

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

3 RECTORY CLOSE,

WOKINGHAM,

BERKSHIRE

SU 81191 68793

On behalf of

**Mr S Worsfold
Luff Developments Ltd**

June 2010

REPORT FOR Mr S Worsfold
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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land at 3 Rectory Close, Wokingham, Berkshire. Two trenches were excavated revealing post-medieval planting pits and a boundary ditch similar to those uncovered during excavations in the area during 2004 and 2007. It was concluded that the area was planted geometrically, using a measurement of 15feet, and was probably a small orchard.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is located on land at 3 Rectory Close, Wokingham in Berkshire. The site is located to the north east of Wokingham's historic core, accessed from the A329 (Shute End) via Rectory Road and is centred on NGR SU 81191 68793. The surface geology is Bagshot Beds. The total site area is approximately 0.56 ha and was previously occupied by a single dwelling.

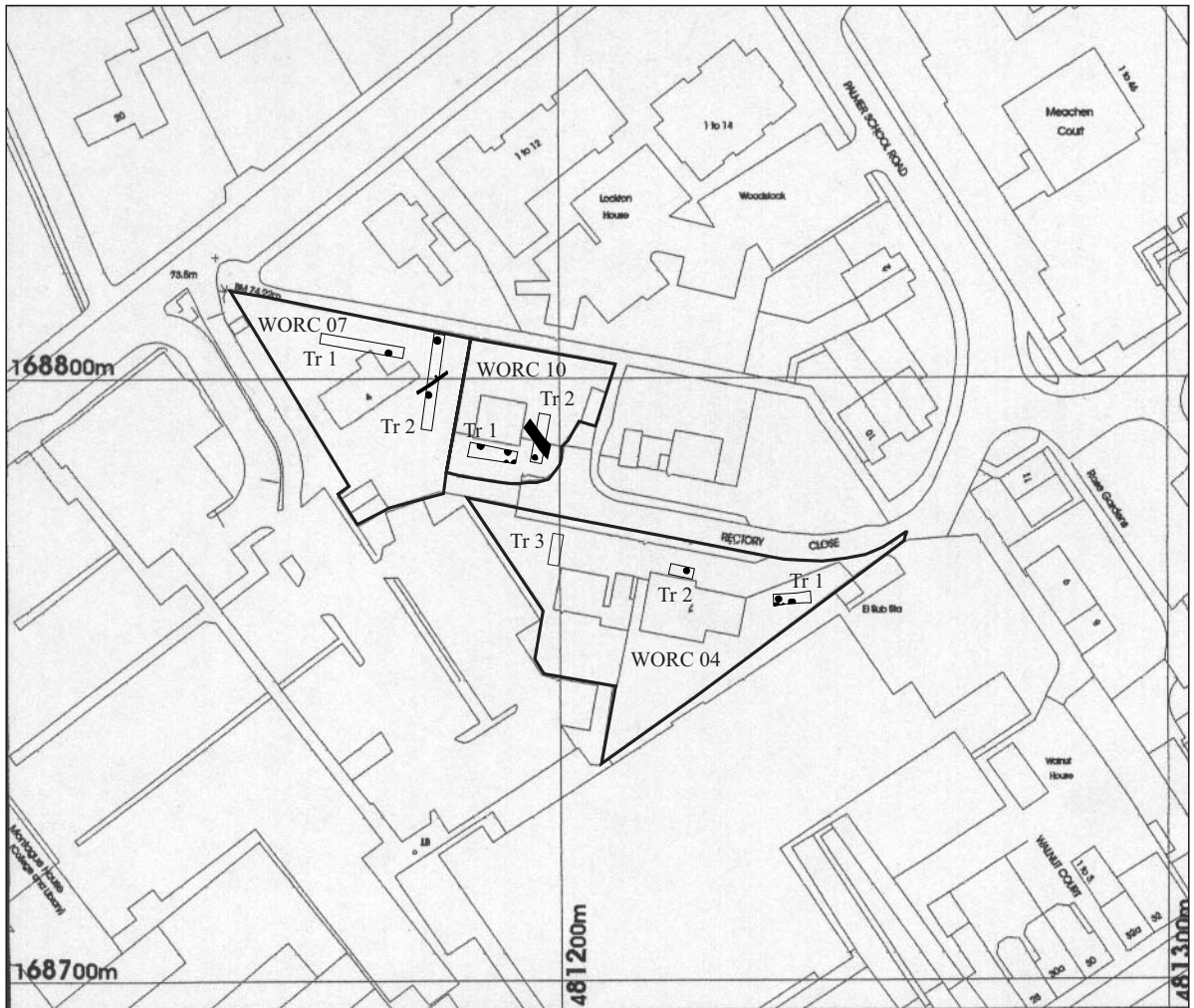
1.2 Planning Background

A planning application was submitted to Wokingham Borough Council that proposed the construction of semi-detached dwellings plus parking access and landscaping, following demolition of existing dwelling (F/2008/2721). Due to the potential presence of remains of archaeological interest in the proposal area the applicant was required to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that was submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. This is in line with PPS 5. Berkshire Archaeology prepared a Brief for the first phase of the work, namely a field evaluation. The *Written Scheme of Investigation* proposed a method to satisfy the requirements of the Brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lies close to the center of Wokingham. The town is thought to have Saxon origins as the place-name appears to be of Saxon origin meaning 'homestead of the people of Wocc'. However, no evidence of Saxon occupation has yet to be found. Wokingham is not mentioned in Domesday as it formed part of the manor and parish of Sonning and was administered by the Bishops of Salisbury as a separate ecclesiastical and jurisdictional unit from Berkshire. The estate of Sonning remained part of Wiltshire until 1845. The Bishops of Salisbury created Wokingham as a planned town, in the late 12th or early 13th century, probably laid out around Rose Street and Peach Street with a market place at the junction with Broad Street. It was granted a market in 1219.

The majority of the sites identified on the SMR are Listed Buildings. The Terrace at Shute End comprises nine listed Buildings dating from the 1400s to the 1800s. This is evidence of late medieval activity in the area, supposedly indicating the expansion of the settlement at Wokingham along the Reading road.



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Figure 1. Site location

An evaluation carried out by The Trust for Wessex Archaeology (TWA) on Station Road found no occupation evidence earlier than the 18th century. The trench in the orchard behind the 19th century rectory found no medieval remains, but did contain three residual late medieval sherds. It is possible that there was medieval occupation closer to the Shute End street frontage where less garden landscaping has occurred. TWA also carried out a watching brief on a site between Rose Street and Rectory Road during the construction of the Waitrose supermarket. Here, investigations recorded a concentration of post-medieval pits, a brick-lined well, a medieval pit and an undated ditch. This site was located on the adjacent site to the proposed development on Rectory Close.

