



RHYDDINGS PARK, OSWALDTWISTLE, LANCASHIRE

Archaeological Evaluation Report



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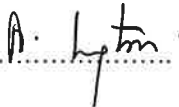
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SUMMARY

Newground is preparing a detailed application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver a significant project in Rhyddings Park, Oswaldtwistle (centred on NGR 374490 427330). Working in partnership with The Friends of Rhyddings Park and Hyndburn Borough Council, the project will aim to restore the park, protect its heritage, and encourage more local people to use the restored buildings and facilities in the park. It is envisaged that one element of the proposed project will allow for a community-led archaeological excavation, which will aim to engage local communities in the rich history of the park and highlight the site as an important local heritage asset by investigating the buried remains of former buildings.

The site of a building identified as 'Riddings' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848 occupies the eastern part of Rhyddings Park. The origin of this building is uncertain, although it was perhaps a small hall or large farmhouse of seventeenth- or eighteenth-century date. It was demolished in the mid-nineteenth century, when a large villa residence, known as Rhyddings Hall, was erected by Robert Watson, a leading local textile manufacturer. The hall was used as a domestic residence until 1909, when the building and its grounds were acquired by Oswaldtwistle Urban District Council, and opened as a public park in the same year. The hall was eventually converted to a museum and art gallery although, by 1932, the maintenance of the building was proving to be too expensive, and it was demolished in 1938.

In order to inform the design and scope of the proposed archaeological excavation in the park, Newground commissioned Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) to undertake the excavation of some preliminary test pits. These were intended primarily to establish the presence or absence of any buried remains of archaeological interest, and thereby enable a programme of more detailed excavation to be devised. Eight test pits were excavated in January 2015, targeted on the sites of 'Riddings', the mid-nineteenth-century Rhyddings Hall, and ancillary buildings.

The results obtained from the test pits has indicated that the structural foundations of Rhyddings Hall survive *in-situ*, and further excavation of the site as a community-led project would almost certainly yield significant data. The test pits also demonstrated that the site of 'Riddings' has been subject to comprehensive demolition and subsequently landscaping works. However, fragments of eighteenth-century pottery were discovered in the test pits, and more artefacts could be recovered from further excavation, which may contribute to a better understanding of the origin and character of this rather enigmatic building. The test pits also investigated a glasshouse associated with Rhyddings Hall, although no buried remains were encountered.

It is concluded that the site of the mid-nineteenth-century Rhyddings Hall has the best potential as a focus for a community-led excavation in the park. This could usefully reveal the foundations of the building, enable the interior layout to be recorded and establish whether it contains any cellars.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) is grateful to Dr Rachel Street, Senior Education Officer for Newground, for commissioning and supporting the project. Thanks are also expressed to Craig Haraben, Head of Parks and Cemeteries at Hyndburn Borough Council, for logistical support.

The evaluation was supervised by Peter Schofield of OA North, assisted by Dr Rachel Street and Arthur Baldwin of Newground. The report was compiled by Ian Miller, and the drawings were produced by Mark Tidmarsh.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Newground is preparing a detailed application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to deliver a significant project in Rhyddings Park, Oswaldtwistle (Fig 1; Plate 1). Working in partnership with The Friends of Rhyddings Park and Hyndburn Borough Council, the project will aim to restore the park, protect its heritage, and encourage more local people to use the restored buildings and facilities.
- 1.1.2 It is intended that funding from the HLF will be expended on restoring walls and refurbishing the former coach house so it can be used for meeting rooms, a cafe and training kitchen, rejuvenating derelict spaces and returning the walled garden to its traditional use of food growing, improving footpaths, access points and signage in and around the park, establishing a volunteer programme, and creating activities for different age groups including guided walks and family fun events. One element of the proposed project allows for a community-led archaeological excavation, which will aim to engage local communities in the rich history of the park and highlight the site as an important local heritage asset by investigating the buried remains of former buildings.
- 1.1.3 The earliest buildings within the area of the park are shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848. One of these is annotated as 'Riddings' (Plate 2), and whilst little is known about the building and its date of construction is presently uncertain, its layout on the map is consistent with a large yeoman farmhouse or minor hall of seventeenth-/eighteenth-century date. The second building shown on the 1848 Ordnance Survey map fronts onto Fielding Lane, and survives extant as the Stop and Rest public house.
- 1.1.4 Rhyddings Park originated as the grounds of a private house belonging to Robert Watson, a local textile manufacturer who established the nearby Stone Bridge Mill. It seems that Watson was responsible for the demolition of the Riddings building in 1853, and the erection of a villa in the heart of what is currently Rhyddings Park. Known as Rhyddings Hall, the villa was used as a domestic residence until 1909, when it was acquired by Oswaldtwistle Urban District Council along with its grounds, to provide a recreational facility for the people of Oswaldtwistle. The grounds were opened officially as a park in the same year. The hall was eventually converted to a museum and art gallery although, by 1932, the maintenance of the building was proving to be too expensive, and it was demolished in 1938.
- 1.1.5 The site of the Rhyddings Hall is clearly visible in the modern landscape as a raised, grass-covered, level platform. Other surviving remnants of the estate include the former coach house, which is currently used as a depot facility, and a folly that has been incorporated into the park as a feature, and may have been constructed using materials salvaged from the demolished Riddings building.

- 1.1.6 In order to inform the design and scope of the proposed archaeological excavation in the park, Newground commissioned Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) to undertake the excavation of some preliminary test pits. These were intended primarily to establish the presence or absence of any buried remains of archaeological interest, and thereby enable a programme of more detailed excavation to be devised.
- 1.1.7 The test pits were excavated in January 2015, and confirmed that extensive buried remains of Rhyddings Hall survive *in-situ*. This document summarises the results obtained from the test pit excavations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 The project was carried out in accordance with a Project Brief supplied by Newground. All work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

2.2.1 **Evaluation:** it was proposed that eight test pits, each measuring c 1 x 1m, were excavated manually across Rhyddings Park. Three test pits were placed across the footprint of the building marked 'Riddings' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848, and another three across the footprint of the mid-nineteenth-century Rhyddings Hall. It was also proposed that two test pits examined the site of two glasshouses shown on historical mapping, although only one of these test pits could be excavated fully as the surface of the second test pit comprised a concrete surface that could not be broken-out using hand tools.

2.2.2 **Recording:** this comprised a full description of the deposits and structures revealed, on OA North *pro-forma* sheets. The test pits were located with a GPS survey equipment, and tied into the Ordnance Survey grid. An indexed photographic record using digital format was maintained throughout the course of the evaluation.

2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 The results of the archaeological investigation will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition, 1991*) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (Walker 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project.

2.3.2 OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. The archive and the excavated material will be deposited with the Lancashire Records Office. The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database project *Online Access to index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.

2.3.3 The material and paper archive generated from the evaluation will be transferred in accordance with the guidelines provided by *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation* (Brown 2007).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1 Rhyddings Park lies on the eastern fringe of Oswaldtwistle, and is bounded by Park Lane, Fielding Lane, Edinburgh Drive and Hawthorn Avenue. The park forms the south-eastern part of the Rhyddings Conservation Area. The site of Rhyddings Hall lies in the north-eastern part of the park (centred on NGR 374490 427330; Fig 1).

