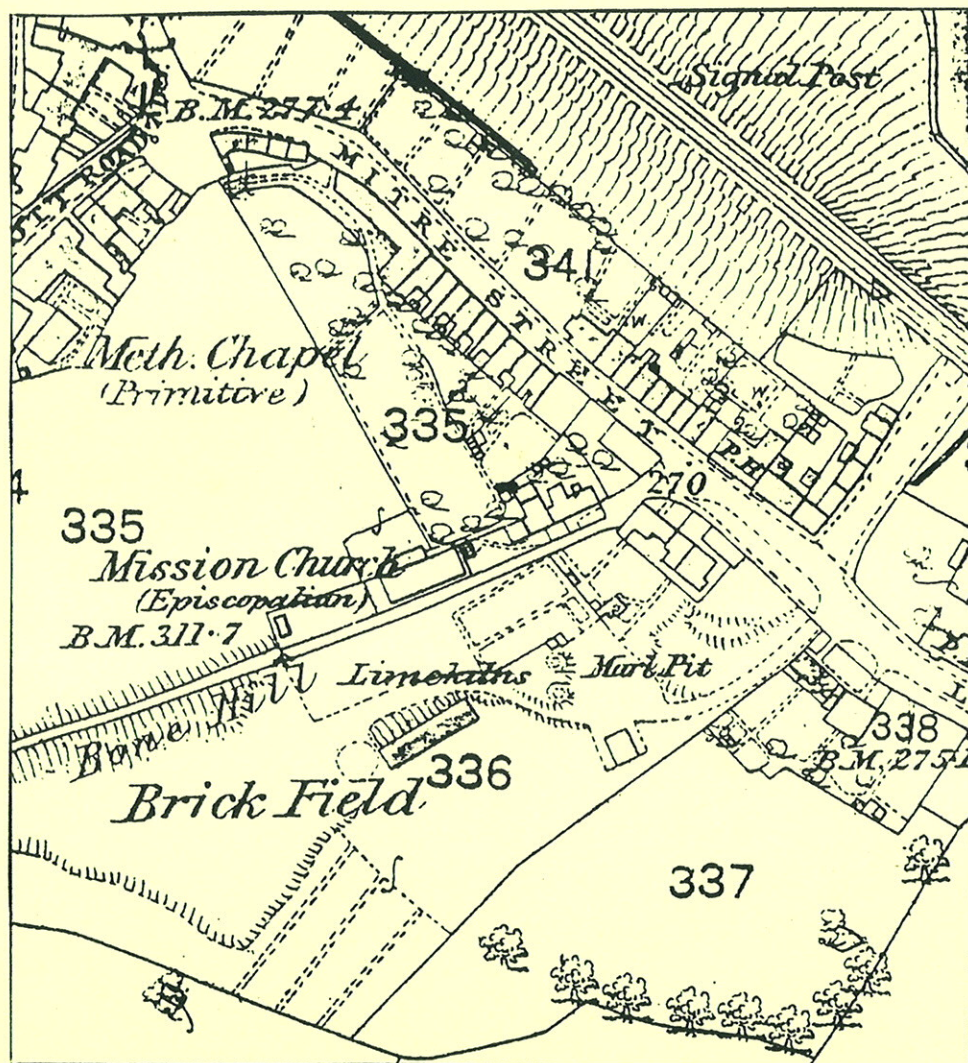


Beard/Michael Farley (Archaeology)

28 Mitre Street, Buckingham

NGR SP 6921 3332

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
REPORT**

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REPORT

Prepared by: J Hiller	<i>J Hiller</i>
Date: July 2000	
Checked by:	<i>R. Williams</i>
Date:	<i>14/7/2000</i>
Approved by:	<i>R. Williams</i>
Date:	<i>14/7/2000</i>

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION REPORT

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Land adjacent to No. 28 Mitre Street, Buckingham is to be redeveloped (Fig. 1). In advance of any redevelopment the County Archaeologist for Buckinghamshire requested that an archaeological evaluation of the land be undertaken in accordance with PPG 16, owing to the presence of archaeological remains in the area and the documented ancient history of the town. The site of the development lies within an area known historically as 'Prebend End' (see section 2 below).
- 1.2 OAU was commissioned to undertake the fieldwork by the Beard family, of 28 Mitre Street, for whom Michael Farley (Archaeology) acted as archaeological consultant to the project. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a brief prepared by, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services. The fieldwork was undertaken on the 3rd July 2000.
- 1.3 This report summarises the background to the project and presents the results of the fieldwork.