Further east along Rectory Close an evaluation by John Moore Heritage Services (JHMS 2004) found several pits of the late 19th or early 20th century. An evaluation was carried out on the adjacent plot of 4 Rectory Close (JMHS 2007). This located intense 19th-20th century disturbance, 18th century pits and an undated ditch.

A quick map regression exercise was requested to assess whether the site had been developed previously. This confirmed that 1:2,500 OS maps from 1871 -1912 show no buildings in the area and likewise the 1:10,560 OS map of 1931/2 also did not show development in the immediate area of the site.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The objectives of the investigation as laid out in the Specification were as follows:

- To determine the existence or absence of archaeological remains and, shall archaeological remains be present, to assess their general nature and significance.
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remains.
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains.
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape.
- To determine the implications of the remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeo-environmental, geoarchaeological and/or economic evidence. The forms in which such evidence may be present will be determined in accordance with the

guidelines set out in English Heritage's *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* and *Geoarchaeology: Using earth sciences to understand the archaeological record*.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In accordance with the *Specification* designed by John Moore Heritage Services and agreed with the Local Planning Authority, John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of 2 trenches.

The trenches were 8 metres in length and 1.8 metres wide. They were located in areas least impacted upon by previous development and within the footprint of the proposed building.

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of 2 trenches by a JCB equipped with a ditching bucket, supplemented by hand investigation of archaeological deposits. The integrity of any archaeological features or deposits that might better be excavated in conditions pertaining to full excavation, or might warrant preservation *in situ*, was not compromised.

The trenches were 8 metres in length and 1.8 metres wide. They were excavated to the geological horizon under direct archaeological supervision. The machine excavation was used only for the removal of non-archaeologically significant material.

Site procedures carried out followed IFA guidelines and the requirements of the *Specification* designed by John Moore Heritage Services Ltd.

4 RESULTS

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated to the top of the Bagshot Beds, the natural underlying sands (1/11). These consisted of lightly compacted mid orange brown silty sand and were not excavated. Cut into the natural sands were four circular features. Two of these, 1/06 and 1/04, extended beyond the northeastern baulk and were identified as possible pits. The two additional features, 1/08 and 1/10, extended beyond the southwestern baulk and were identified as being possible shallow pits. None of the features were completely visible in plan.

