

Land on the site of the stable block and yard,
Oaklands, Cowick Lane, Exeter, Devon

SX 91272 90615

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation and buildings
recording

Condition 6 of planning permission no. 11/0858/03

Prepared by:
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On behalf of:
Steve Laing

Document No: ACD304/2/2

Date: July 2013



AC archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Exeter	National Grid Reference SX 91272 90615	Number:
Subject: Land on the site of the stable block and yard, Oaklands, Cowick Lane, Exeter, Devon: Results of an archaeological evaluation and buildings recording		Photo attached? Plates 1-6
Planning Permission no: 11/0858/03 (Exeter City Council)	Recipient museum: Royal Albert Memorial Museum	
OASIS ID: 145664	Museum Accession no: TBC	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD304	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 12 th March 2013	

Introduction

An archaeological trench evaluation and building recording was carried out in advance of groundworks associated with the construction of a single detached dwelling and associated double garage and restoration of an existing outbuilding. The work was carried out by AC archaeology and was commissioned by the site owner Steve Laing. The work was undertaken under condition no.6 on the planning permission for the development.

The site covers an area of c. 700m² and is located on generally level ground, occupying a low ridge just above the Alphinbrook and Exe floodplains (Fig. 1). It lies at around 18m OD and the current land consists of an existing brick-built outbuilding and concrete covered yard. The underlying solid geology of the area is Breccia of the Dawlish Sandstone Formation.

Recent investigations immediately to the west identified part of a large Bronze Age ring ditch, representing the ploughed-down remains of a former barrow (Fig. 1). No associated burials were present within the excavation area, although two corn-drying ovens located just outside the ring ditch that were of post-Roman date.

The Ordnance Surveyors' drawing of 1801 depicts the site within an open plot extending to Crabb Lane to the west (Map 1). Within the plot to the northeast is an arrangement of buildings positioned around an open courtyard that are unlikely to relate to the existing outbuilding. The subsequent Alphington parish tithe map of 1842 shows the site within a more open plot, cleared of the range of buildings previously depicted to the northeast and extending up to Cowick Lane (Map 2). A building in the position of the existing outbuilding is depicted on the tithe map as a rectangular structure. The accompanying 1841 apportionment describes the plot as an orchard owned and occupied by James Marsh. To the west, the field is subdivided by this date with a plot and buildings shown extending along Crabb Lane. The first edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1888 shows the wider plot as again sub-divided, as is the current arrangement, with the southwest portion occupied by an orchard (Map 3). On this map the outbuilding is shown as enlarged with an extension to the southwest. This is also the case in second edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1904 (not illustrated).

Methodology

The evaluation comprised the excavation of a single trench measuring 25m long and 1.5m wide excavated using a tracked machine fitted with a toothless bucket and working under constant archaeological supervision. The existing concrete surface for the yard was removed prior to commencement. Investigations were undertaken to identify whether any prehistoric or later remains survived on the site (given its proximity to the ring ditch and oven previously found immediately to the south west).

The building recording consisted of a photographic record of the existing brick-built outbuilding with an assessment of its layout, function and date. A rapid appraisal of historic maps was made in order to determine its original date and subsequent development.

Results

Evaluation

The evaluation trench was excavated onto natural subsoil (context 102), which comprised a light orangey-brown clayey-sand with frequent rounded gravels and pebbles and was present at a depth of 0.84m below current levels (Plate 1). The trench contained a single ESE to WNW aligned linear feature (F103) that was cut into the natural

subsoil and across the line of a geological fissure (Fig. 2 and Plate 2). The possible ditch measured 0.79m wide and 0.19m deep with gradual sloping sides and a shallow concave base. It contained a mid brown silty-clay fill (104) that contained occasional charcoal flecks and small gravels. No finds were recovered from the possible ditch.

The overlying sequence of layers comprised a thick silty-loam agricultural or garden subsoil (101) that was sealed by a dark brown silty-loam topsoil (100) that was buried under modern sub-base rubble (105). A single fragment of 16th to 17th century glazed red earthenware pottery (19g) was recovered from subsoil layer 101.