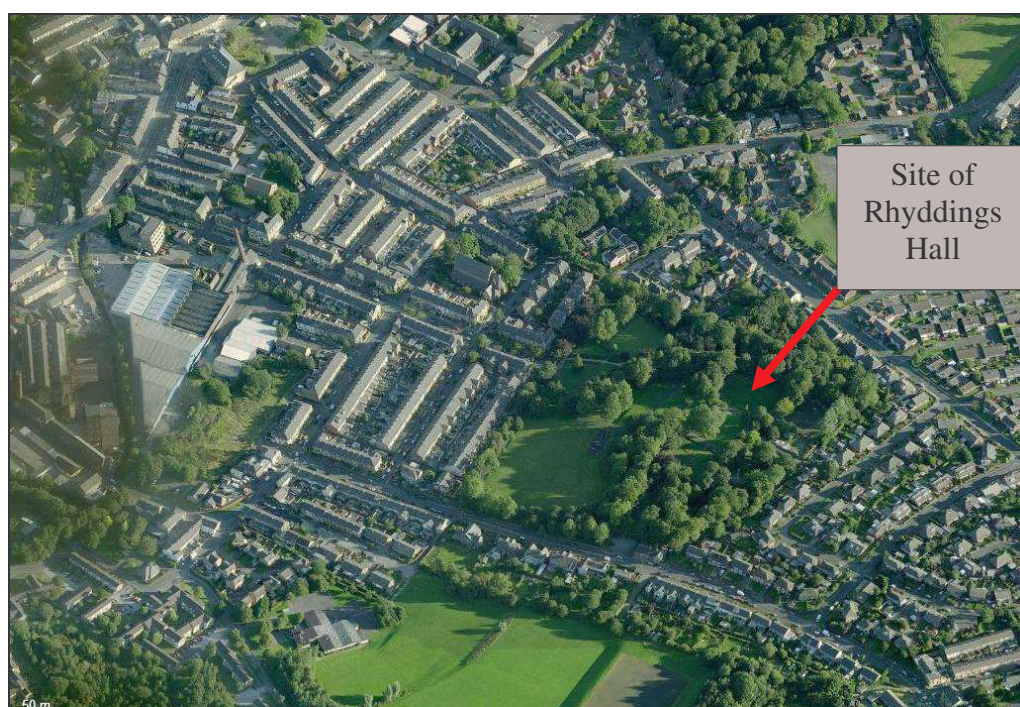


Plate 1: Recent aerial view looking north across the Rhyddings Conservation Area, showing Rhyddings Park in the centre and Robert Watson's Stone Bridge Mill to the west

- 3.1.2 The underlying solid geology is Lower Westphalian Coal Measures of the Carboniferous era (359-299 million years ago; Ordnance Survey 1951), which was an important factor in the early industrial development of the area. The hills surrounding the town are generally formed of Carboniferous sandstones, ranging from the more recent Accrington mudstones to older gritstones and other formations such as Dyneley Flag and Dandy Rock. The former were locally used for flagstones and roofing before the introduction of Welsh slate and later for brick-making, whilst the latter were widely used in the locality for providing stone setts and kerbstones (Countryside Commission 1998, 102). The drift cover consists primarily of soils of the Brickfield Association, being medium to fine textured tills derived from Carboniferous sandstones.

3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 The earliest documentary evidence for the Accrington area dates to the twelfth century, when it formed a township in the chalpery of Altham, itself part of the extensive and ancient parish of Whalley (Croston (ed) 1889, 410). It lay within the Hundred of Blackburn, and by the twelfth century formed part of the de Lacy family's Honour of Clitheroe (Lancashire County Council 2005). Oswaldtwistle is first mentioned in documentary sources in c 1208, when Adam de Rishton granted an area of land to Adam of Oswaldthuisal, which appears to have formed part of the forest of Accrington.
- 3.2.2 In 1507, Henry VII disafforested the chases of Accrington, Bowland, Pendle, Rossendale and Trawden, leading to the formation of the townships of Accrington Old Hold and Accrington New Hold (Porter 1980, 30). In 1650 the two townships were estimated to contain about 200 families (Williams 1872, 8). However, the hearth tax of 1666 enumerated 38 hearths in Old Accrington and 99 in New Accrington (Farrer and Brownbill 1911, 243), suggesting that the population of New Accrington was at least twice that of Old Accrington (Lancashire County Council 2005, 19).
- 3.2.3 The Riddings Estate was originally part of the Catlow Estate, owned by the de Catlow family. The estate was divided in the 1500s, and part of it was taken by the Ridding family, who owned it until 1631; it is possible that a property known as 'Riddings' was occupied by the Ridding family. The footprint of this building lies within the boundary of the modern Rhyddings Park, and it is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1848 (Fig 3; Plate 2).



Plate 2: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1848, showing the modern boundary of Rhyddings Park

- 3.2.4 The Rhyddings estate was purchased by a local cotton manufacturer, Mr Robert Watson, in the early nineteenth century. Watson demolished the Riddings, and constructed a new house, Rhyddings Hall, in 1853. This large villa was inspired by Pugin, and was set in landscaped grounds (Plate 3).



Plate 3: Rhyddings Hall depicted on an early twentieth-century postcard

- 3.2.5 The villa was advertised for sale in the late nineteenth century, when it was described as: ‘a mansion with vestibule, hall, large dining and drawing rooms, library, breakfast room, small sitting room, large nursery, nine bedrooms, two dressing rooms, servants rooms, kitchens, butler’s pantry and two bathrooms.’ There was also a range of other buildings including a conservatory, stable block, wash house, coachman and gardeners’ cottages, a laundry, vinery and greenhouses.
- 3.2.6 Watson gradually sold off portions of the western area of the estate, which was occupied subsequently by rows of terraced housing at a steam-powered weaving factory known as Rhyddings Mill. Robert Watson left the park in 1890, retired to Southport, died 1903 and the hall was passed on to other members of the family. The layout of the hall, outbuildings and landscaped gardens during this period are captured on the Ordnance Survey map of 1893 (Fig 4: Plate 4), which was surveyed during the late 1880s.
- 3.2.7 The hall and its grounds were leased to the Bullough family for a short period in the early twentieth century, before being leased to Oswaldtwistle Urban District Council in 1909. The grounds were officially opened as a park in the same year. A children’s playground was added to the northern corner of the park in 1914, and permanent tennis courts opened in 1925 in the former walled kitchen garden. The playground was later replaced by a bowling green, and paths installed in 1931.