Pit 1/04 was located in the northeast corner of Trench 1. It had a sharp break of top and base slope with gradually inward sloping sides and a flat base and contained a single fill, (1/03). This fill consisted of loosely compacted fine-grained silty sand that was dark grey brown in colour and homogenous in composition. The fill also

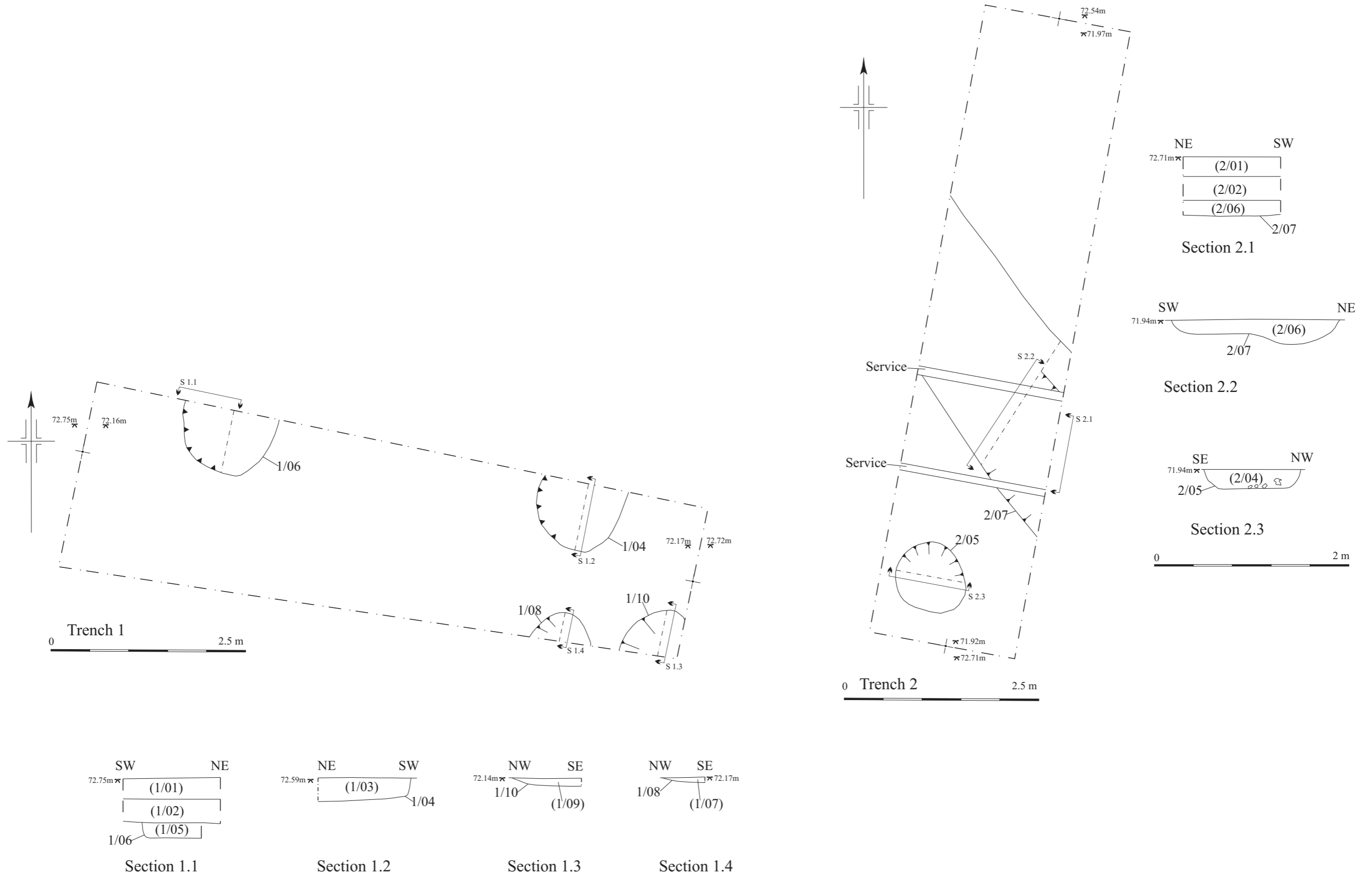


Figure 2. Trenches 1 & 2 Plans and sections

contained rare charcoal flecking <1% and rare CBM fragments <1%. This extended to a depth of 0.30m. Pit 1/04 was approximately 0.90m in diameter. Fill (1/03) was characterised by finds of red and white earthenware pottery, glass and tile fragments.

Pit 1/06 was located in the north west of the trench and was <0.80m. It had a sharp break of top slope with steeply inward sloping sides with a sharp break of base slope and a flat base and contained a single fill, (1/05). (1/05) consisted of dark grey brown fine-grained silty sand, loosely compacted to a depth of 0.20m. Inclusions included rare charcoal flecking <1% and rare CBM fragments <1%. It was characterised by finds of red and white earthenware pottery.

Features 1/04 and 1/06 were located 4.6m apart.

Shallow pit 1/08 was located in the south east of the trench and was <0.40m in diameter. It had a gradual break of top slope, gradually inward sloping sides and an imperceptible break of base slope to a concave base. It contained a single fill (1/07) consisting of fine grained, dark brown silty sand with occasional rounded and sub-angular stone (flint) <1% to a depth of 0.08m. This pit contained finds of tile and slate.