The undated possible ditch probably represents a former agricultural boundary feature aligned perpendicular to the plot boundary to the ESE and is probably truncated by late post-medieval cultivation, suggested by the thick overlying subsoil layer 101.

Due to the lack of any evidence for significant prehistoric or later remains on the site, and the small size of the development site, the ECC Archaeology Officer confirmed that no further archaeological site work was required under the condition.

Building recording

The brick-built structure comprised a two-story rectangular building measuring 9.1m long, 4.1m wide and 6.15m high to tip of gable (Plates 3 and 4). The roof was covered with terracotta tiles and had tongue and groove lining. Openings were present on each gable elevation at the first story level including a window to the SSW and a loading door to the NNW. On the ground floor, a door was present on the NNE gable that was blocked up on its internal face.

The ground floor layout consisted of three rooms divided by brick partitions that were each accessed from the WNW via a total of four doors. The upper story was not entered due to safety concerns but could be viewed and comprised of two rooms divided by a timber plank partition. The structure was principally built from c.19th machine-made bricks with the exception of the partition between the SSW and central room on the ground floor level. Here the partition consisted of a timber-frame structure with hand-made brick nogging that was abutted by the later facade and rear wall. The floor surface in this room was pebble lain with the central and NNW rooms having square concrete brick surfaces.

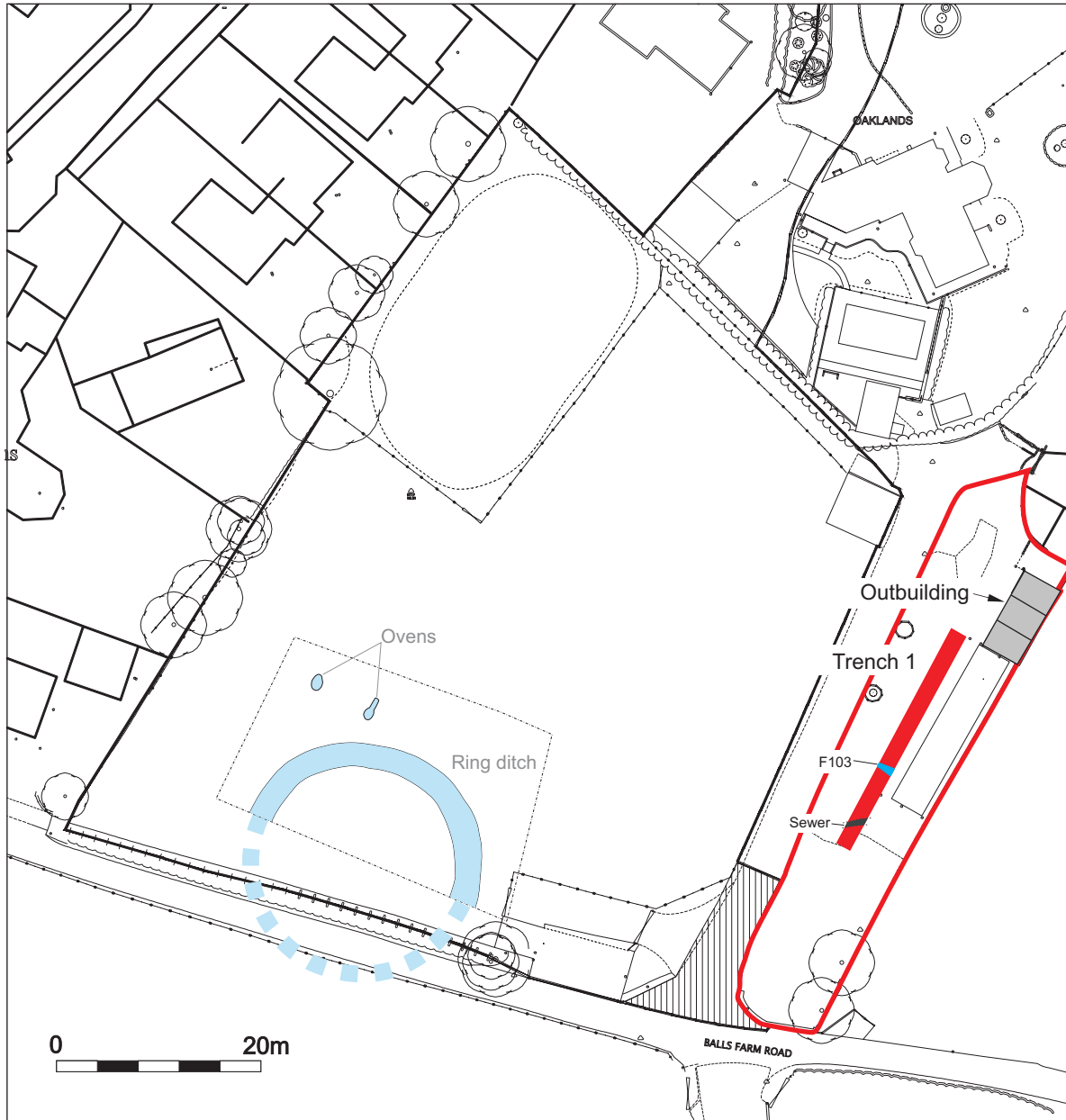
It is likely that the structure in its present form was built in the late 19th century in machine-made bricks as a storage building, possibly an apple store and stable. It is likely that the current structure has encompassed part of an earlier, perhaps smaller, 19th century structure suggested by the timber frame and hand-made brick nogging partition and pebble floor present in the SSW ground floor room. The historic mapping suggests that this structure was constructed between 1801 and 1842 and probably remodelled perhaps into its current form by 1888.

