



The Old Vicarage, Hornby, Lancashire

Archaeological Evaluation Report



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SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by Forrester Retirement Homes to undertake an evaluation in the grounds of The Old Vicarage, Hornby, Lancashire (NGR SD 5809 68529), in advance of a development comprising the construction of a 15 bedroom extension to the original Vicarage, the construction of a boundary wall, and a change of access. The work comprised the excavation of the first of three archaeological trial trenches, in order that the access alterations could be undertaken prior to the main construction works; the two remaining trenches will be undertaken in a separate evaluation phase in due course. The first phase of trenching was excavated on June 26th 2012.

The village of Hornby dates back to the medieval period, and Hornby Castle, situated to the north-east of the Old Vicarage, may date to the mid-thirteenth century. The site is, therefore, in an area of high archaeological potential. As a result, planning permission (ref 10/00610/FUL) was granted on condition that an archaeological evaluation was carried out across the proposed development site, to understand the impact of the development on any potential surviving archaeological remains.

The trial trench was located in the Old Vicarage gardens, in front of a redundant gate leading into the castle grounds. It ran roughly east/west and measured 10m in length, 2m in width, and reached a maximum depth of 0.82m. The trench comprised a dark silty topsoil (**01**) overlying a levelling layer of reddish-brown, clayey-silt (**02**). No finds were recovered from either of these deposits. The levelling layer, in turn, sealed two features of archaeological interest, a cobbled surface (**03**) and a stone-lined culvert (**04**). The cobbled surface was rough in nature and had been disturbed. A slot excavated towards the western end of the trench indicated that the cobbles had been laid directly into the natural geology (**07**). Fragments of late nineteenth or early twentieth century pottery and animal bone were recovered. Running north-east/south-west, and truncating the cobbled surface, the stone-lined culvert comprised waterworn cobbles forming the sides, and roughly-hewn sandstone slabs the floor and capping. It was backfilled with a loose, stone-rich material (**06**), which produced several fragments of pottery, similar to those from the cobbled surface (**03**). No further features or deposits were encountered.

The first edition of the Ordnance Survey (OS 1841) indicates that a courtyard lay between the Old Vicarage to the north and a large building to the south, which is no longer extant. This formed the main access to Hornby Castle, and was part of the medieval market place. It is likely that the cobbled surface (**03**) formed part of this. By the 1890 edition of the OS map the main entrance had been moved to the south of the vicarage, the second building to the south of the Old Vicarage had been demolished, and the access from the castle to the former courtyard had been blocked by a wooded area. A path running north/south through the Old Vicarage garden indicates that the area had been landscaped. It is likely that these alterations, and the establishment of the culvert (**04**), were part of the major rebuilding and landscaping work that took place at Hornby Castle in the nineteenth century.

As the cobbled surface encountered had formed part of the original entrance to the castle, and was positioned in the heart of medieval Hornby, it is recommended that any further groundworks in the immediate vicinity of the trial trench are subject to permanent archaeological monitoring. It is also possible that there may still be subsurface remains of two buildings identified on the first edition of

the Ordnance Survey (1841), positioned within the current Old Vicarage garden.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North would like to thank Mike Brennan of JMP Architects, on behalf of Forrester Retirement Homes, for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Jeremy Collins of Farrell Heyworth, and Chris Lennon for their assistance.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Kelly Clapperton and Jon Onraet, and the report was compiled by Kelly Clapperton. The drawings were produced by Anna Hodgkinson, and the report was edited by Emily Mercer, who also managed the project.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by Forrester Retirement Homes to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation comprising the excavation of three archaeological trial trenches, ranging from 10m by 2m to 15m by 2m, at The Old Vicarage, Hornby, Lancashire, in advance of development to the rear of the existing building. This would comprise the construction of a 15 bedroom extension to the original Vicarage, the erection of a boundary wall and a change of access. However, in the first instance, only the trench in the proposed access alteration is required, with the remaining two trenches to be undertaken separately in a second phase of trenching.
- 1.1.2 The village of Hornby dates back to the medieval period, and Hornby Castle, situated to the north-east of the Old Vicarage, may date to the mid-thirteenth century. There is, therefore, a high potential for archaeological remains to be disturbed during the proposed development. As a result planning permission (application no. 10/00610/FUL) was granted on condition that an archaeological evaluation was carried out across the proposed development site. The first phase of trenching was excavated on June 26th 2012. The following document provides a summary of the results of the archaeological fieldwork.

1.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 1.2.1 The Old Vicarage is positioned on Hornby Main Street, to the north of the main entrance to Hornby Castle and the river Wenning (NGR SD 58509 68529; Fig 1). Hornby village is situated to the east of the confluence of the rivers Lune and Wenning, on the edge of the Lune Valley. The topography of the area comprises gently undulating, well-maintained farm and parkland, a result of the good surrounding agricultural land. This is interspersed with patches of ancient woodland (Countryside Commission 1998), and contrasts with the high, moorland fells of Bowland to the south (*ibid*).
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology marks a transitional zone between the Bowland fells and the coastal plain to the west (*ibid*). Bowland consists of hard sandstones, for example Millstone Grit, with the deep valleys to the north demarcating the position of softer mudstone and limestone. The coastal plain, however, is underlaid with soft Permo-Triassic rocks (*ibid*). Much of the area is sealed with thick layers of glacial till, sands and gravels (*ibid*), which in turn are overlaid by typical alluvial gley soils (Ordnance Survey 1983).