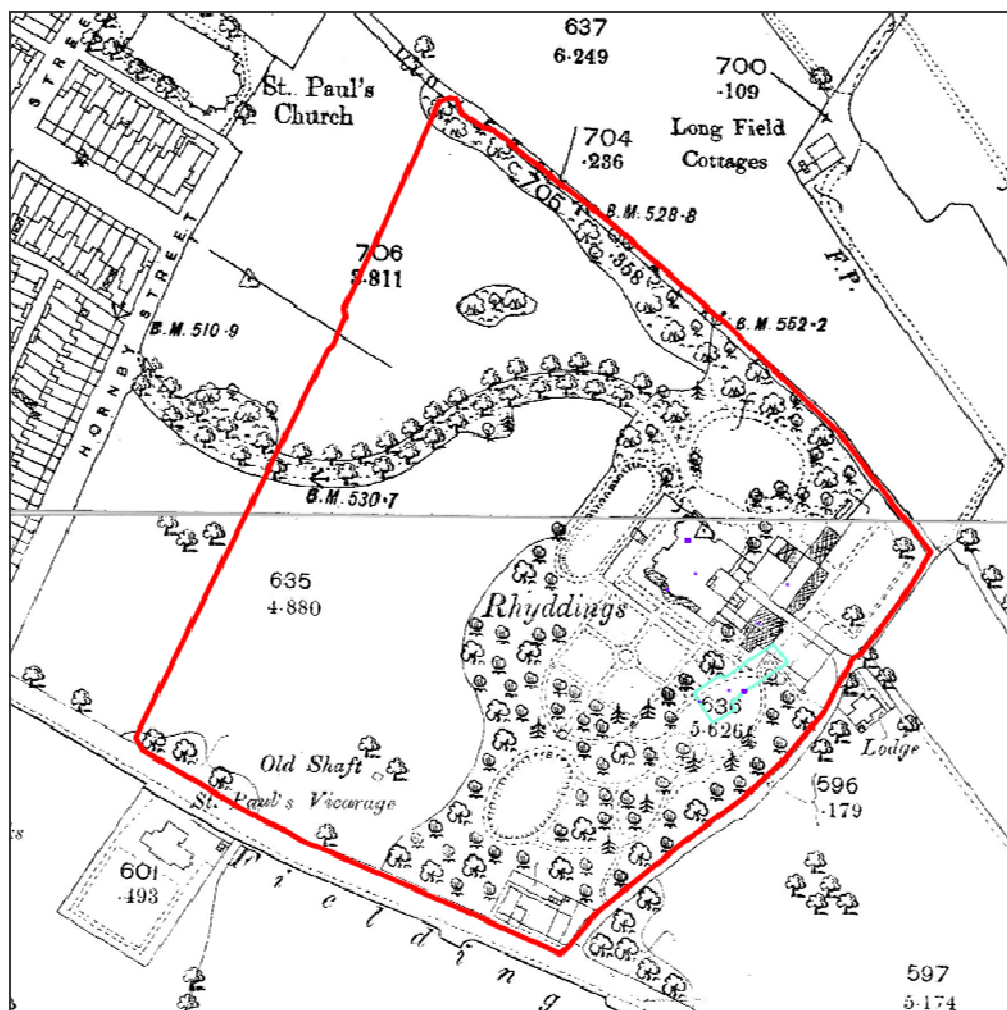


Plate 4: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1893, showing the modern boundary of Rhyddings Park and the footprint of Riddings. The Ordnance Survey map shows Rhyddings Hall in its fully developed form as a private residence, with a tree-lined drive from Hornby Street, landscaped gardens and several glasshouses to the rear of the hall.

- 3.2.8 The hall was eventually converted to a museum and art gallery and accommodation for the grounds keeper. A plan produced for Oswaldtwistle Urban District Council shows the proposed alterations on the ground floor of the hall that were required to convert the building to a museum (Fig 5). However, by 1932, the maintenance of the building was proving to be too expensive, and the hall was demolished in 1938.

4. EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The archaeological evaluation of Rhyddings Park comprised the excavation of eight small test pits, although one of these (Test Pit 5) could not be excavated fully due to an overlying concrete surface that could not be broken-out using hand tools. The test pits were targeted on the footprint of structures shown on the sequence of historical mapping for the area, and included the site of an former minor hall/large farmhouse annotated 'Riddings' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848 (Fig 3), and the site of the mid-nineteenth-century Rhyddings Hall (Figs 4 and 5). The footprint of two glasshouses were also targeted (Fig 4), primarily to establish whether these had been greenhouses or heated hothouses, intended for the cultivation of exotic fruits. The test pits were excavated using exclusively manual techniques in January 2015, and were backfilled upon completion.

4.2 TEST PIT 1

4.2.1 Test Pit 1 was placed across the projected course of the south-western wall of Riddings farmhouse, as depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848 (Plate 2). The test pit measured 1 x 1m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.67m below the modern ground surface (Plate 5).



Plate 5: Test Pit 1 fully excavated

- 4.2.2 A thick layer of mixed clay (**103**) was exposed at a depth of 0.45m. This contained fragments of sandstone and degraded mortar, together with occasional rounded cobbles and flecks of charcoal. Excavation for a further 0.2m demonstrated that the layer was fairly homogeneous in both its texture and constituents. Whilst the clay component is likely to represent the natural geology, it had clearly been disturbed and mixed with materials that probably derived from the demolition of the building in the mid-nineteenth century.
- 4.2.3 Mixed clay **103** was overlain by a 0.05-0.10m thick layer of light brown silty clay subsoil (**102**), which contained occasional fragments of coal, sandstone and pottery. This appeared to have been cut by a block of concrete, which was only partially exposed within the confines of the excavated test pit (Plate 5). It is possible that this had formed the base pad for a fence posts, although this could not be established with any degree of certainty.
- 4.2.4 Subsoil **102** was sealed by the modern topsoil (**101**). This contained occasional stones and fragments of glass and pottery.

4.3 TEST PIT 2

- 4.3.1 Test Pit 2 lay a short distance to the north-east of Test Pit 1, and was similarly intended to investigate the site of Riddings. The test pit measured 1 x 1m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.8m (Plate 6).



Plate 6: Test Pit 2 fully excavated

- 4.3.2 The stratigraphic sequence exposed in the test pit was very similar to that in Test Pit 1, although a layer of clean clay revealed at the base of the excavation, at a depth of 0.8m, almost certainly represented the natural geology. This was overlain by a 0.2m thick layer of mixed demolition material in a clay matrix (**203**). This contained occasional rounded stones, together with fragments of sandstone and pottery, and represented a continuation of layer **103** that was recorded in Test Pit 1.
- 4.3.3 Layer **203** was overlain by a deposit of light brown silty clay subsoil (**202**), which contained occasional fragments of coal, sandstone and pottery. Whilst similar to layer **102** in Test Pit 1, **202** had a maximum thickness of 0.3m. It was sealed by the modern topsoil (**201**), which contained occasional stones and fragments of brick.

4.4 TEST PIT 3

- 4.4.1 Test Pit 3 was placed a short distance to the east of Test Pit 2, and was targeted on the projected south wall of Riddings. The test pit measured 1 x 1m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m (Plate 7).



Plate 7: Test Pit 3 fully excavated

- 4.4.2 A thick layer of orange-brown clay exposed at the base of the excavated test pit clearly represented the natural geology. A series of irregular-sized stones was set into the clay in the western part of the test pit. These appeared to have been deliberately laid, and potentially represented part of the foundations for a north-west/south-east-aligned wall. As such, this putative structure lay at a right angle to the exterior walls of the building, and may thus have been an internal partition. However, there was no indication for any interior surfacing.

- 4.4.3 The natural clay in the eastern part of the trench had been cut by a modern land drain. The construction trench for this drain will have removed any archaeological remains in the eastern part of the trench.
- 4.4.4 The natural clay geology and putative wall foundation were overlain by a layer of light brown silty clay subsoil (302), similar to that exposed in the other test pits. This layer had a maximum depth of 0.3m, and was sealed by the modern topsoil (301).

4.5 TEST PIT 4

- 4.5.1 Test Pit 4 was targeted on the footprint of a former glass house depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1893 (Plate 4), within the area occupied most recently by 'Pets Corner'. The test pit measured 1 x 1m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m (Plate 8).



Plate 8: Test Pit 4 fully excavated

- 4.5.2 A layer of stiff orange-brown clay was revealed at the base of the excavated test pit (403). This contained occasional rounded stones and fragments of pottery, implying that it was not the natural geology. It was overlain by a layer of dark brown silt clay (402), which contained demolition material, including fragments of bricks, pottery and mortar. It also incorporated a distinct lens of ash with abundant flecks of mortar and ash.

- 4.5.3 Layer **402** had a maximum depth of 0.34m, and was sealed by a layer of modern detritus (**401**) that reflected the recent use of the area by animals. This contained organic matter, including decomposed straw and animal faeces.
- 4.5.4 No structural remains of the glass house were present in the trench. It seems probable that the building had been completely demolished and the area subject to earth-moving works during the construction of 'Pets Corner'.

4.6 TEST PIT 5

- 4.6.1 Test Pit 5 was placed within the footprint of a second glass house, situated on the northern side of the access track from Edinburgh Drive, adjacent to the former coach house. Whilst much of this structure has been demolished, the side walls remain partially extant, and the original floor has been resurfaced with concrete. Whilst an attempt was made to break through the concrete surface, this proved to be impossible with manual tools, and the test pit was abandoned.

4.7 TEST PIT 6

- 4.7.1 Test Pit 6 targeted the site of the mid-nineteenth-century Rhyddings Hall, and was placed across the footprint of the bay window in the centre of the south-west-facing elevation of the building, as shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1893 (Plate 4). The test pit measured 1.1 x 1.1m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.48m (Plate 9).