Recorder:

Simon Hughes (AC archaeology)

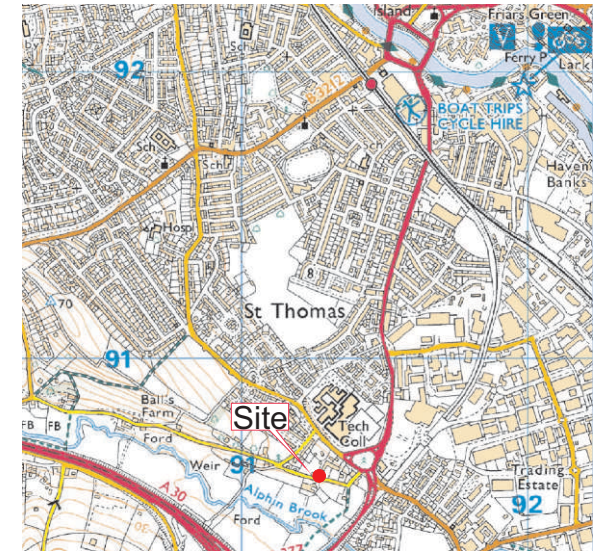
Date sent to HER:

17 June 2013






b) Trench location

a) Site location



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-  Application area
-  Trench location
-  Previously recorded archaeological features