1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.3.1 The following section provides a summary of the historical and archaeological background of Hornby, to put the fieldwork results in their wider context. It is not meant to be a detailed history of the region, which is beyond the remit of the evaluation.
- 1.3.2 No prehistoric or Romano-British sites are known in Hornby. Nevertheless, excavations at

Priory Farm unearthed finds of worked flint and chert that potentially date to the Late Mesolithic or Early Neolithic, and two conjoining sherds of Roman pottery (OA North 2002b). Several Roman coins were also discovered during a rebuilding programme at Hornby Castle in the nineteenth century (Whitaker 1823), bolstering the theory that the castle was founded on an earlier Roman site (Lancashire County Council LCC 2006).

- 1.3.3 The name Hornby derives from the Old Norse *Horni*, either a forename or a horn-shaped piece of land, and *byr*, meaning farm (Ekwall 1922), and indicates that there may have been a pre-ninth century settlement (LCC 2006). Other evidence for pre-Conquest settlement includes a fragment of segmented cross-shaft recovered from St Margaret's Churchyard, which bears similarities to those at Heysham (*ibid*). This might suggest an early foundation of the Premonstratensian Priory, present after 1160 (*ibid*). The earliest documentary evidence for Hornby is in the Domesday Book of 1086 (Farrer and Brownbill 1912).
- 1.3.4 It is thought that the motte and bailey at Castle Stede was one of the earliest establishments in Hornby. It was the seat of the Montbegons, who acquired lordship over the lands shortly after the Norman Conquest (Curwen 1912). Towards the end of the twelfth century, Roger de Montbegon granted 100 acres of land at what later became known as Priory Farm, for the establishment of the Premonstratensian monastery (Whitaker 1823). This was made out to the 'canons of Hornby', suggesting, however, the presence of a pre-existing monastery. Archaeological work undertaken near Priory Farm did not reveal any remains associated with the religious establishment (OA North 2002b).
- 1.3.5 It is likely that Hornby castle, was constructed in the thirteenth century, and was first referred to in 1285 (LCC 2006). Although no official date can be attributed to the construction of the castle, which was rebuilt in the nineteenth century, thirteenth century fabric is present in the lower part of a sixteenth century pele tower (Pevsner 1969). It is also noted by Whitaker (1823), that two round towers dating to the reign of Edward I (1239-1307) were demolished during the nineteenth century.
- 1.3.6 The village itself comprised 47 ½ burgage plots by 1319 (Higham 1992), positioned to the north-west and south of the river Wenning. A boundary bank and wall demarcated the burgage plots to the west, running south from the river to the Lancaster Road. Excavations to the south of the road (OA North 2002a) revealed a similarly aligned ditch 75m from the Main Street, which produced pottery of twelfth and thirteenth century date. It was thought that this would have been used to demarcate the size of the borough during its establishment, and was backfilled once it had completed this function (LCC 2006). To the north of the Wenning, a bank and ditch bounded burgage plots to the west, while to the east of Main Street lay the castle demense (*ibid*). A market place was positioned at the entrance to the castle, and adjacent to St Margaret's Church, occupying a widening of the street (Chippindall 1939). The medieval market cross base is still present. By the later medieval period Hornby could be described as a typical rural, market village. A fulling mill, corn mill and malt kiln were situated towards the northern edge of the village (Farrer and Brownbill 1912; Marsden 1979; Chippindall 1939), while a tithe barn and pinfold, the ruins of which are still extant, was positioned behind a property fronting western side of the former market place. A tannery was located adjacent to the river to the south-east

(Higham 1992).

- 1.3.7 By the post-medieval period Hornby had hardly changed. It was recorded in the seventeenth century that the village held four shops, three of which were on the market place, and two smithies (Chippindall 1939), as well as the aforementioned mills and tannery. In 1626 a market hall was constructed in the middle of the market place (White 1986), and is annotated on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey (OS 1841). However, it was not properly maintained, and was demolished in 1853 (Farrer and Brownbill 1912). In the eighteenth century the establishment of Hornby Hall, and its estate, meant the reorganisation of the north of the village, and by the mid-nineteenth century it had lost most of its medieval layout (LCC 2006). Other post-medieval developments included the establishment of several inns, including the current Castle Hotel, which dates back to at least 1645 (*ibid*).
- 1.3.8 Unlike many of the villages around, Hornby failed to establish an industrial base in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A link to the Lancaster Canal was proposed, to exploit a local coalfield, but never undertaken (*ibid*). By the mid nineteenth century, the market and fair were obsolete, and all that remained was a fortnightly livestock market (Mannex 1851), which was redundant by 1912 (Farrer and Brownbill 1912). Some minor development did take place in the nineteenth century, reflecting the middle class nature of the village. St Margaret's Church was rebuilt in 1817, and St Mary's Catholic chapel was constructed in 1820 (Farrer and Brownbill 1912), plus a number of private schools (LCC 2006). Hornby, however, has only strayed beyond its medieval confines in the latter half of the twentieth century, as a commuter village for Lancaster.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 OA North was requested to undertake the excavation of the first of three trial trenches proposed in the grounds of the Old Vicarage in response to a request from Forrester Retirement Homes. The scheme of works are to be undertaken to satisfy a planning condition, and the project was verbally agreed with Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS), and in line with the National Planning Policy Framework produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG 2012). The fieldwork was carried out in a manner consistent with the guidance issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008), and English Heritage (2006), and accepted best practice.