2 Archaeological Background

The following account is based on information kindly supplied by Mike Farley (Archaeology), who acknowledges the County Archaeological Service for access to the Sites and Monuments Record and the also the Local Studies Centre, for access to printed maps.

- 2.1 The small town of Buckingham dates at least to the Saxon period: an entry in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle for AD 914 reads '*and after that in the same year, before Martinmas, King Edward went to Buckingham with his army, and stayed there four weeks, and made both the boroughs on each side of the river, before he went away*' (EHD 1955, 195).
- 2.2 The site of this archaeological field evaluation is located in an area known as 'Prebend End over the water', which may be the location of the original burh, or part of it and the river formerly ran close to Prebend End over the water. The

principal burh eventually developed as a flourishing medieval town, for a period complete with castle.

- 2.3 The Ouse separates Prebend End from the town. The rising ground behind Prebend End is on Lower Jurassic Cornbrash. The Prebend End Manor, in which the evaluation site lies, was also known as Buckingham with Gawcott (VCH 1925, 482). By the medieval period the manor was the property of the prebendaries of Sutton-cum-Buckingham at Lincoln Cathedral, and a cannon or cannons at Lincoln were supported by revenues from the manor. Another group of prebendaries at Lincoln benefited similarly from revenues from Aylesbury. The Sutton referred to is Kings Sutton in Northamptonshire as, until 1445, Buckingham church was a chapelry dependent on Kings Sutton (VCH 3, 487).
- 2.4 The evaluation area is depicted as 'Prebend Ende beyond the water' on Speed's map of c 1610 (Fig. 2). The Lord's Bridge connected it to Prebend End and the bridge was one of three crossing the river Ouse into the town. There are two Listed Buildings opposite the evaluation area: Mitre Cottage and the adjacent Mitre Inn, both of which date to the 17th century or earlier. Both may be depicted on the Speed map, as it shows a row of houses on the north side of Mitre Street. Also shown are two houses on the south side of Mitre Street in the vicinity of the evaluation site and other houses on both sides of the present Lenborough Road to the east.
- 2.5 In 1803 Prebend End and Gawcott were enclosed, and by the time of the 1:500 Ordnance Survey plan of 1881 (Fig. 2), what is now 28 Mitre Street was adjoined by two buildings to the west with an additional building (probably roofless and no longer extant) parallel to the street in its front garden.
- 2.6 The complex lay north of a large area known as 'Brick Field', with a clay mill, a brick kiln and other associated buildings. Directory entries for the brick-works suggest a start date around 1830 for the works, when Samuel Holdom of Prebend End was the brickmaker and lime burner. The industry appears to have ended here c 1883-1887 with one Edward Emerton (CASS 5130). At the south corner of the site of 28 Mitre Street was a marl pit, though nothing is depicted in the area between the house and the pit (Fig. 2).
- 2.7 The brick-works site was entered via a trackway off Mitre Street that followed the approximate south-east side of the marl pit. This track today leads to a new housing development on the former Brick Field site. By the time of the 1920 OS 1:2500 map, Brick Field had gone and allotments occupied the whole site (Fig. 2).
- 2.8 There have been two recorded excavations in Buckingham, an evaluation and a separate piece of trial work. The excavations were behind Bank House north of the present church (unpublished CASS 4367) and the other on Hunter Street in Prebend End (Hall 1975). Little archaeological evidence has otherwise been forthcoming from the town.

- 2.9 At the time of the evaluation, the site was under rough grass and shrubs, formerly part of a garden. There were multiple young ash trees on the southern margin, which was also steeply scarped. A block retaining wall, with a base constructed of limestone formed the north boundary of the property. A height difference of c 1-m existed between the investigation area and the ground level of the adjacent house. The general level of the garden descended from 84 m OD to 82.5 m towards Mitre Street.

3 Aims

The aims of the archaeological field evaluation were to:

- 3.1 Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- 3.2 Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present; specifically to establish whether any late Saxon or medieval remains associated with the historic town extended into the development site, and to identify and characterise any post-medieval settlement evidence and establish its relationship to the later town.
- 3.3 Establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 3.4 Make available the results of the investigation through a written report.