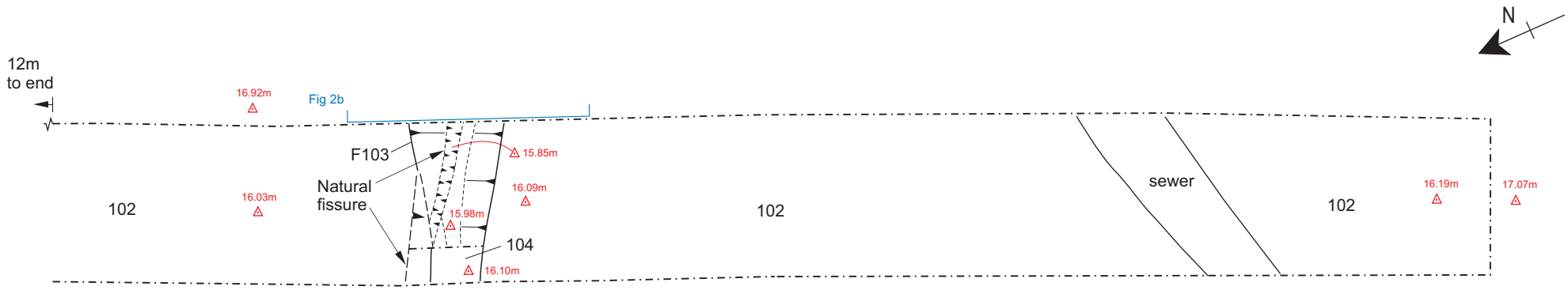
PROJECT

Land off Balls Farm Road, Exeter

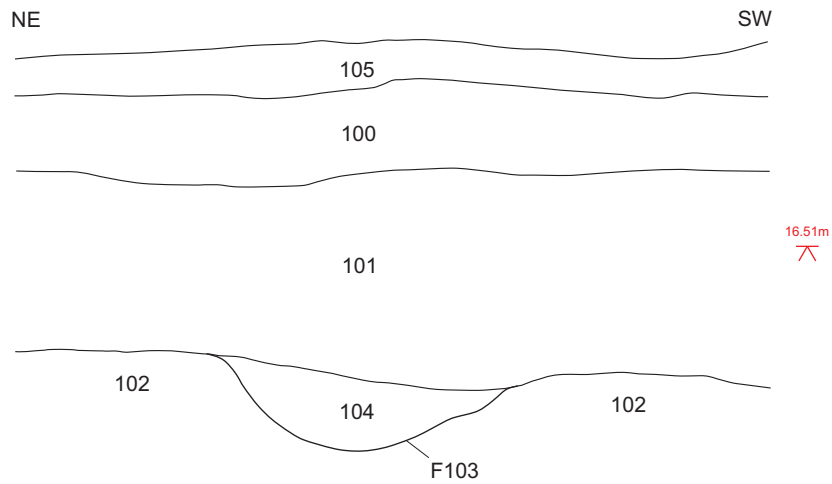
TITLE

Fig. 1: Trench location plan, showing features identified during excavation

a) Plan, Trench 1



b) Section, Trench 1



PROJECT

Land off Balls Farm Road, Exeter

TITLE

Fig. 2: Plan and section, trench 1





Plate 1: Trench 1, general view, looking SSW. Scale 1m



Plate 2: Trench 1, possible ditch F103 and geological fissure, view to NNW. Scale 1m



Plate 3: View of brick structure, looking south. Scale 1m



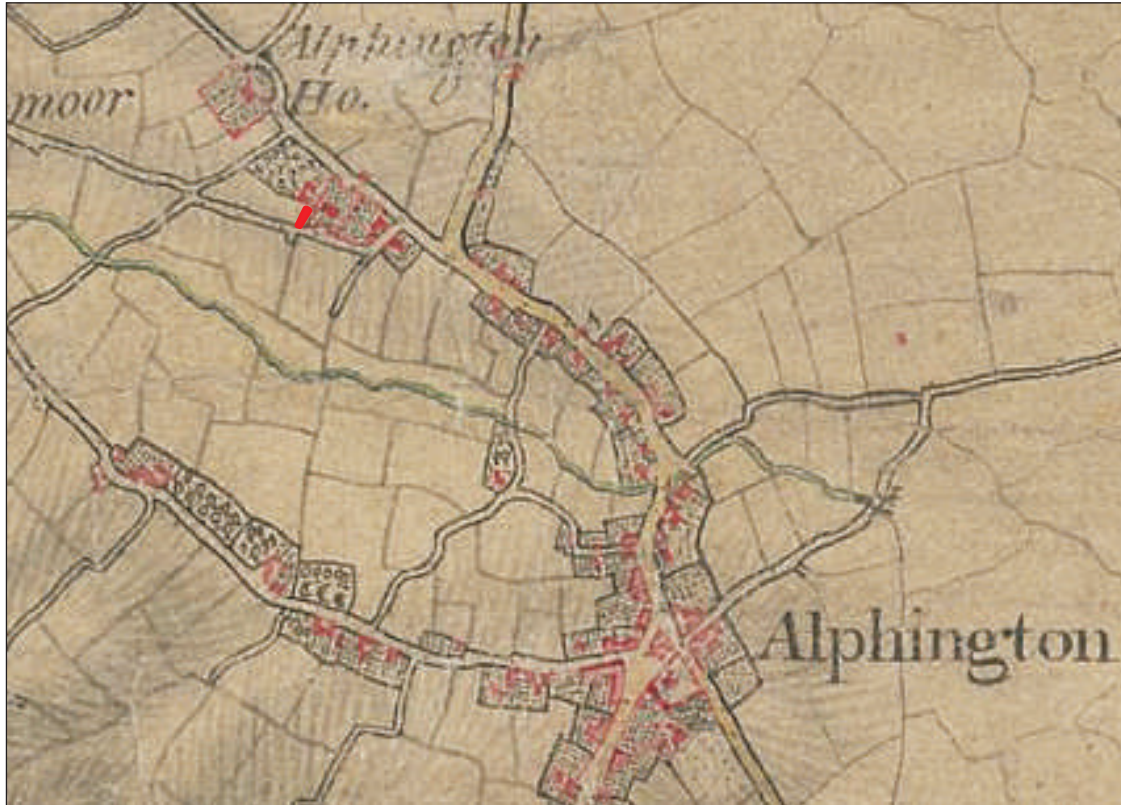
Plate 4: View of brick structure, looking south. Scale 1m