Plate 9: Test Pit 6 fully excavated

- 4.7.2 A layer of quite compact, dark brown clay (**604**) was exposed at the base of the excavated test pit, at a depth of 0.32m. Whilst this may have represented the natural geology, it appeared to have been redeposited, perhaps to create a raised platform during the construction of Rhyddings Hall, as it contained small fragments of hand-made bricks. Layer **604** had been cut by the foundation trench for a substantial curved wall (**603**), which almost certainly represented the foundations of the bay window of Rhyddings Hall. The wall survived to a height of at least two courses, and comprised large sandstone blocks, with a sandstone rubble core (Plate 9). Traces of lime-based mortar, consistent with a mid-nineteenth-century construction date, were clearly visible on the component stone blocks. Layer **604** was also cut by a salt-glazed drain pipe, 4" in diameter, which was revealed in the south-eastern corner of the excavated test pit.
- 4.7.3 Wall **603** was overlain by a 0.32m thick later of mixed demolition rubble (**602**), comprising fragments of sandstone, bricks, ash and mortar, deriving from the demolition of Rhyddings Hall in the twentieth century. This was sealed by the modern topsoil (**601**), which had a maximum depth of 0.17m.

4.8 TEST PIT 7

- 4.8.1 Test Pit 7 was placed within the footprint of Rhyddings Hall, and aimed to establish the presence or absence of any structural remains in the central part of the building. The test pit measured 1 x 1m, and was excavated to a depth of 0.61m (Plate 10).



Plate 10: Test Pit 7 fully excavated

- 4.8.2 A layer of dark brown clay (**704**), very similar to layer **604** in Test Pit 6, was exposed at the base of the excavated test pit, at a depth of 0.46m. This similarly appeared to represent made ground, creating a raised level platform upon which to erect Rhyddings Hall.
- 4.8.3 Layer **704** was cut by the foundation trench for a sandstone wall (**703**), which was 0.4m wide and was aligned north-east/south-west across the test pit (Plate 10). The wall comprised large, worked sandstone blocks bonded with lime-based mortar. This probably represented the foundation course of a substantial partition wall within Rhyddings Hall.
- 4.8.4 Wall **703** was overlain by a 0.2m thick later of mixed demolition rubble (**702**), comprising fragments of sandstone, bricks, ash and mortar, deriving from the demolition of Rhyddings Hall in the twentieth century. This was sealed by the modern topsoil (**701**), which had a maximum depth of 0.28m.

4.9 TEST PIT 8

- 4.9.1 Test Pit 8 was placed to the north of Test Pit 7, and was again within the footprint of Rhyddings Hall. The test pit measured 1.2 x 1m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m (Plate 11).



Plate 11: Test Pit 8 fully excavated

- 4.9.2 The earliest feature exposed in the test pit was another substantial stone-built wall (**803**), which was aligned north-east/south-west across the south-eastern corner of the trench. The wall was covered with demolition rubble (**802**), which formed the lowest deposit excavated in the test pit. Rubble **802** was exposed to a depth of 0.6m, but continued below this level, suggesting that this may have been an infilled cellar. The rubble contained numerous fragments of broken bricks, stones, and floor tiles (Plates 12 and 13). It was sealed beneath a 0.2m thick layer of topsoil (**801**).



Plate 12: Fragments of floor tiles recovered from Test Pit 8



Plate 13: Fragment of a Minton floor tile recovered from Test Pit 8

4.10 FINDS

4.10.1 Numerous artefacts were recovered from the test pits, although numerically the assemblage was dominated by fragments of ceramic tiles, which had formed the floor surface in the mid-nineteenth-century Rhyddings Hall. Fragments of ceramic vessels were also well represented in the finds assemblage (101 fragments), together with lesser amounts of clay tobacco pipes (two fragments), glass bottles (three fragments) and window glass (four fragments), and a single plastic object. Most of the artefacts were in fair to good condition, although the majority of the pottery fragments were small, suggesting some post-depositional disturbance. The material is entirely domestic in function and can be broadly dated to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although a small proportion probably dates to the eighteenth century, with one fragment potentially of a seventeenth-century date.

4.10.2 **Ceramic tiles:** numerically, fragments of tiles dominated the finds assemblage, nearly all of (229 fragments) which was recovered from the demolition rubble (802) in Test Pit 8. Several of the fragments had been stamped with the manufacture's mark of the Minton tile companies of Stoke-on-Trent, and it is probable that all of the tiles had been supplied by Minton (Plates 13 and 14). There were several different tile companies with Minton in the name that were active in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although some of the tiles recovered from the test pits were stamped 'Minton & Co' and 'Prosser's Patent' (Plate 13). This relates to a dust-pressing method of producing floor tiles that was patented by Richard Prosser in 1842, and was in widespread use by 1860, enabling the tiles to be dated with confidence to the second half of the nineteenth century. The vast majority of the tiles were of a single colour, either black, terracotta or cream. They occurred in a variety of shapes, including diamonds, triangles, hexagonals and small squares, presumably to enable a geometric pattern to be laid, typical of high-status Victorian buildings. Examples of decorated rectangular tiles were also discovered (Plates 14 and 15), and had probably formed the borders to the tiled floor.



Plate 14: The underside of a complete Minton & Co floor tile recovered from Test Pit 8



Plate 15: A complete Minton floor tile recovered from Test Pit 8

- 4.10.3 A single small fragment of decorated floor tile was recovered from the demolition rubble (**602**) in Test Pit 6. The decoration on the tile comprises a cream square with a light blue border, perhaps representing part of the floor of one of the original drawing rooms.
- 4.10.4 **Pottery:** in total, 101 sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered during the excavations. Whilst the fragments were generally in good condition, they were all small in size with relatively few diagnostic sherds. The earliest material comprised a single small sherd of a blackware vessel, which was recovered from the layer of disturbed subsoil (**302**) in Test Pit 3. This fragment is probably of an eighteenth-century date, although the possibility that it is actually of a seventeenth-century date can by no means be discounted. Other early material included several fragments of mottled ware, recovered from disturbed subsoil **202** in Test Pit 2 and demolition material **702** in Test Pit 7, and a single small fragment of a tin-glazed earthenware vessel from layer **302** in Test Pit 3. All of these fragments are likely to date to the early eighteenth century.
- 4.10.5 As may be anticipated, the pottery assemblage was dominated dark-glazed earthenwares, which continued in production for 200 years (Philpott 1985). As such, the material recovered from the test pits cannot be dated closely, as typologically it spans the period from the late seventeenth to late nineteenth centuries.
- 4.10.6 A proportion of the assemblage comprises refined earthenwares, probably dating to the second half of the nineteenth century. Much of this material was typical tablewares, such as plates, saucers and bowls. A small quantity of industrial slipwares, mostly cup forms, was also noted (Barker 1993, 27-29).

