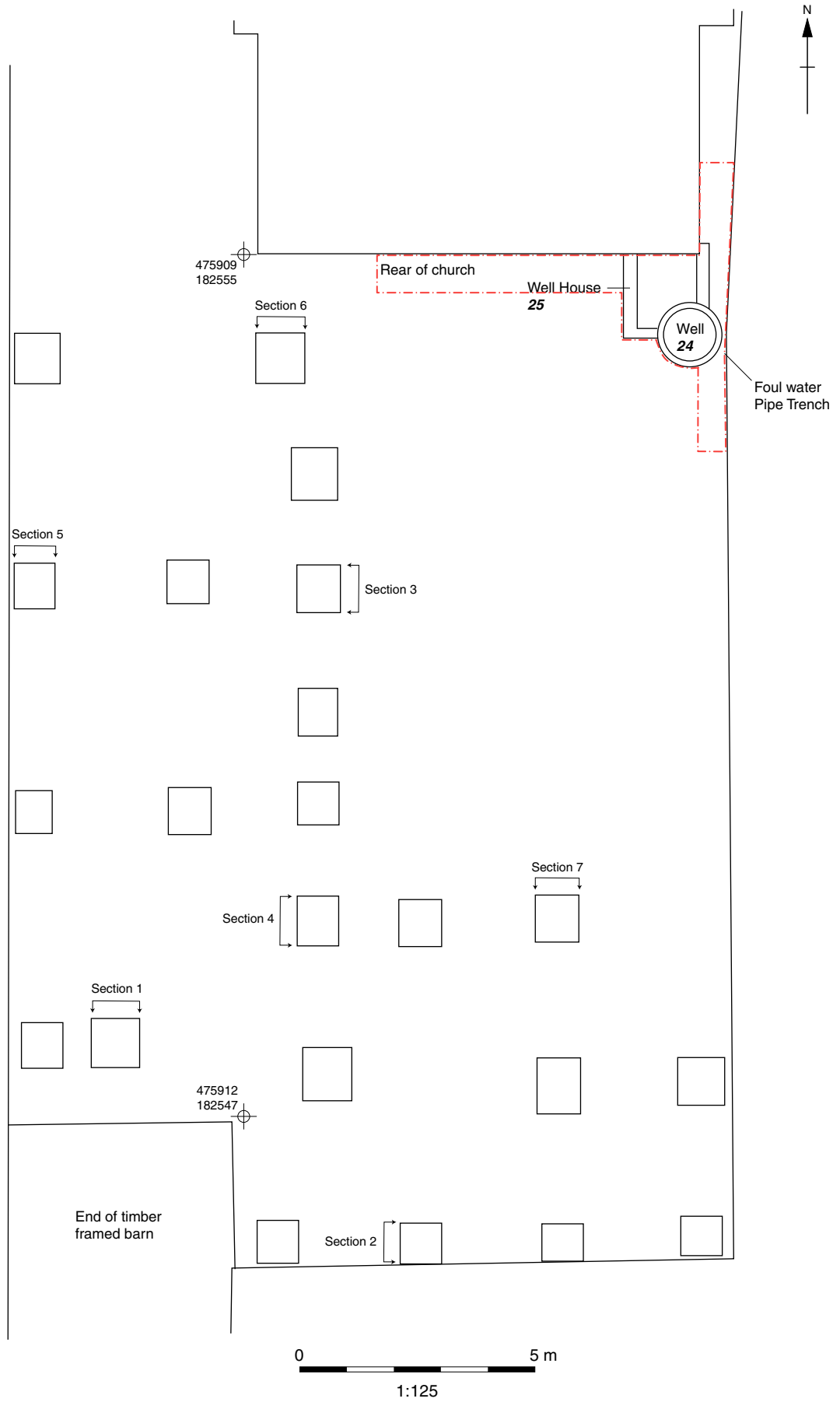


Figure 2: Site plan

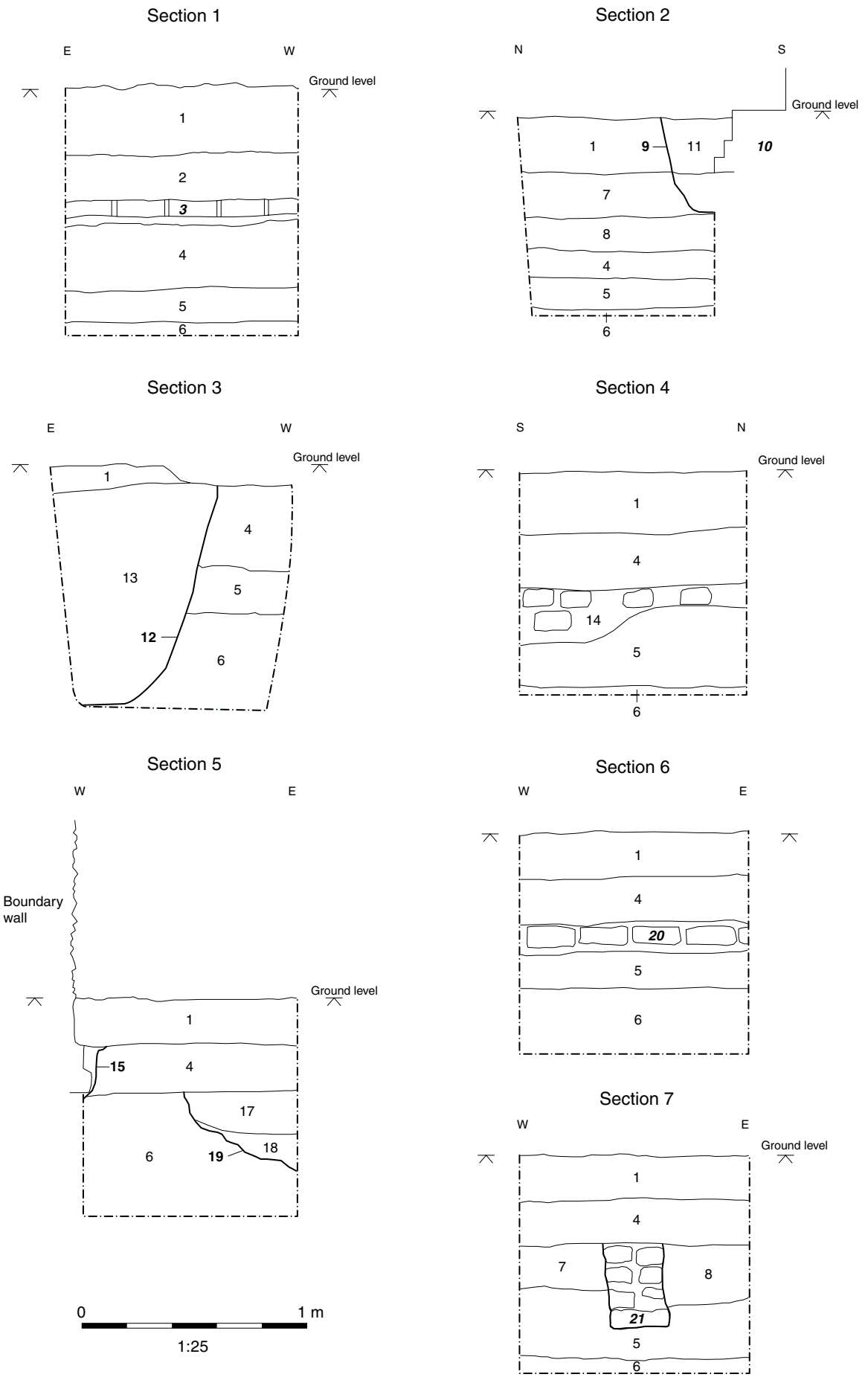


Figure 3: Sections