Plate 5: Timber frame and brick nogging partition, looking NNE. Scale 1m

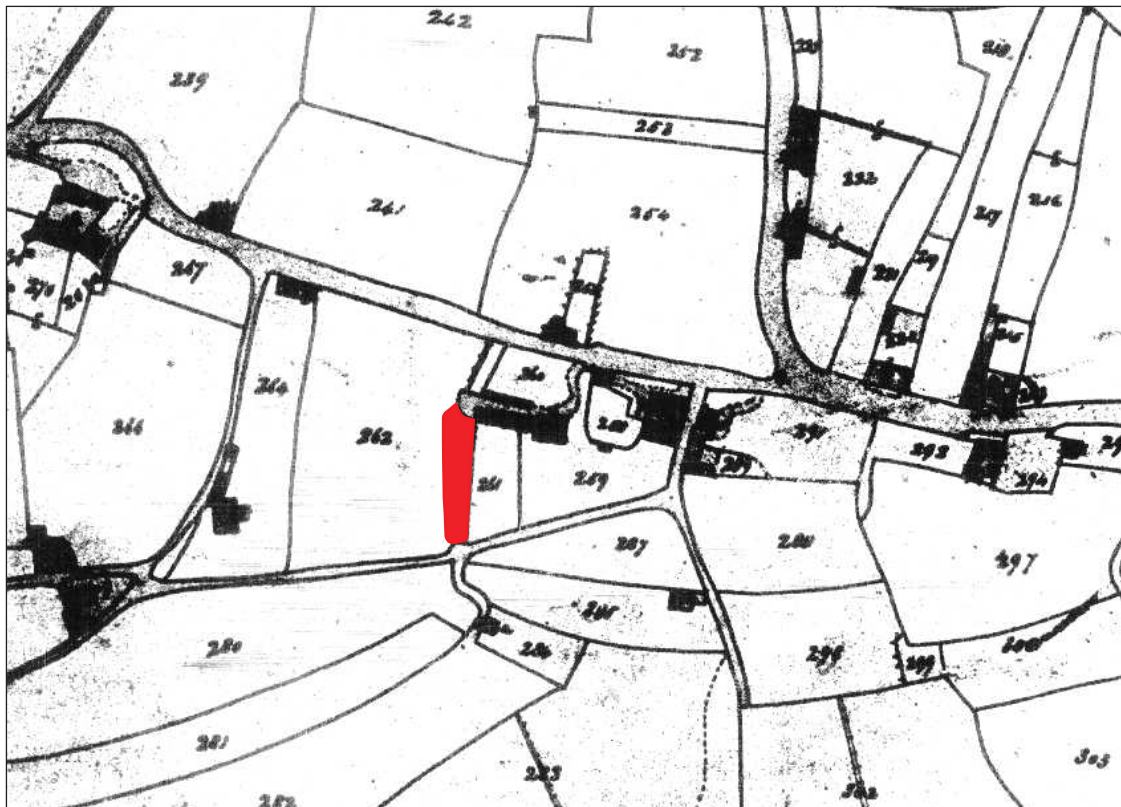


Plate 6: Pebble-lain floor surface of SSE ground floor room. View to ESE. Scale 1m