Shallow pit 1/10 was located in the south eastern corner of the trench and was <0.60m in diameter. It had a gradual break of top slope, with gradually inward sloping sides with an imperceptible break of base slope and a concave base. It contained a single fill (1/09) that consisted of dark grey brown fine grained silty sand with nil inclusions and extended to a depth 0.10m. This pit was characterised by a single sherd of green glazed ceramic.

Sealing these features was a layer of of ploughsoil (1/02) 0.30m in thickness consisting of firm mid grey brown silty loam with some sand mixed throughout with <1% CBM and charcoal flecking throughout. A layer of topsoil (1/01) 0.28m in thickness sealed the ploughsoil. The topsoil consisted of loose dark grey brown silty loam with some sand with <2% CBM and charcoal flecking throughout.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated to the top of the natural sands (2/03) these consisted orange brown silty sand and extended throughout Trench 2. Cut into the natural (2/03) were 2 features; a ditch 2/07 and a pit 2/05.

Ditch 2/07 ran beyond the eastern and western sections of the trench and was <2.6m in length. In plan the sides were straight and parallel and 1.9m apart. Ditch 2/07 had a sharp break of slope at the top, and gradual break of base slope. Sides were slightly concave and the feature had a relatively flat base. It contained a single fill (2/06) of soft mid orange brown silty sand with occasional medium stone extending to a depth of 0.30m. This fill contained numerous pieces of bone, tile and brick and rare redware and white earthenware pottery

Pit 2/05 was roughly circular in plan and <0.90m in diameter. It had a sharp break of slope at top and base, with a flat base and relatively straight sides. It contained fill (2/04) consisting of loosely compacted fine-grained silty sand extending to a depth of 0.22m. This was dark grey brown in colour and homogenous in composition with rare

charcoal flecking <1% and CBM fragments <1%. It was characterised by finds of brick, tile and bottle glass.

Pit 2/05 was located 4.6m east of Pit 1/04.

Sealing these features was a ploughsoil layer 0.30m in thickness, consisting of firm mid grey brown silty loam with some sand mixed throughout. Inclusions included CBM and charcoal flecking throughout <1%. On top of the ploughsoil was a layer of topsoil (2/01) 0.24m in thickness. This consisted of firm dark grey brown silty loam with some sand content. Inclusions included CBM and charcoal flecking throughout <1%.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be reasonable. The archaeological evaluation took place during occasional wet weather conditions.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Pottery

The pottery assemblage comprised 9 sherds with a total weight of 154g. This assemblage consists largely of 17th and 18th century domestic ceramic food related types. Where appropriate, the codings and chronology of the provisional type series of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (Jones 1998, 211-238) were used. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Mass produced white earthenwares were recovered from 3 contexts. They date to *c.* late 18th-20th century. One of these sherds is a pearlware rim sherd from a hollow vessel, recovered from context (1/03). Blue transfer print was present on the interior and was identified as Willow pattern. This was first produced in 1790 by Josiah Spode and became incredibly popular. A sherd from context (1/05), also a hollow vessel, had remnant blue transfer printed decoration on exterior. A third earthenware sherd was recovered from context (2/06). This sherd was undecorated and undiagnostic.

Sherds of Post-medieval redware, fabric RW from the provisional type series of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (Jones 1998, 211-238), were recovered from 3 contexts. These date to *c.* mid 16th-18th century. A rim/body sherd recovered from context (1/03) has a light brown lead glaze on the interior, with remnants of a mid brown slip on both the interior and exterior. Two conjoining rim/body sherds from context (1/05) have a mid brown lead glaze on the interior, and mid brown slip on the exterior. A body sherd from context (2/04) has the remnants of a light brown lead glaze on the interior and mid brown slip on the exterior. A sherd recovered from context (2/06) has faint remnants of brown glaze on its exterior and an unfinished interior.

A single body sherd recovered from context (1/09) has a buff coloured fabric with a brown yellow glaze on the interior, and a green glaze on the exterior. This corresponds with type RW3B (sparse grains of a homogenous size) Post-medieval

‘Border Ware’ from the provisional type series of the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (Jones 1998, 211-238) but the sherd is too small to make an exact identification.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	No. of sherds	Wt (g)	Surrey County Archaeological Unit provisional fabric type series	Date
(1/03)	1	18	RW	16 th -18 th
(1/03)	1	2	-	1790 – 20 th
(1/05)	1	4	-	18 th -20 th
(1/05)	2	104	RW	16 th -18 th
(1/09)	1	1	WW3B	16 th -18 th
(2/04)	1	7	RW	16 th -18 th
(2/06)	1	11	RW	16 th -18 th
(2/06)	1	7	-	18 th -20 th
Total	9	154		

5.2 Animal Bone

39 fragments of animal were recovered from 2 contexts.