2.2 FIELDWORK

2.2.1 A single trial trench was excavated in the garden to the rear of the Old Vicarage (Fig 2). It measured 10m in length and 2m in width, and was excavated to the level of the first archaeological deposits encountered. The trench was opened by a three tonne, 360°, rubber-tracked mechanical excavator, fitted with a 0.9m toothless ditching bucket, and under the constant supervision of an archaeologist.

2.2.2 All features and deposits of archaeological interest were cleaned and investigated by hand. All deposits were identified and recorded on *pro forma* sheets produced by OA North. Drawings were produced on permatrace, and drawn to an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20 or 1:50). A digital photographic archive was produced, and also recorded on *pro forma* sheets. The trench was surveyed using a Leica 407 TST, and was located and levelled in relation to the Ordnance Survey and the Ordnance Survey datum.

2.3 FINDS

2.3.1 All finds exposed, lifted, cleaned and bagged in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) *First Aid for Finds*, 1998 (new edition). All identified finds and artefacts were retained from all material classes; these were hand-collected from stratified deposits for processing and assessment.

2.4 ARCHIVE

2.4.1 A full and professional archive has been compiled in accordance with current IfA (2009) and English Heritage (2006) guidelines. On completion of the project, the original record archive will be deposited with the County Record Office (CRO) in Preston, and a copy of the report will be sent to the Historic Environment Record (HER) also in Preston. The material archive will be submitted to the Museum of Lancashire.

3 FIELDWORK RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 The following section provides a synopsis of the results of the archaeological evaluation. Full descriptions of all the contexts identified and recorded are provided in *Appendix 1*.

3.2 FIELDWORK

3.2.1 The trial trench (Figs 2 and 3; Plate 1) was positioned in front of the gate into the castle grounds, and ran roughly east/west across the Old Vicarage gardens. It measured 10m in length, 2m in width, and reached a maximum depth of 0.82m. The trench comprised a dark silty topsoil (**01**), which was 0.34m thick, overlying a levelling layer of reddish-brown, clayey-silt (**02**), containing frequent angular pebbles, that was 0.19m thick. No finds were recovered from either of these deposits. Layer **02**, in turn, sealed two features of archaeological interest, a cobbled surface (**03**) and a stone-lined culvert (**04**). The cobbled surface was rough in nature and comprised rounded and sub-rounded, waterworn cobbles, up to 300mm in diameter. A slot excavated towards the western end of the trench indicated that they had been laid directly into the natural geology (**07**; Plate 2). No edges were identified, so the full extent of the feature could not be ascertained. Fragments of pottery and animal bone were recovered (*Section 3.3*).



Plate 1: General trench view, looking west



Plate 2: View of slot through cobbles (03), looking south

3.2.2 Running north-east/south-west, and truncating the cobbled surface, the stone-lined culvert was formed by construction cut 05, and stone-lining 04 (Plate 3). This lining comprised waterworn cobbles, forming the sides, and roughly-hewn sandstone slabs forming the floor and capping. It was backfilled with a loose, stone-rich material (06; Plate 4), which produced several fragments of pottery, similar to those from the cobbled surface (03). No further features or deposits were encountered.



Plate 3: Detail of culvert 04, looking south-west

Plate 4: North-facing section of the trench showing culvert **04**

3.3 FINDS

3.3.1 A small assemblage of finds was recovered in the course of the excavation, with a total of 31 fragments of artefacts and ecofacts. The range and distribution of finds is shown below in Table 1. All fragments were small and relatively abraded, suggesting some disturbance of the deposits from which they were recovered, and possibly some secondary deposition.

Context number	Ceramic vessel	Iron	Lithic	Animal bone	Total
03	7	1	0	6	14
06	15	0	1	1	17
Total	22	1	1	7	31

Table 1: Range and distribution of finds

3.3.2 Only one item was of demonstrable antiquity, being a struck flint, of prehistoric date, from the backfill of the culvert trench, **06**. Its presence does not, however, indicate prehistoric activity, and it seems most likely to be 'background noise'. The pottery from both the cobbled surface, **03**, and the culvert trench, **06**, can be dated, most realistically, to the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century. Black-glazed and self-glazed redwares like those recovered are probably locally produced, but their origin cannot now be determined. They are most likely to have been used as kitchen and storage wares, and are, as a result, less subject to changes in fashion than fine tablewares, which inhibits dating with precision. The single iron object, part of a hand-forged nail, is of a type that has changed little over a very long period and similarly cannot be dated, but it seems most likely to be contemporary with the pottery from the site.