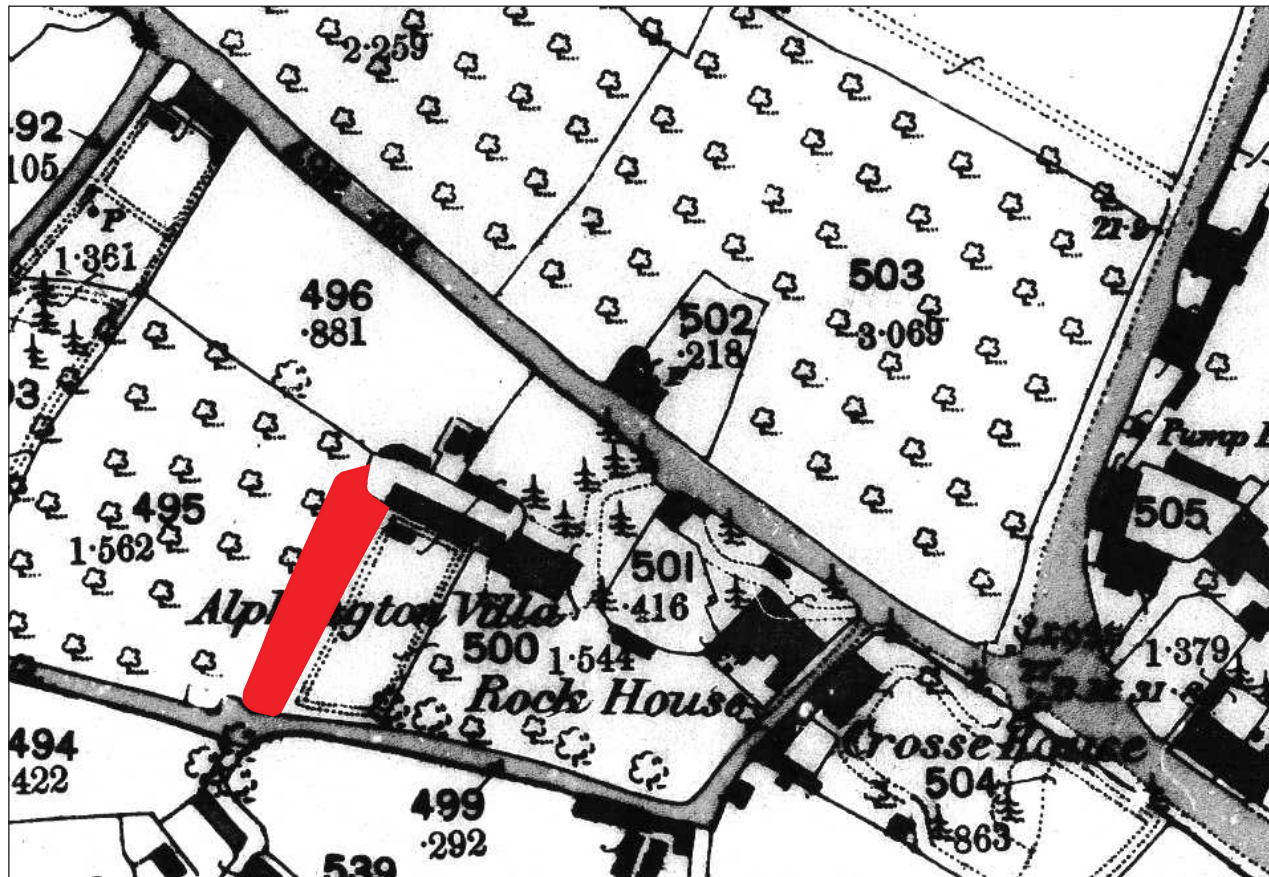
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Map 1: Extract from Ordnance Surveyor's drawing, sheet 5, 2-inch, 1801



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Map 2: Extract from the Alphington Parish tithe map, 1842



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Map 3: Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map, 1888

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