Context (1/07) contained 3 pieces of bone weighing 3g.

Context (2/06) contained 36 pieces of bone weighing 74g. Preliminary inspection suggests these are the remains of a large bird, such as a duck or goose.

5.3 Building Materials

10 fragments of tile weighing 609g were recovered from 4 contexts, (1/03), (1/07), (2/04) and (2/06). These may be the remnants of peg-tiles, although only one peghole was present (context (2/04)). The fabric of the tiles was well-mixed, homogenous, fine grained and buff orange in colour. This type of tile was hand struck, and striations where the levelling wire has pulled grit down the strike face are visible on several examples. Peg-tiles were largely superseded by the Welsh slate roofing tile industry from the 1830’s onwards (Buchanan 1972: 381), when the creation of the railways allowed for cheap and easy mass transportation of the material.

A single fragment of slate weighing 6g was recovered from context (1/07). This was probably a partial slate roofing tile.

6 fragments of brick weighing 614g were recovered from 2 contexts. A partial brick from context (2/04) had three edges present. The fabric was largely homogenous and buff orange in colour. The only variation to this was a single large flint inclusion, 12mm in length. 5 partial bricks/brick fragments were recovered from the fill of ditch 2/07, (2/06). These all had at least one face present, were buff orange in colour and homogenous in fabric composition. No frogs or other variations were observed.

4 unidentified fragments of buff orange earthenware recovered from contexts (1/03) and (2/04) are probably fragments of brick or tile.

A single irregularly shaped buff orange earthenware fragment from context (1/03) appears to have been moulded. Its partial survival makes it difficult to identify with certainty.

Table 1: Building materials occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context

Context	No. of fragments	Wt (g)	Comments
(1/03)	1	29	Unid. Moulded?
(1/03)	1	3	Unid frag
(1/03)	1	88	Tile
(1/07)	1	35	Tile
(1/07)	1	6	Slate
(2/04)	1	182	Tile. 2 sides and peghole present, 18mm in diameter
(2/04)	3	10	Unid fragments
(2/04)	1	119	Brick. Large flint inclusion.
(2/04)	5	198	Tile fragments
(2/06)	2	194	Partial tiles
(2/06)	5	495	Brick fragments. Some quartzite, flint and sand inclusions.
Total	22	1359	

5.4 Small finds

A single partial slate pencil was recovered from context (1/03), weighing 2g. Slate as a writing material was largely replaced by pencils and pencils by c.1930.

5.5 Glass

A total of 4 glass sherds were recovered from 2 contexts. The glass occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Context (2/04) contained a single fragment of aqua bottle glass weighing 4g and a single fragment of blue bottle glass weighing 1g. It is difficult to ascertain information regarding vessel type from these artefacts. The remnants of a corner/base were observed on the light blue glass fragment. Blue glass was used in the production of a multitude of vessel types from the mid 19th to 20th centuries. Aqua glass was in common usage from the early 19th century up to the mid 1900's.

Fragments of clear press moulded glass were recovered from context (1/03). These body sherds conjoin. Press moulding was a technique patented in America in the 1820's and quickly became popular in the production of hollow tableware. The remnant of a scalloped edge is visible.

Overall, very few conclusions can be made on the basis of this limited assemblage. These types of glass are common in domestic assemblages dating from the 18th-20th century.

Table 1: Glass occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context

Context	No. of fragments	Wt (g)	Date
(2/04)	1	4	Mid 19 th /20 th
(2/04)	1	1	Early 19 th /20 th
(1/03)	2	14	1820 -
Total	4	19	

5.6 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken as the potential of the deposits was not felt to be sufficient to warrant sampling.

6 DISCUSSION

Previous evaluations carried out by JMHS in the area have revealed circular pits of a similar size to those uncovered in area WORC 10 (pits 1/04, 1/06 and 2/05). The three pits revealed during the most recent evaluation, 3 Rectory Close, were regularly spaced 4.6m, or 15 feet, apart. This suggests a deliberate arrangement of planting occurred in the area. During the 17th and 18th century gardens, even those designed to imitate 'natural' landscapes, were created along geometric lines (Hadfield 1997: 6). However, this type of garden was largely replaced by the English Landscape type garden from the early 18th century onwards (Hadfield 1997: 6). It is therefore likely that the area of land marked as being covered in trees on the early maps is not a garden, but a small orchard. The 1899 Berkshire 1:2500 shows trees in a geometric formation across the site. Similarly, the 1900 Berkshire OS 1:10560 shows schematic planting in the study area. Whilst these maps are likely not a literal depiction of tree numbers and arrangement on the site, they do suggest that a geometric layout was used. The archaeological evidence suggests that this layout was based on a measurement of 15 feet. Figure 3 suggests a possible planting arrangement based on a measurement of 15 feet between pits, and 30 feet between rows, to project a possible layout using the findings of previous excavations. The pit located within Trench 1 in WORC 07 is the exception to this. Pits found in area WORC 04 are also slightly off the proposed alignment, but this can be explained by human error during the original layout of the orchard.