3.3.3 Beyond contributing to the broad dating of the contexts from which they derive, the finds have no further archaeological significance.

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 DISCUSSION

- 4.1.1 The evaluation trench excavated in the grounds of the Old Vicarage contained a rough cobbled surface, which had been heavily disturbed, and a stone-lined culvert. The first edition of the Ordnance Survey (OS 1841; Fig 4) illustrates the main entrance to the castle running through the Old Vicarage gate. To the north lies the current retirement home building, and a small structure immediately to its north-east. To the south was a second, large building that is no longer extant, and is now occupied by the Old Vicarage garden. It was likely that the space between the two larger properties formed a small courtyard and access to the castle, to which the cobbled surface (03) relates. By the 1890 edition of the OS map (Fig 5) the main entrance had been moved to the south, and the Lodge had been built. The second building to the south of the Old Vicarage had been demolished, and the access from the castle to the former courtyard has gone, blocked by a wooded area. A path running north/south through the Old Vicarage garden would indicate that the area had been landscaped.
- 4.1.2 Although no direct mention has been made of moving the castle access in the documentary sources, it was well known that major rebuilding and landscaping work took place at Hornby Castle in the nineteenth century (LCC 2006). It is possible that this alteration formed part of these works. Therefore, it is also likely that the stone-lined culvert (04) was constructed during the nineteenth century refurbishments.
- 4.1.3 The pottery recovered from both of these features dated to somewhere between the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, which corroborates with the late nineteenth century mapping evidence.

4.2 SIGNIFICANCE, IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) asserts that *'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected'*. The cobbled surface encountered in the trench can be described as being of archaeological significance, although at a local level, as it is probably the former courtyard for the vicarage and building to the south, and formed part of the original entrance to Hornby Castle. It would have led out on to the medieval market place. The proposed groundworks in this area comprise the creation of an access road across the lawn, and through the currently redundant gate into the castle grounds, and will have a significant impact on the underlying remains.
- 4.2.2 NPPF (DCLG 2012) guidance requires that *'developers [are] to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact'*. Therefore, it is recommended that the proposed access road groundworks are subject to permanent archaeological monitoring in the form of a watching brief.

- 4.2.3 The remains of two buildings, which are no longer extant, seen on the OS 6" first edition (1841, Fig 4), may exist below ground in the Old Vicarage garden. The smaller of the buildings, to the immediate east of the current Old Vicarage, will have both of the proposed trial trenches positioned over it. It is highly likely that archaeological remains will be encountered in the next phase of works.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Trench location plan

Figure 3: Plan of trench showing cobbled surface **03** and stone-lined culvert **04**

Figure 4: Evaluation Trench superimposed on Ordnance Survey first edition 6":1 mile map, 1841

Figure 5: Evaluation Trench superimposed on Ordnance Survey first edition 25":1 mile map, 1890