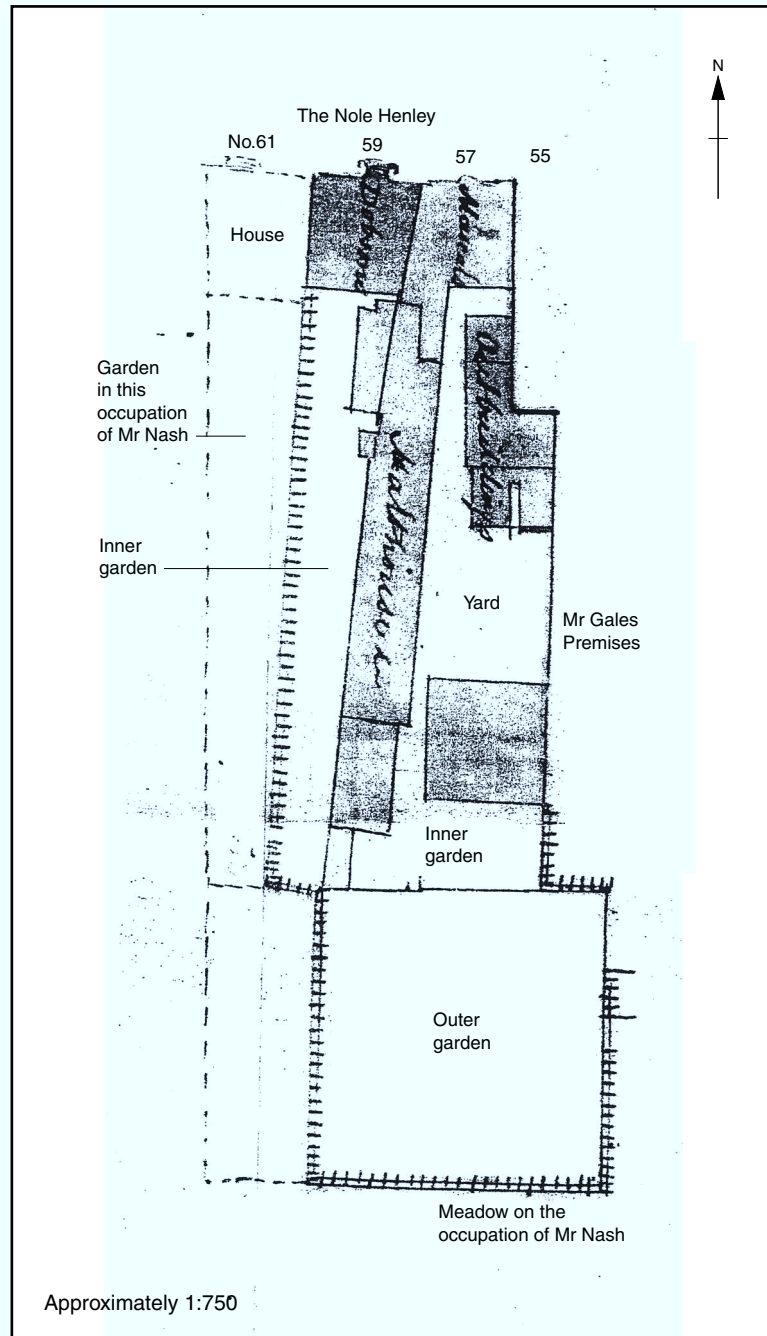


Figure 4: 1826 plan of site

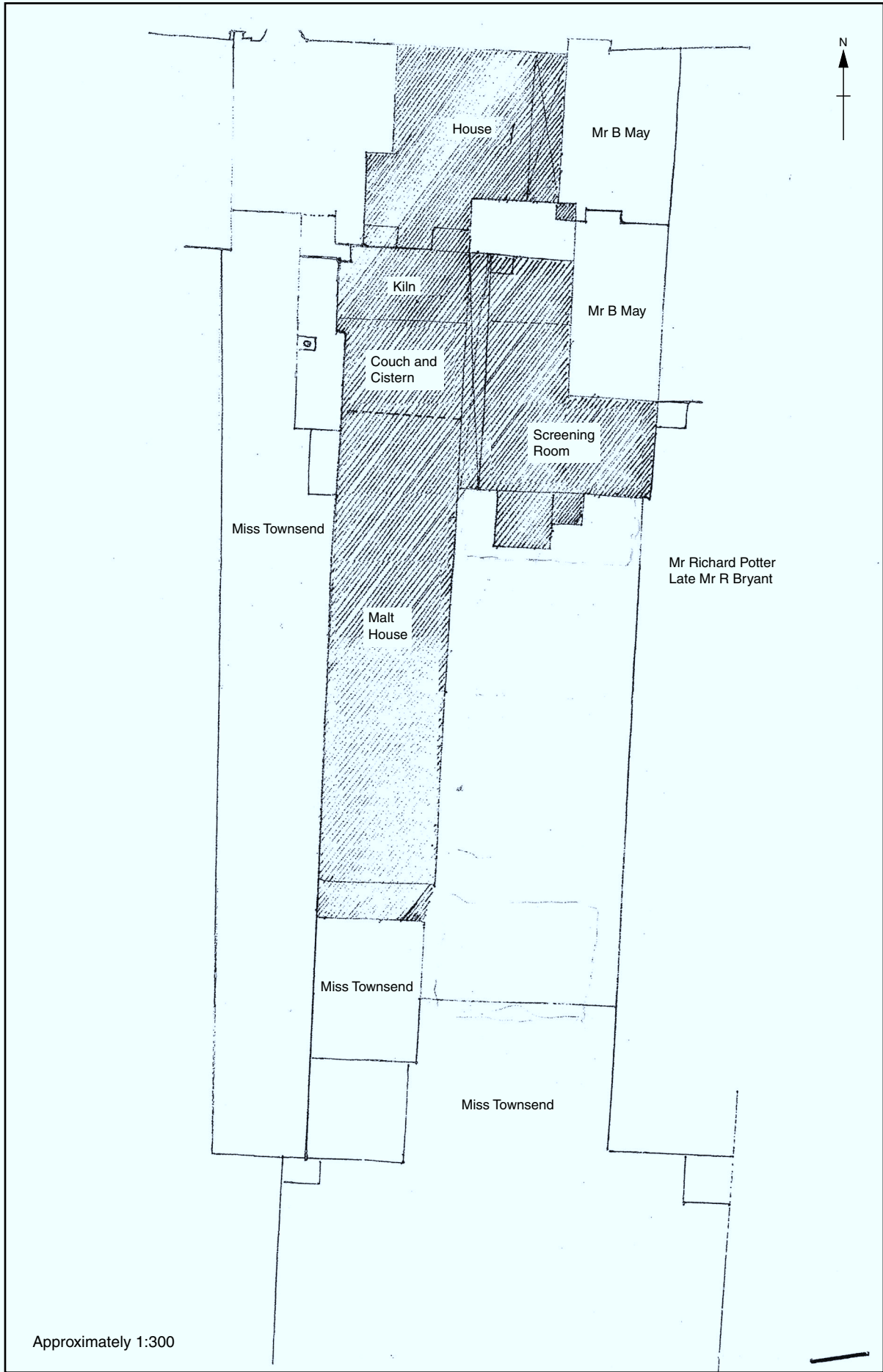


Figure 5: 1877 plan of site



Figure 6: Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition of 1925



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