- 4.10.7 **Clay tobacco pipe:** two small fragments of clay tobacco pipe stems were recovered from the test pits. Whilst it is difficult to ascribe a date to pipe stems with any degree of precision, one (recovered from layer **302** in Test Pit 3) is likely to be of an eighteenth-century date, and the second (from topsoil **701** in Test Pit 7) probably dates to the nineteenth century.
- 4.10.8 **Glass:** in total, seven fragments of glass were recovered from the excavation. For the most part, these comprised small fragments of window glass, although several vessels were also present. These had a date range spanning the later nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The fragments are of little archaeological interest, and add little to the interpretation of the site.
- 4.10.9 **Conclusion:** the artefact assemblage from the test pits is of limited archaeological interest. It is noticeable, however, that the earliest material was recovered from the test pits placed over the footprint of Riddings, and tentatively suggest occupation of the building from the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

- 5.1.1 **Riddings:** no structural foundations or interior surfacing were exposed in any of the test pits (Test Pits 1-3) placed across the footprint of the building marked 'Riddings' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848. Whilst the test pits only investigated a small proportion of the whole footprint of the Riddings, it appears that the remains of the building may have been entirely removed during demolition and the landscaping that was carried out subsequently. However, the small assemblage of pottery recovered from the test pits excavated in this part of the park was dominated by eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century fragments, with one sherd of a potential seventeenth-century date being found in the layer of disturbed subsoil (302) in Test Pit 3. It is of note that little material of a later date was retrieved from the test pits, implying that the site has not actually sustained much disturbance since the mid-nineteenth century. This raises the possibility that some fragmentary remains of the building's foundations may survive *in-situ*, together with more evidence of the material culture associated with the former residents.
- 5.1.2 **Rhyddings Hall:** the stone-built foundations of the mid-nineteenth-century villa were encountered in each of the test pits excavated across its footprint (Test Pits 6-8), at depths ranging from *c* 0.2m to 0.5m below the modern ground surface. These included the foundations for the exterior walls, revealed in Test Pit 6, and internal partitions in Test Pits 7 and 8. A large assemblage of Minton tiles were also recovered, particularly from Test Pit 8, providing a good indication of the original internal floor design.
- 5.1.3 **Ancillary Buildings:** the sites of two glasshouses were also targeted during the test-pit evaluation. One of these, situated adjacent to the former coach house, was sealed beneath a modern concrete surface, which could not be broken-out using hand tools. However, the original brick walls of the building do survive to a reduced height, and incorporate features that are consistent with flues for a hot-air system, suggesting that the structure had been designed as a hothouse for the cultivation of exotic fruit, rather than just a greenhouse. It is quite possible that further elements of the heating system will survive *in-situ* beneath the concrete surface, although this awaits confirmation.
- 5.1.4 The second glasshouse was targeted by Test Pit 4, although this concluded that all buried remains of the structure had been removed, presumably when the site was converted for use as 'Pet's Corner'. However, the glasshouse is shown in an historic photograph dating to the early 1950s (Plate 16), which was kindly supplied by a local resident who expressed an interest in the archaeological evaluation. This shows the hothouse with its original glass superstructure atop the dwarf walls, with a doorway providing access



Plate 16: An historic photograph dating to the early 1950s kindly shared by a local resident, showing the hothouse adjacent to the coach house in the background prior to its demolition

- 5.1.5 The site of the second glasshouse lies in the area occupied most recently by ‘Pet’s Corner’, and was investigated by Test Pit 4. However, no structural remains of the former glasshouse were encountered, suggesting that it had been removed entirely during twentieth-century redevelopment as a park. There is thus little archaeological potential in this part of the park.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 The excavation of the trial pits has provided a very useful opportunity to establish the presence or absence of buried remains of archaeological interest in Rhyddings Park, and the merits of carrying out further archaeological investigation as a community-led project. It is concluded that considerable buried remains of the mid-nineteenth-century Rhyddings Hall survive *in-situ*, and these would certainly provide a valuable and interesting focus for further investigation. Any such excavation, moreover, would be entirely suitable for delivery as a community-led project under professional archaeological supervision.
- 6.1.2 The site of the building marked 'Riddings' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848 has less potential for further archaeological investigation. Whilst the recovery of artefacts from the footprint of the building may contribute to an understanding of the material culture associated with the former residents, any such project might not be of sufficient interest for a community-led archaeological excavation.
- 6.1.3 The large glasshouse investigated by Test Pit 4 does not appear to have any archaeological potential. Conversely, whilst not confirmed during the test-pit evaluation, the site of the probably hothouse adjacent to the coach house could be usefully investigated further in the event of the existing concrete surface being removed as part of the proposed improvements to the part. Similarly, there is also some potential to carry out an archaeological survey of the standing fabric of this structure, together with the masonry of the adjacent former walled garden, as part of the community-led archaeological component of the wider project.

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APPENDIX 1: FINDS SUMMARY CATALOGUE

Test Pit	Context No	Material	Description	Date Range
1	102	Ceramic	Ten fragments of ceramic vessels, including dark-glazed earthenware, unglazed red earthenware (plant pot), white earthenware, and machine-turned slipware bowl	Mid-nineteenth - twentieth century
1	102	Glass	Two fragments of clear glass vessels	Nineteenth - twentieth century
1	103	Mortar	Large fragments of lime-based mortar	Eighteenth - nineteenth century
2	202	Ceramic	28 small fragments of ceramic vessels, including dark-glazed earthenware (kitchenwares), mottled ware dish, yellow ware, machine-turned slipware, transfer-printed table ware, white earthenware, and unglazed red earthenware (plant pot)	Eighteenth - nineteenth century
2	202	Brick	Small fragment of hand-made brick	Undated
2	202	Glass	One fragment of (?) window glass	Undated
2	202	Coal	Three small fragments of coal	Undated
2	203	Ceramic	Small fragment of dark-glazed earthenware tableware (possibly a cup), and an underglaze transfer-printed ware (?) butter dish lid	Late eighteenth - early nineteenth century
3	302	Ceramic	48 small fragments of ceramic vessels, including a single blackware, numerous dark-glazed earthenware (kitchenwares), tin-glazed earthenware, machine-turned slipware and unglazed red earthenware	Late seventeenth - early nineteenth century
3	302	Clay tobacco pipe	Single clay tobacco pipe stem with a narrow, off-central bore	Late eighteenth - early nineteenth century
3	302	Coal	Small fragment of coal	Undated
4	403	Ceramic	Single fragment of dark-glazed earthenware storage jar	Eighteenth - nineteenth century
4	402	Ceramic	Two fragments of dark-glazed earthenware	Eighteenth - nineteenth century
4	402	Brick	Small fragment of hand-made brick	Undated
4	402	Coal	Three small fragments of coal	Undated
6	602	Ceramic	Six fragments of unglazed red earthenware (plant pot)	Nineteenth - twentieth century
6	602	Ceramic	Two fragments of unglazed drain pipe	Nineteenth - twentieth century
6	602	Brick	Several fragments of hand-made bricks	Eighteenth - nineteenth century
6	602	Tile	Single fragment of decorated floor tile	Nineteenth - twentieth century
6	602	Glass	Three fragments of glass, including single vessel fragment and window fragments	Nineteenth - twentieth century

Test Pit	Context No	Material	Description	Date Range
6	602	Plastic	Comb	Twentieth century
6	602	Mortar	Fragments of lime-based mortar	Undated
6	604	Ceramic	Single fragment of unglazed drain pipe	Nineteenth century
6	604	Brick	Two fragments of hand-made bricks	Eighteenth - nineteenth century
7	701	Brick	Two fragments of hand-made bricks	Eighteenth - nineteenth century
7	701	Clay tobacco pipe	Single small fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem with a central bore	Nineteenth century
7	701	Coal	Two fragments of coal	Undated
7	702	Ceramic	One fragment of mottled ware, one fragment of dark-glazed earthenware, and two fragments of unglazed red earthenware	Eighteenth - nineteenth century
7	702	Glass	Single fragment of window glass	(?) Nineteenth century
7	702	Ceramic	Three fragments of unglazed drain pipe	Nineteenth - twentieth century
7	702	Brick	Two fragments of hand-made bricks	Eighteenth - nineteenth century
8	802	Tile	229 fragments of decorated and plain floor tiles, several bearing the Minton & Co manufacturer's stamp	Mid-nineteenth century
8	802	Ceramic	Two fragments of salt-glazed drain pipe	Twentieth century

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURES

- Figure 1: Site location
- Figure 2: Location of Rhyddings Park test pits
- Figure 3: Ordnance Survey 6": 1 mile map of 1848
- Figure 4: Ordnance Survey 25": 1 mile map of 1893
- Figure 5: Ground-floor plan of Rhyddings Hall
- Figure 6: Plan of the test pits