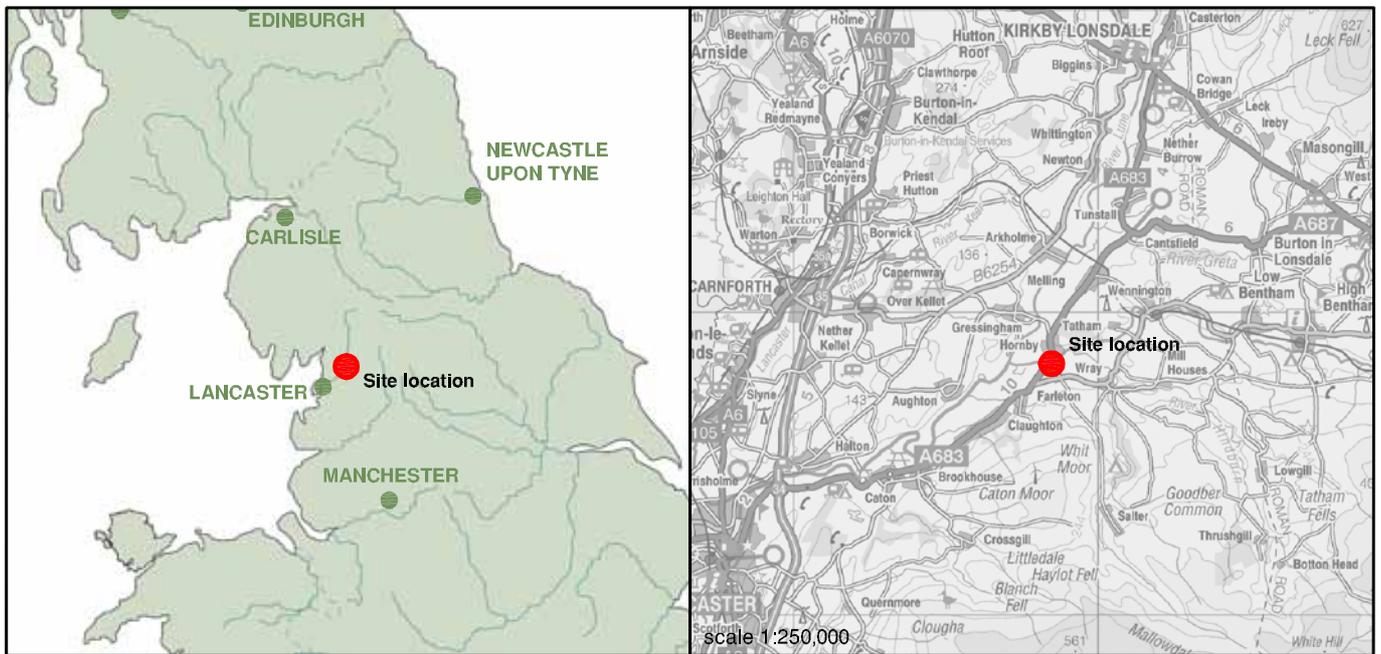
PLATES

Plate 1: General trench view, looking west

Plate 2: View of slot through cobbles (**03**), looking south

Plate 3: Detail of culvert **04**, looking south-west