Dating the area is slightly complicated by the addition of ditch (2/07) that relates to an earlier boundary line as indicated in Figure 4 on a map from 1881. A continuation of this boundary was also found during an evaluation by JMHS in 2007 in area WORC 07. Finds from (2/07) support the interpretation of a Victorian date. However, lacking a relationship between the pit features and the ditch makes pre- or post- dating them in association with each other difficult. Map evidence for the area, as indicated above, is available, but maps from the period are not always conclusive or exhaustive in their content. If, as the maps appear to indicate, the boundary was removed some time after 1881 and the planting pits put in some time over the next 18 years, the presence

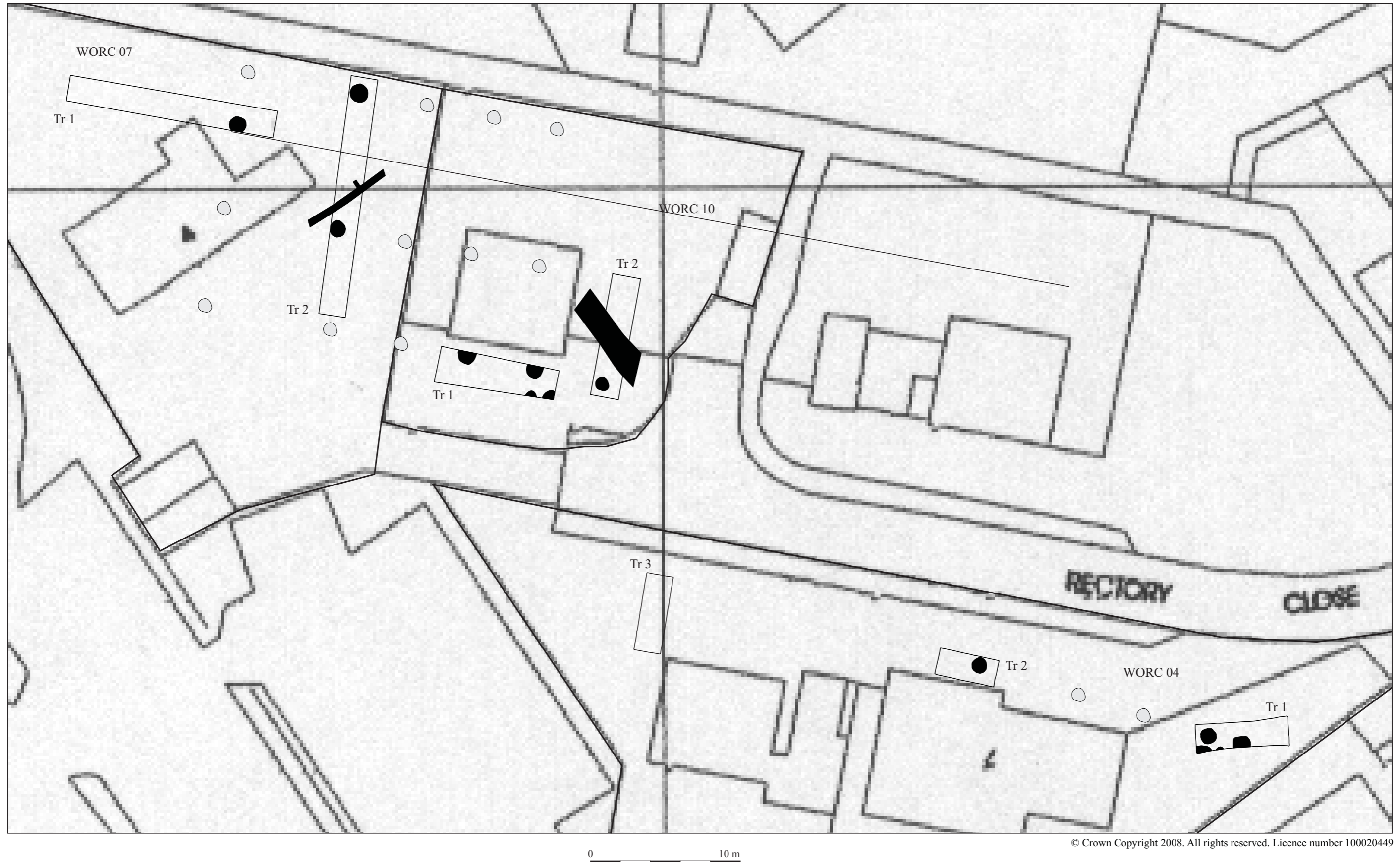


Figure 3. Planting Pits

of pottery and other finds of a similar date in both the ditch and pit fills can be explained. The pits would have been cut through the topsoil and therefore are likely to contain a mix of earlier discarded material.