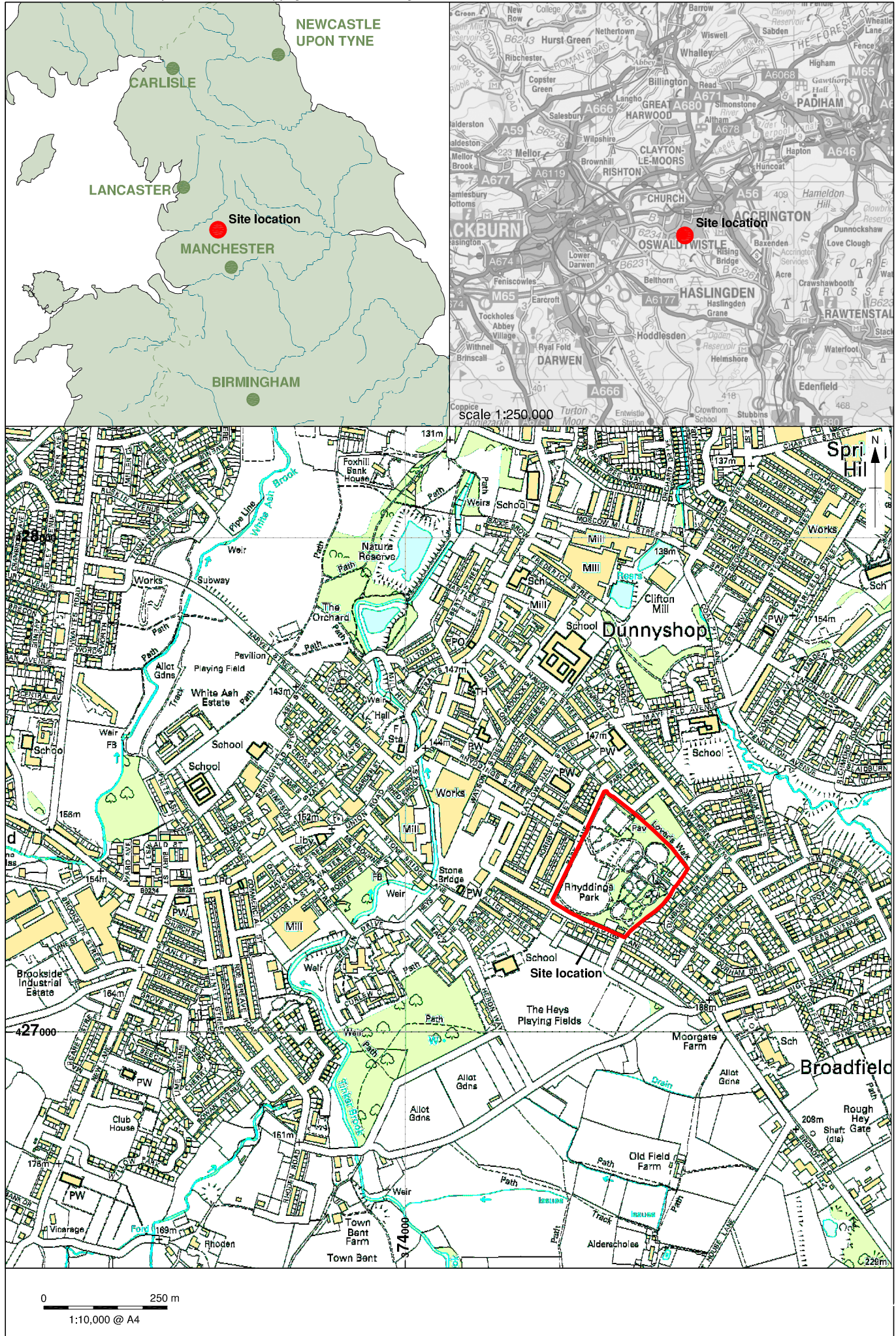


Figure 1: Site location

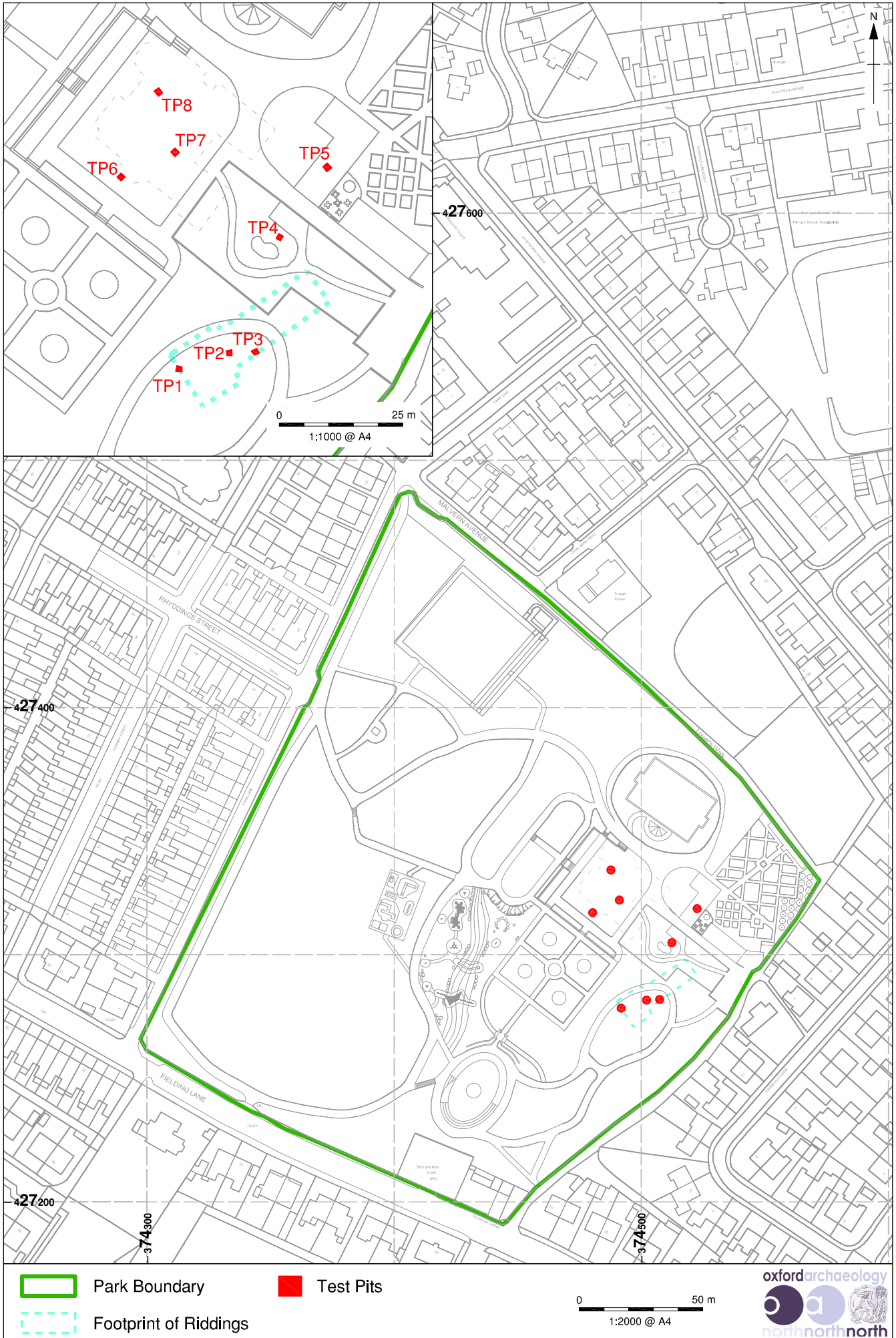


Figure 2: Location of Rhyddings Park test pits