Plate 4: North-facing section of the trench showing culvert **04**



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Figure 1: Site location

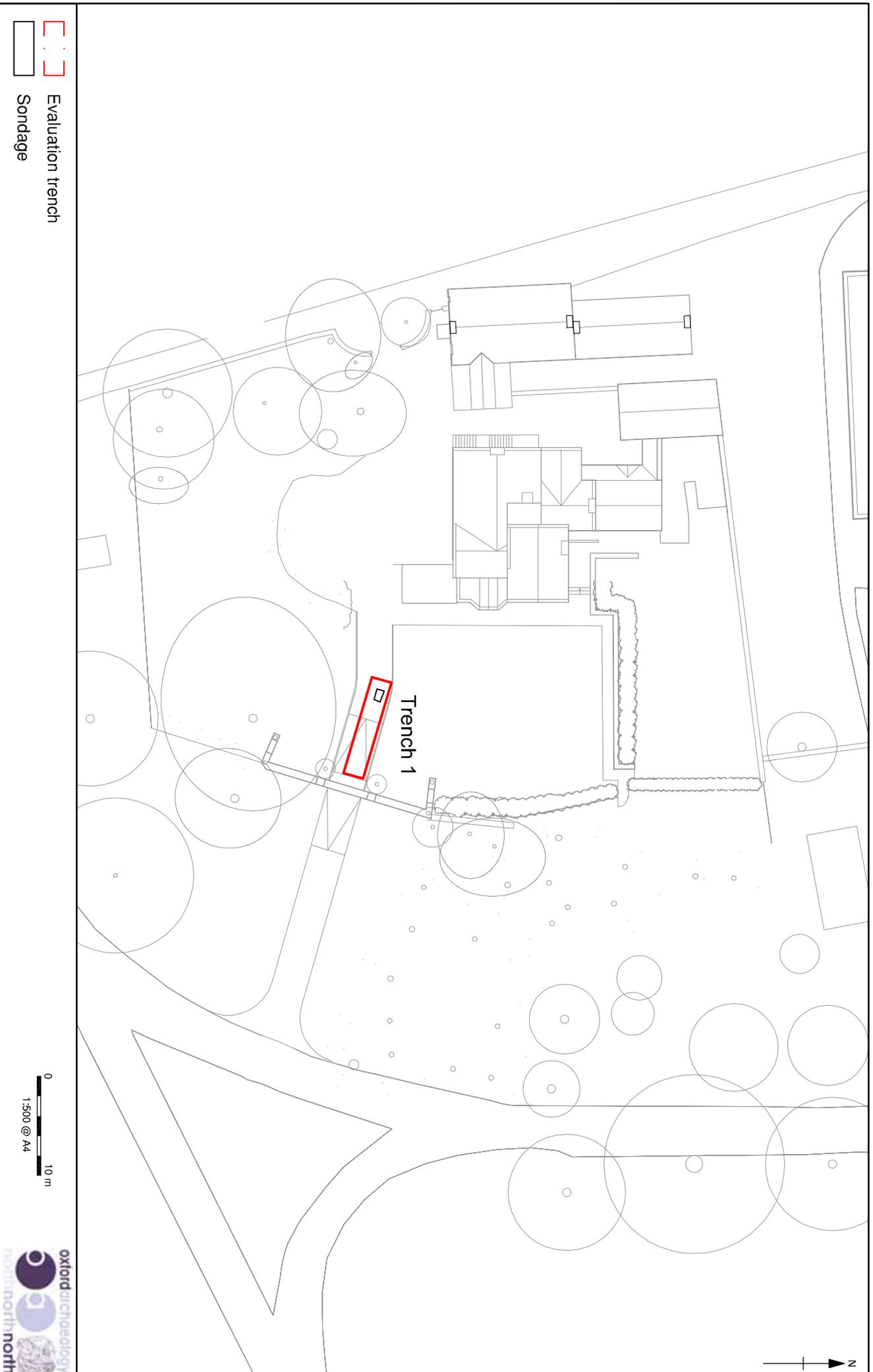
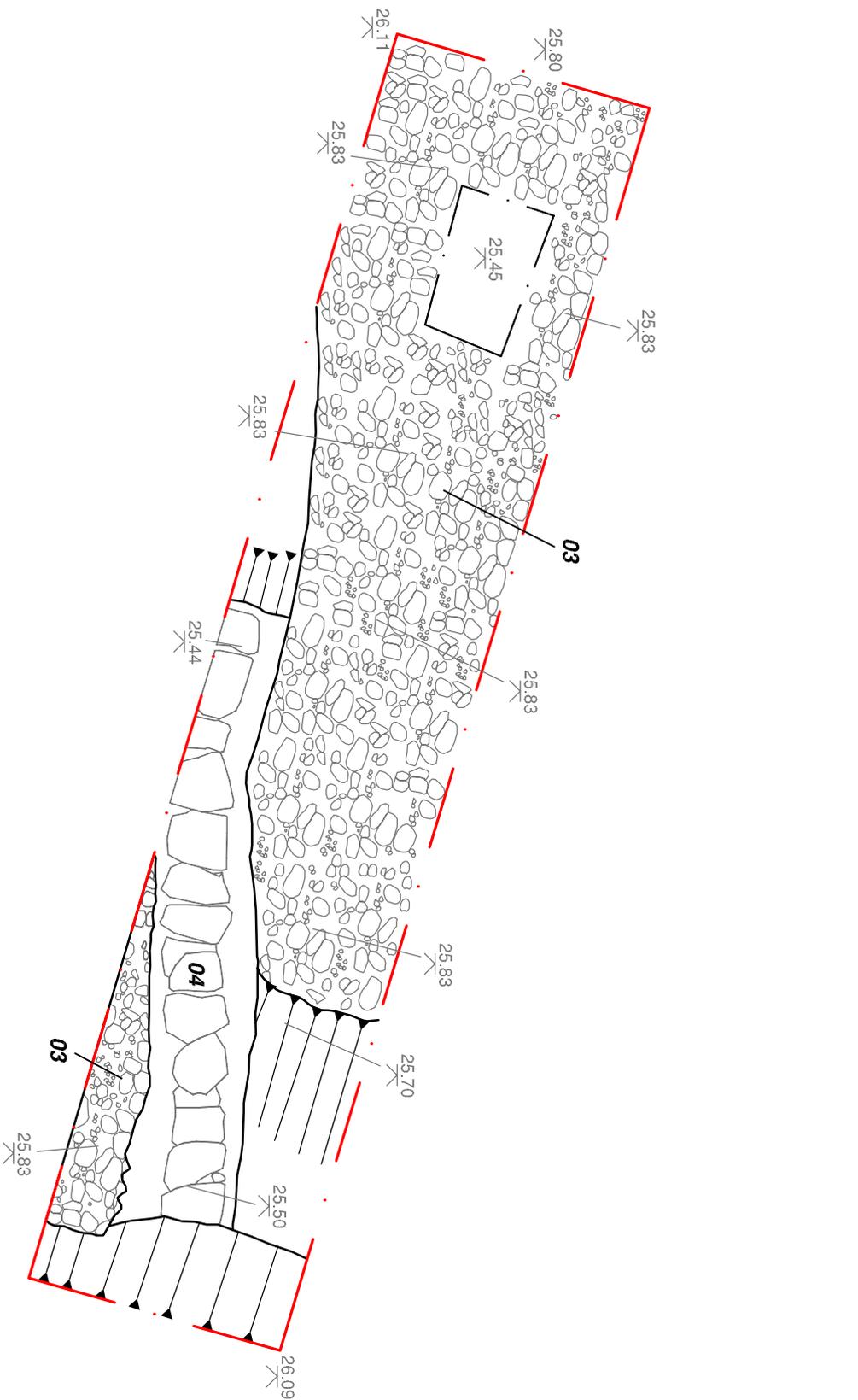