Another possibility is that the boundary ditch was cut through at a later date than the planting pits. The area of planting on the 1899 and 1900 maps is delimited by residential housing in the southeast and south west and a footpath to the northeast that runs between Broad and Rose streets (today this footpath is preserved between Rectory Road and Rectory Close). This seems to date to a much earlier period and may be medieval. The boundary, ditch 2/07, marked on the 1881 map completely disregards the alignment of this footpath suggesting it is later than the planting pits. In addition to this, a single sherd of white earthenware recovered from ditch fill (2/06) is probably of a later date than the transfer printed whitewares recovered from the planting pits (one of which was pearlware glazed, a slightly blue green tinted glaze that was largely phased out with the introduction of colourless glazes in the mid 1800s). A single sherd of redware was also recovered from ditch fill (2/06). Although generally found in earlier contexts than white earthenwares it is possible this is residual, and was mixed in with the ditch fill during backfilling. Further evidence comes from the amount of building material found in the ditch. Brick fragments were not recovered from the pit fills (although tile was). Finds from pits excavated during evaluations in the area in 2004 and 2007 contained similar material.

Therefore, due to the lack of solid dating evidence it is difficult to ascertain whether the ditch or planting pits pre-dates the other. In addition, as both features would have been cut through top and ploughsoils that probably contained earlier material, residual material of different dates may have contaminated both fills. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that at least some of the planting pits, particularly those in WORC 07 and WORC 10 were in place prior to the construction of boundary ditch 2/07.

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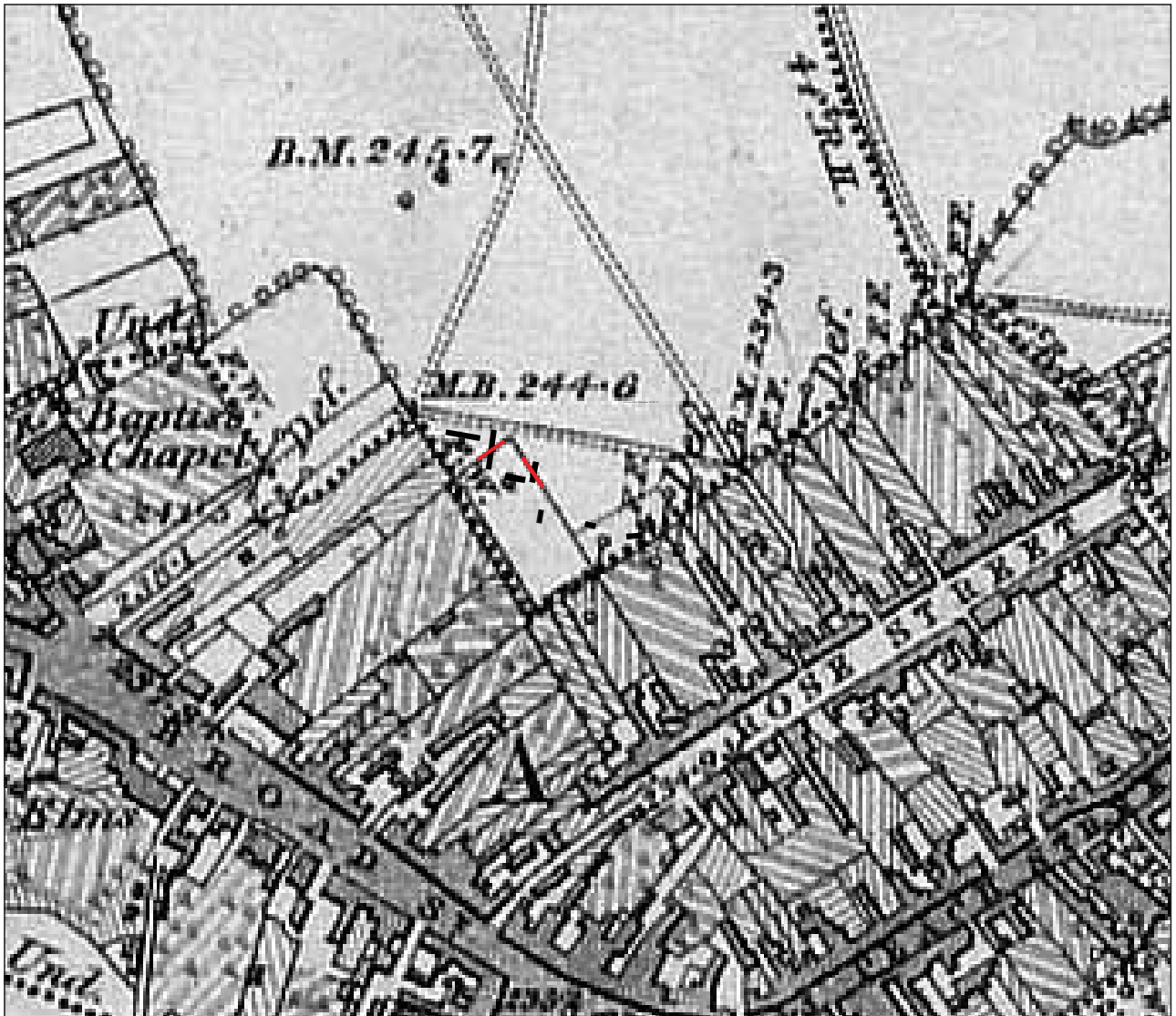
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Not to Scale