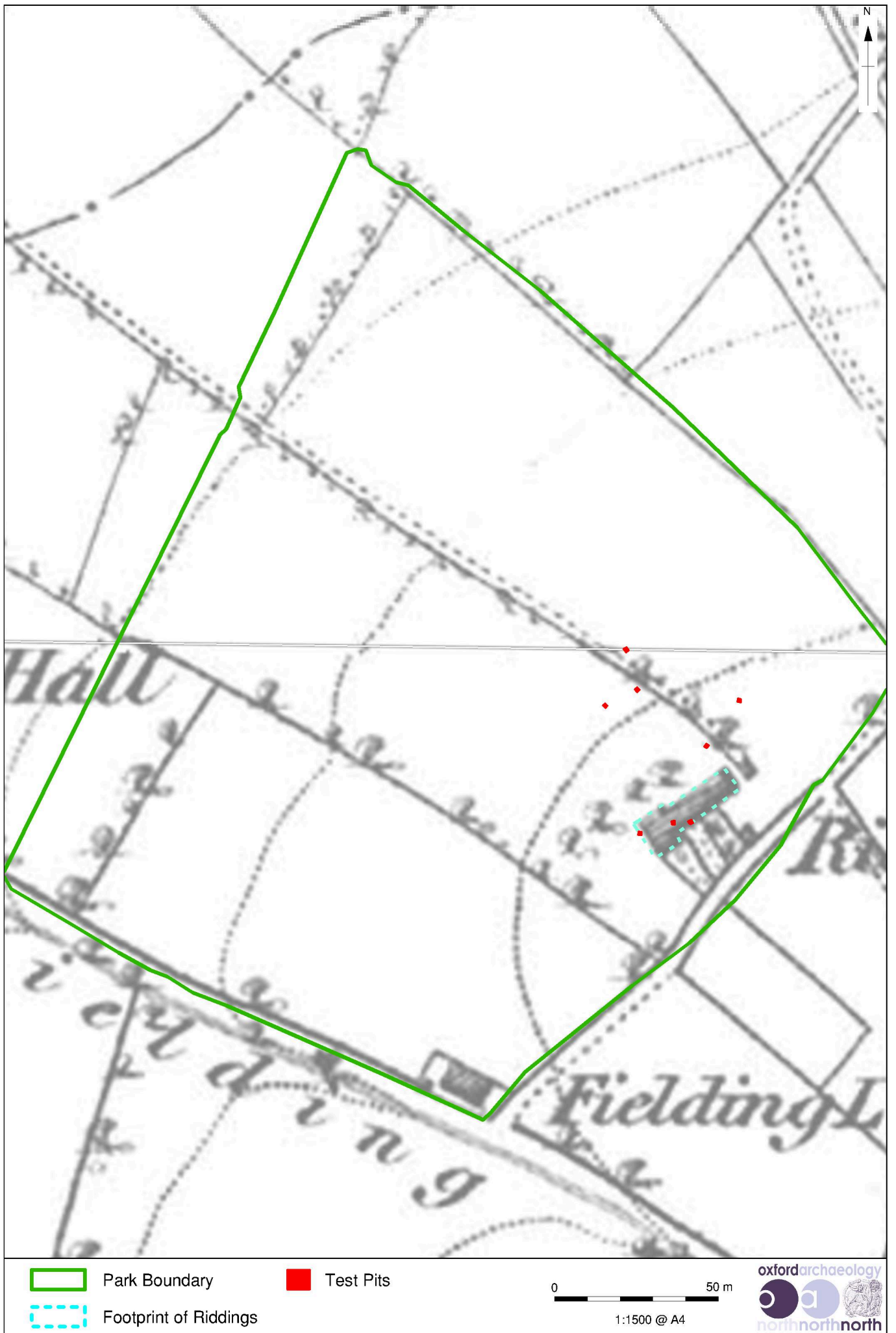


Figure 3: Ordnance Survey 6":1 mile map of 1848

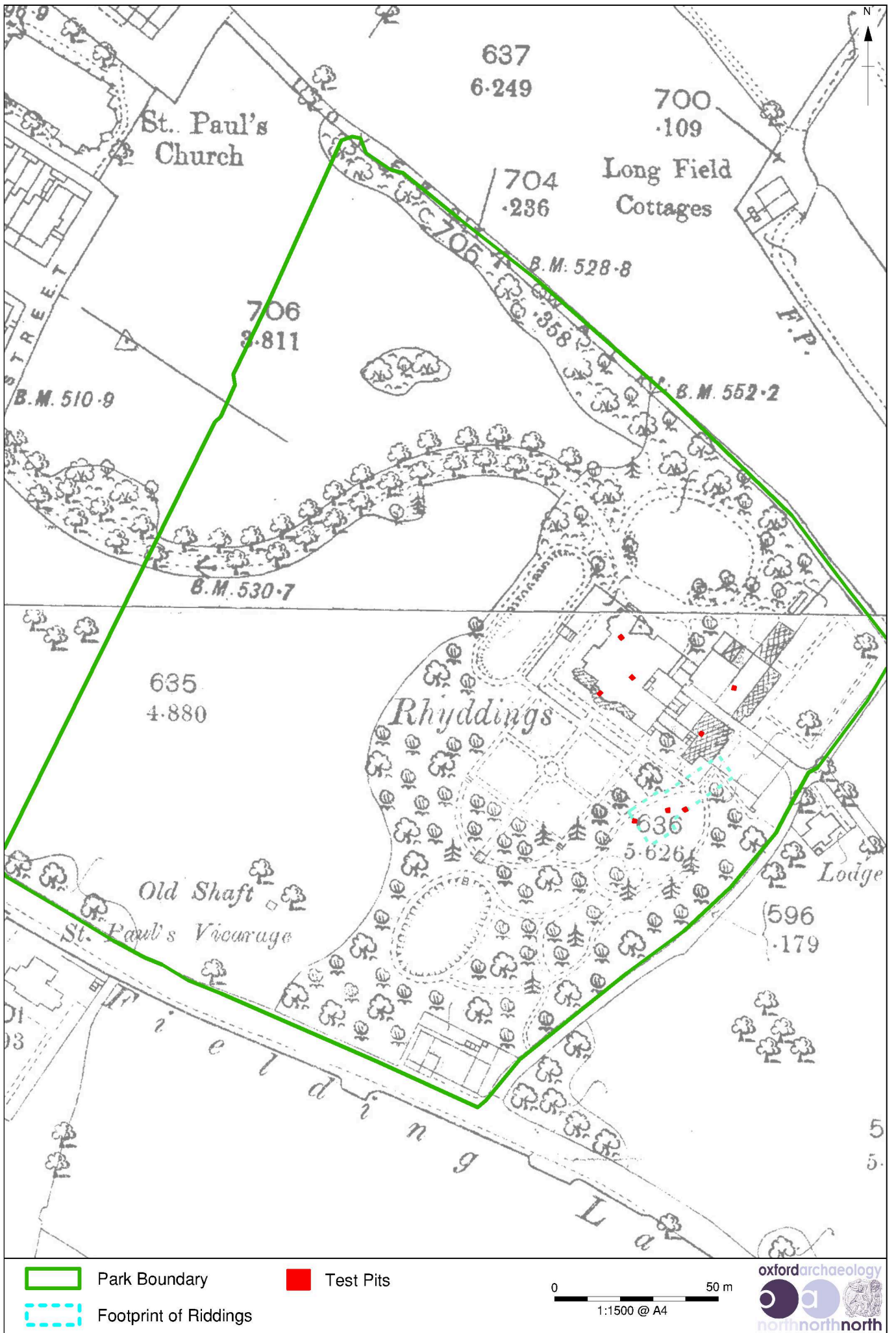
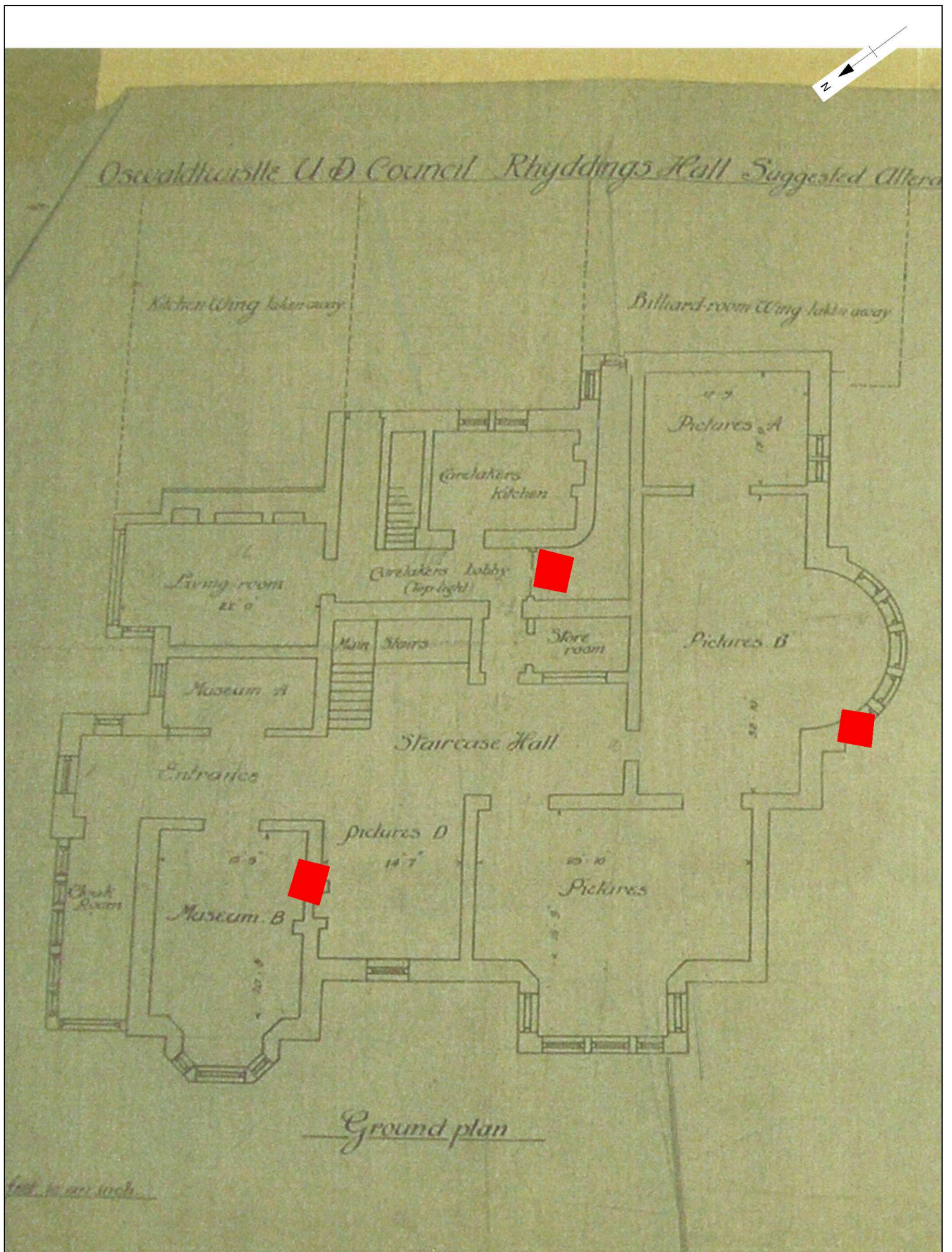