Figure 2: Trench location plan

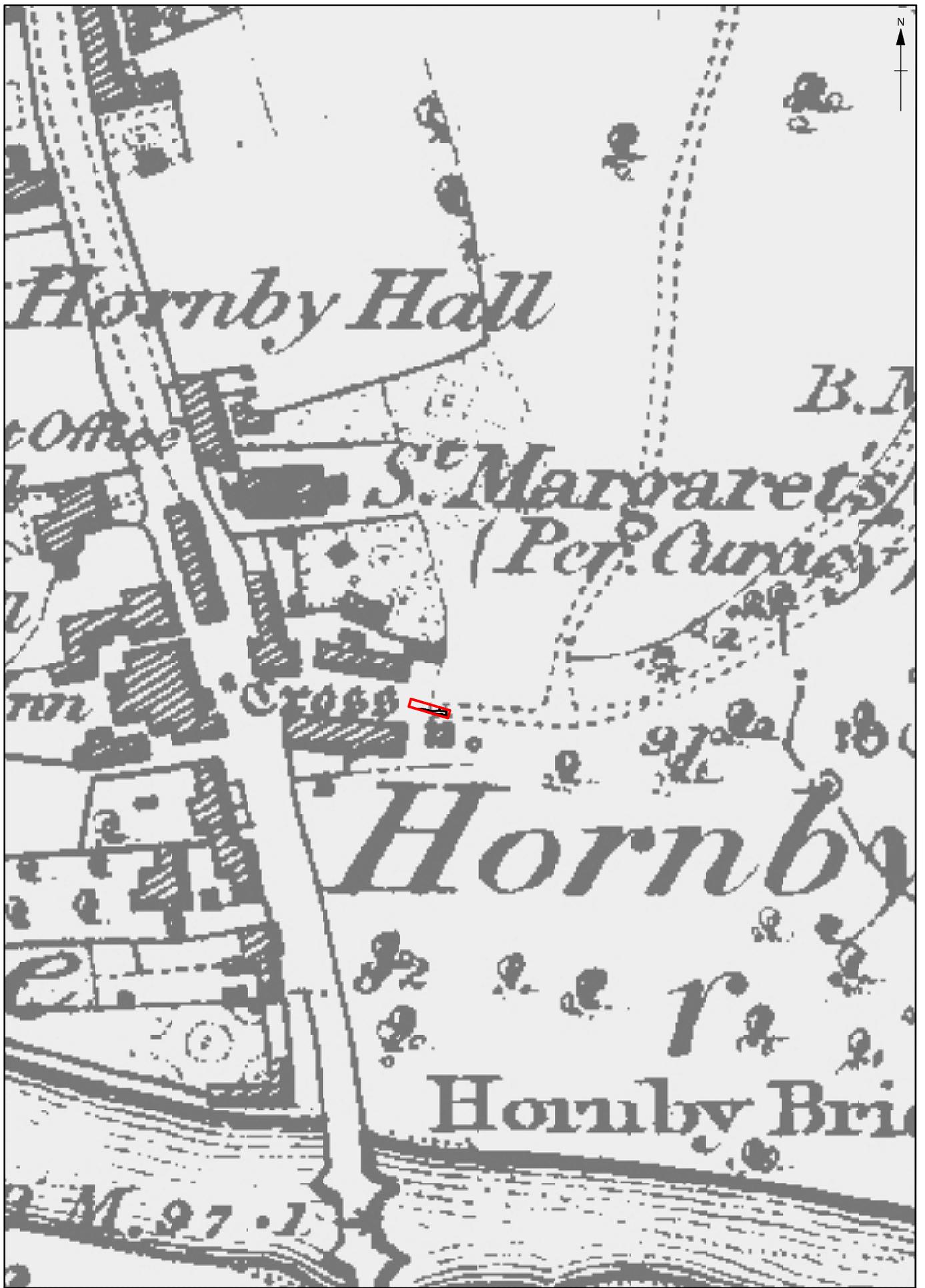


- [- - -] Evaluation trench
- [>>>] Breaks of slope
- [] Archaeological feature
- [Stone pattern] Stones
- [Horizontal lines] Levels

0 1 m
1:50 @ A4



Figure 3: Plan of trench showing cobbled surface **03** and stone-lined culvert **04**



Evaluation trench
 Archaeological feature

0 25 m
 1:1250 @ A4



EM*L10508*AKH*09/07/2012

Figure 4: Evaluation Trench superimposed on Ordnance Survey first edition 6":1 mile map, 1841