Figure 4. 1881 map showing boundary and excavated features

Appendix 1: Archaeological Context Inventory

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Interpretation
Trench 1							
(1/01)	Layer	Loose dark grey brown silty loam with some sand. CBM and charcoal flecking throughout <2%.	0.28	2.0-2.4	8.00	No	Topsoil
(1/02)	Layer	Firm mid grey brown silty loam with some sand mixed throughout. CBM and charcoal flecking throughout <1%.	0.30	2.0-2.4	8.00	No	Ploughsoil
(1/03)	Fill	Loose dark grey brown silty sand with some gravel concentrations <2%. CBM pieces and fragments <1%. Charcoal pieces and fragments <1%. Rounded and sub-angular stones <1%. Rare lime based mortar concentrations <1%. Runs under northern section of trench.	0.23-0.3	0.90	1.1	Yes	Fill of 1/04
1/04	Cut	Semi-circular in plan (other half under baulk). Sharp break of top slope, gradually inward sloping sides to sharp break of base slope and a flat base. Single fill (1/03).	0.23-0.3	0.90	1.1	No	Planting pit
(1/05)	Fill	Loosely compacted fine-grained silty sand. Dark grey brown in colour, homogenous in composition. Rare charcoal flecking <1%. Rare CBM fragments <1%. Runs under northern section of trench.	0.20	0.80	1.2	Yes	Fill of 1/06
1/06	Cut	Semi-circular in plan (runs under northern baulk). Sharp break of top slope, steeply sloping sides to a sharp break of base slope and a flat base. Contains single fill (1/04).	0.20	0.80	1.2	No	Planting pit
(1/07)	Fill	Loose fine grained silty sand, dark grey brown in colour. Rounded and sub-angular stone (flint) <1%.	0.08	0.4	0.8	Yes	Fill of 1/08
1/08	Cut	Semi-circular in plan (runs under southern baulk). Gradual break of top slope, gradually inward sloping sides with an imperceptible break of base slope, concave base. Contains single fill (1/07).	0.08	0.4	0.8	No	Possible planting pit?
(1/09)	Fill	Loose fine grained silty sand, dark grey brown in colour. Nil inclusions.	0.10	0.6	0.75	Yes	Fill of 1/10

1/10	Cut	Roughly circular in plan (runs under southern baulk). Gradual break of top slope, gradually inwards sloping sides, imperceptible break of base slope, concave base.	0.10	0.6	0.75	No	Possible planting pit?
1/11	Layer	Lightly compacted mid orange brown silty sand. Homogenous in composition.	Unk.	2.0-2.4	8.00	No	Natural
Trench 2							
(2/01)	Layer	Firm dark grey brown silty loam with some sand. CBM and charcoal flecking throughout <1%.	0.24	1.8	8.2	No	Topsoil
(2/02)	Layer	Firm mid grey brown silty loam with some sand mixed throughout. CBM and charcoal flecking throughout <1%.	0.30	1.8	8.2	No	Ploughsoil
(2/03)	Layer	Lightly compacted mid orange brown silty sand. Homogenous in composition. Nil inclusions.	Unk.	1.8	8.2	No	Natural
(2/04)	Fill	Loosely compacted fine-grained silty sand. Dark grey brown in colour, homogenous in composition. Rare charcoal flecking <1%. Rare CBM fragments <1%	0.22	0.90	0.90	Yes	Fill of 2/05
2/05	Cut	Circular in plan. Sharp break of slope at top and base, mostly flat base with relatively straight sides.	0.22	0.90	0.90	No	Planting pit
(2/06)	Fill	Soft mid orange brown silty sand with occasional medium stone.	0.19-0.30	1.9	2.6	Yes	Fill of 2/07
2/07	Cut	Linear in plan. Sharp break of slope at top, gradual at base. Sides slightly concave with a flattish base.	0.19-0.30	1.9	2.6	No	Ditch