Figure 4: Ordnance Survey 25":1 mile map of 1893

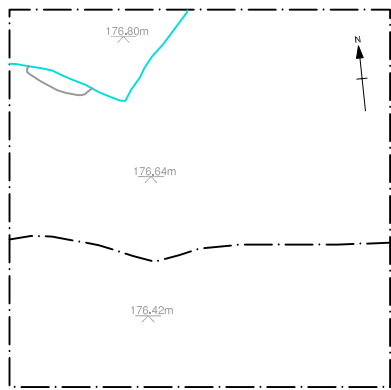


■ Test Pits

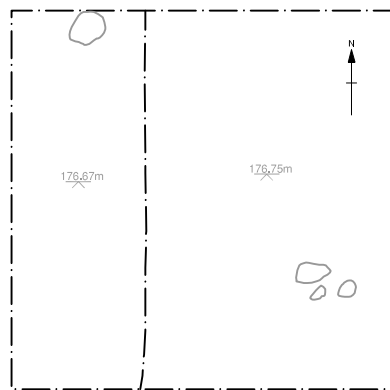
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Figure 5: Ground-floor plan of Rhyddings Hall



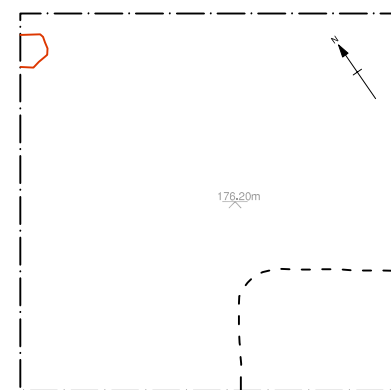
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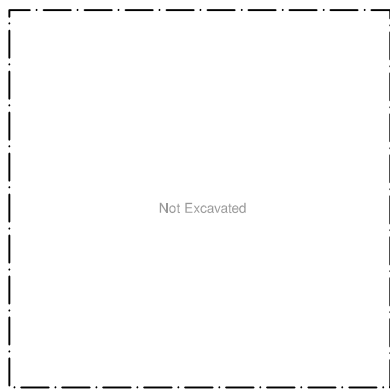
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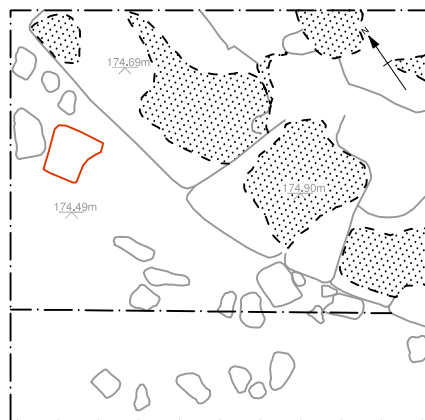
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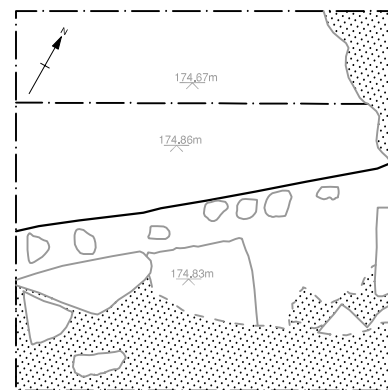
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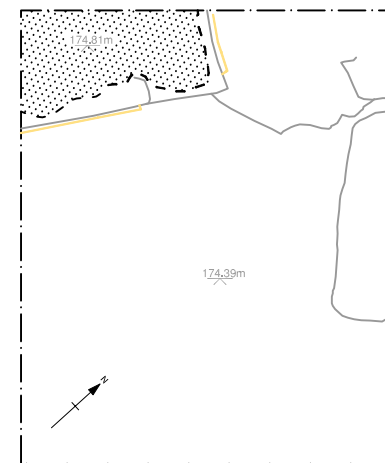
Test Pit 5



Test Pit 6



Test Pit 7



Test Pit 8

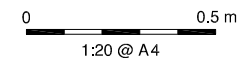
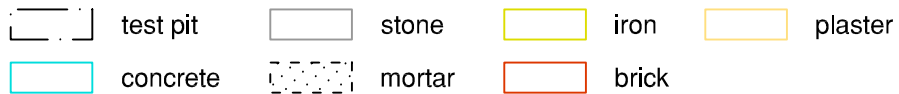


Figure 6: Plans of test pits