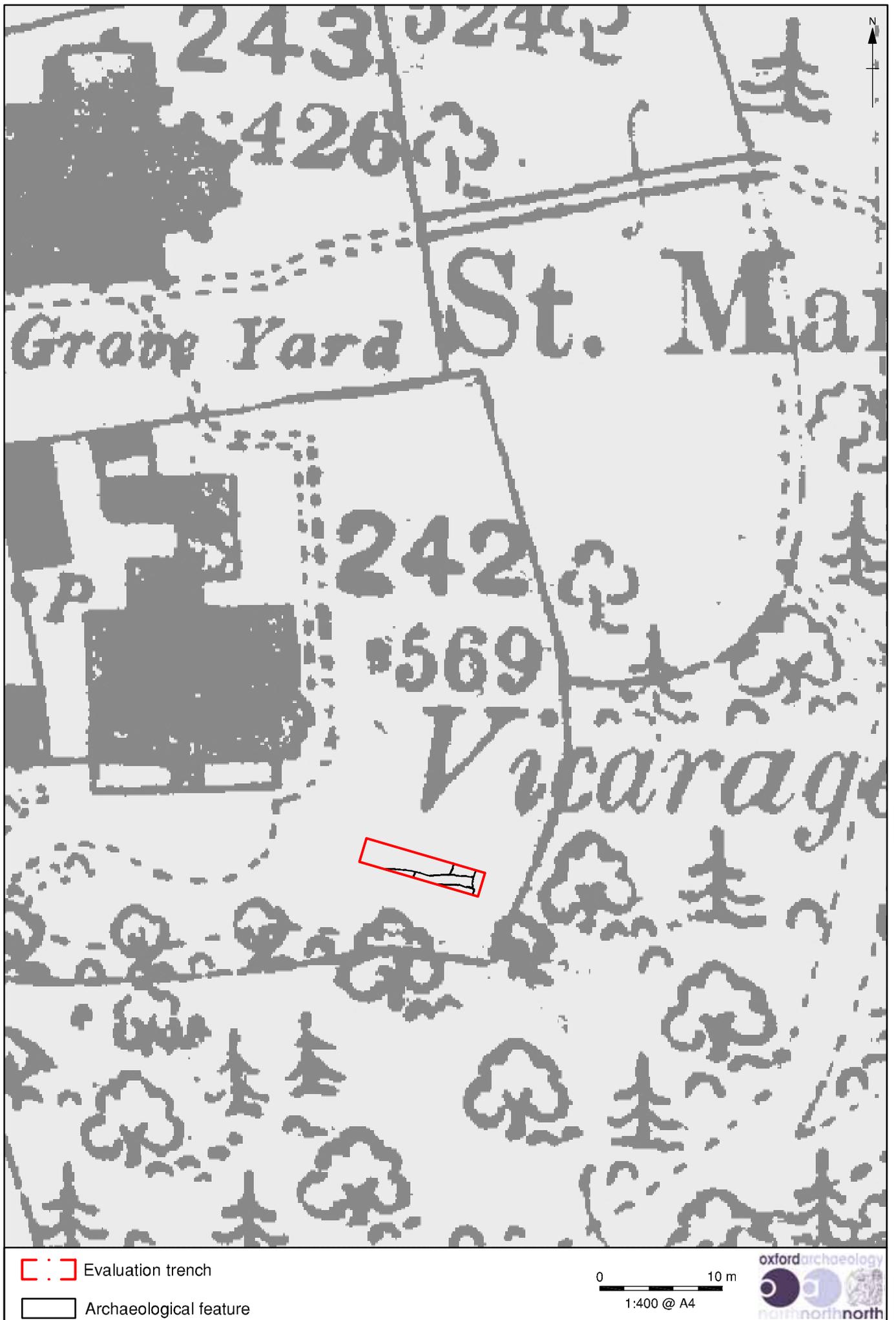


Figure 5: Evaluation trench superimposed on Ordnance Survey first edition 25":1 mile map, 1890

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context No	Description	Interpretation
01	Dark-brown, friable sandy-silt, with 50% rounded pebbles 5mm-200mm. 0.34m thick	Topsoil
02	Mid-dark reddish-brown, compact clayey-silt, with 60% angular stones 10mm-50mm. 0.19m thick	Layer of angular levelling material, most likely as a result of landscaping activities
03	Naturally waterworn rounded and sub-rounded cobbles and pebbles, 50mm-300mm diameter. Sitting in a dark-reddish-brown, tacky clayey-silt matrix. 0.25m thick	Cobbled surface projecting west from the gate. Pottery and mapping evidence suggests a late nineteenth century date. A rough surface indicating that the finer material on top has been removed and used elsewhere
04	Roughly-hewn sandstone slabs forming the floor and capping, and naturally waterworn rounded cobbles forming the sides. Sandstone: 0.41m x 0.32m x 0.06m, cobbles: 0.2m x 0.1m. Measured >7m long, 0.62m wide and 0.4m deep.	Stone-lined culvert, fills cut 05 . Rounded cobbles pressed into natural geology to form the sides, with sandstone slabs lining the floor and capping. Filled with a sandy, sterile silt – no finds recovered
05	Linear in plan, squared U-shaped profile, with sharp break of slope, near vertical sides and a flat base. Aligned north-east/south-west, turning sharply south to align east/west. Measured >7m x 0.62m x >0.65m	Construction cut for stone-lined culvert 04 . Backfilled by 06
06	Mid-reddish-brown, loose and friable sandy-silt, with >70% sub-rounded pebbles and cobbles, 30mm-200mm. 0.4m thick.	Backfill of culvert trench 05 , produced pottery of probable later nineteenth century date, possibly residual
07	Mid-orangey-brown, firm and tacky sandy-clay, with <50% sub-rounded pebbles <20mm.	Natural geology

APPENDIX 2: FINDS SUMMARY

Context	Material	Category	Quantity	Description	Date
03	Iron	Nail?	1	Small fragment, probably shank of hand-forged nail.	Not closely dateable
03	Ceramic	Vessel	4	Four small and abraded body fragments of black-glazed redware.	Nineteenth century or later
03	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Two small rim fragments of self-glazed redware, possibly with slip-trailed decoration. Flatware.	Nineteenth century or later
03	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Small body fragment of self-glazed redware with green, white and brown mottled slip.	Nineteenth century or later
03	Bone	Animal	1	Probably shattered fragments of a single bone.	Not closely dateable
06	Ceramic	Vessel	9	Nine small and abraded body fragments of black-glazed redware.	Nineteenth century or later
06	Ceramic	Vessel	6	One rim and five body fragments of self-glazed redware, possibly with slip-trailed decoration. Rim is from a dish or bowl.	Nineteenth century or later
06	Bone	Animal	1	Small fragment of bone.	Not closely dateable.
06	Stone	Flint	1	Pale grey, poor quality struck flake with abrupt retouch along one edge. Utilised.	Prehistoric