4 Strategy

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field evaluations' (IFA, 1994) as set out in the brief for the project.
- 4.2 The investigation comprised a single trench measuring 10 m x 1.6 m, which was excavated under archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The trench was aligned north-west - south-east and was located c 5 m to the east of No. 28 Mitre Street (Fig 3).
- 4.3 All deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established OAU practice (OAU Field Manual, 1992). Bulk finds were collected by context, and colour transparency and black-and-white negative photographs were taken during the course of the work.
- 4.4 Trench plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 and section drawings of the trench were made at a scale of 1:20. The full length of the trench was drawn and recorded.

5 Results (Fig. 4)

- 5.1 The earliest deposit within the evaluation trench was a layer of dark grey clay (6) with patches of lighter grey clay, which lay at the north end of the trench. The layer was at least 0.5 m thick and was still showing at a depth of 2 m below the ground surface at the time of the evaluation. The layer contained pottery of 19th century date, together with brick fragments. Layer 6 was sealed by a tenacious mid-dark grey clay (5) that contained gravel and brick fragments, to a maximum depth of 0.42 m. This layer was in turn sealed by a 0.2 m thick layer of tenacious light grey clay (4) confined to the centre of the trench. The layer contained brick fragments and pieces of tile. Above was a homogenous layer of orange gravel within a tenacious clay matrix (3) containing pottery of 19th century date, and brick fragments. Layer 3 was 0.2-0.45 m in thickness, and did not extend to the north end of the trench.
- 5.2 Layers 3 and 5 beneath were overlain by a layer of mid-dark grey clay loam (2) that contained bricks, brick fragments, 19th/20th century pottery including willow pattern china and pieces of red earthenware pottery. The layer extended fully the length of the trench and was overlain by the present topsoil (1) that supported garden shrubs and vegetables at the time of the evaluations.

6 The Finds

6.1 *The pottery*

A total of 6 sherds of pottery was recovered from the excavated deposits. A single sherd of Willow Pattern decorated china was found in layer 4, while layer 6 produced two sherds of willow pattern china, one sherd of a red earthenware vessel with internal glazing, and one sherd of white china. Of note was a piece of quite finely decorated china depicting pottery urns and figures. None of the pottery need date any earlier than 1850, and may represent general refuse deposited at the time that the site was used as a brick works.

6.2 *The ceramic building material*

Five pieces of tile were recovered from contexts 3, 4 and 6. The material is undiagnostic and was found in association with 19th century pottery. One of the tile sherds was burnt, which may indicate on-site firing took place. Brick pieces were likewise recovered from contexts 3 and 4. Of note was a single complete brick found in layer 3. The brick measures 220 mm x 100 mm x 70 mm and exhibited traces of burning on one side. Fired clay particles and the misshapen end to the brick show that it had not fired properly, and is presumably a waster. The brick is typical of a number seen in buildings in the vicinity and was almost certainly manufactured on site here in the mid-late Victorian period.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The evaluation trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 2 m. At this depth Victorian material was still present within the homogenous layers of clay and gravel, which certainly extended below the adjacent present ground surface of No. 28 Mitre Street. The implication of this depth of deposit may suggest that there has previously been some land clearance prior to the raising of the land level by dumping.
- 7.2 More likely, given the local history of the site, it would appear that the deposits represent the infill of a sunken feature, possibly a large pit. The marl pit depicted on an O.S. map of 1881 may at one time have extended up to the line of the street frontage, thereby removing any medieval structures or deposits. The presence within the excavated layers of bricks and building tile confirms the documentary and map evidence of this practice in the immediate vicinity.
- 7.3 The pottery from the excavated layers dates their deposition to the mid-Victorian period at the earliest; no medieval pottery was recovered from the trench.

J Hiller
OAU
July 2000

Table of contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	Layer	0.12 m	Topsoil, C20/C21
2	Layer	0.14-0.32 m	Cultivation horizon, C20
3	Layer	0.2-0.45 m	Gravel dump layer C19
4	Layer	0.2 m	Clay band between layers 3 and 5, C19
5	Layer	0.42 m	Clay layer with C19 finds
6	Layer	0.5 m+	Clay layer with C19 finds, extends below 2 m depth and below present ground level of No. 28

References:

CASS County Sites and Monuments Record

EHD 1955 *English Historical Documents c 500-1042*, D Whitelock (ed)

Hall, R A, 1975 An excavation at Hunter Street, Buckingham 1974 *Records of Buckinghamshire*, **20**, 100-133

OAU 1992 Fieldwork Manual (First Edition)

RCHM(E) 1913 *Royal Commission on Historical Monuments: Buckinghamshire 2* (North)

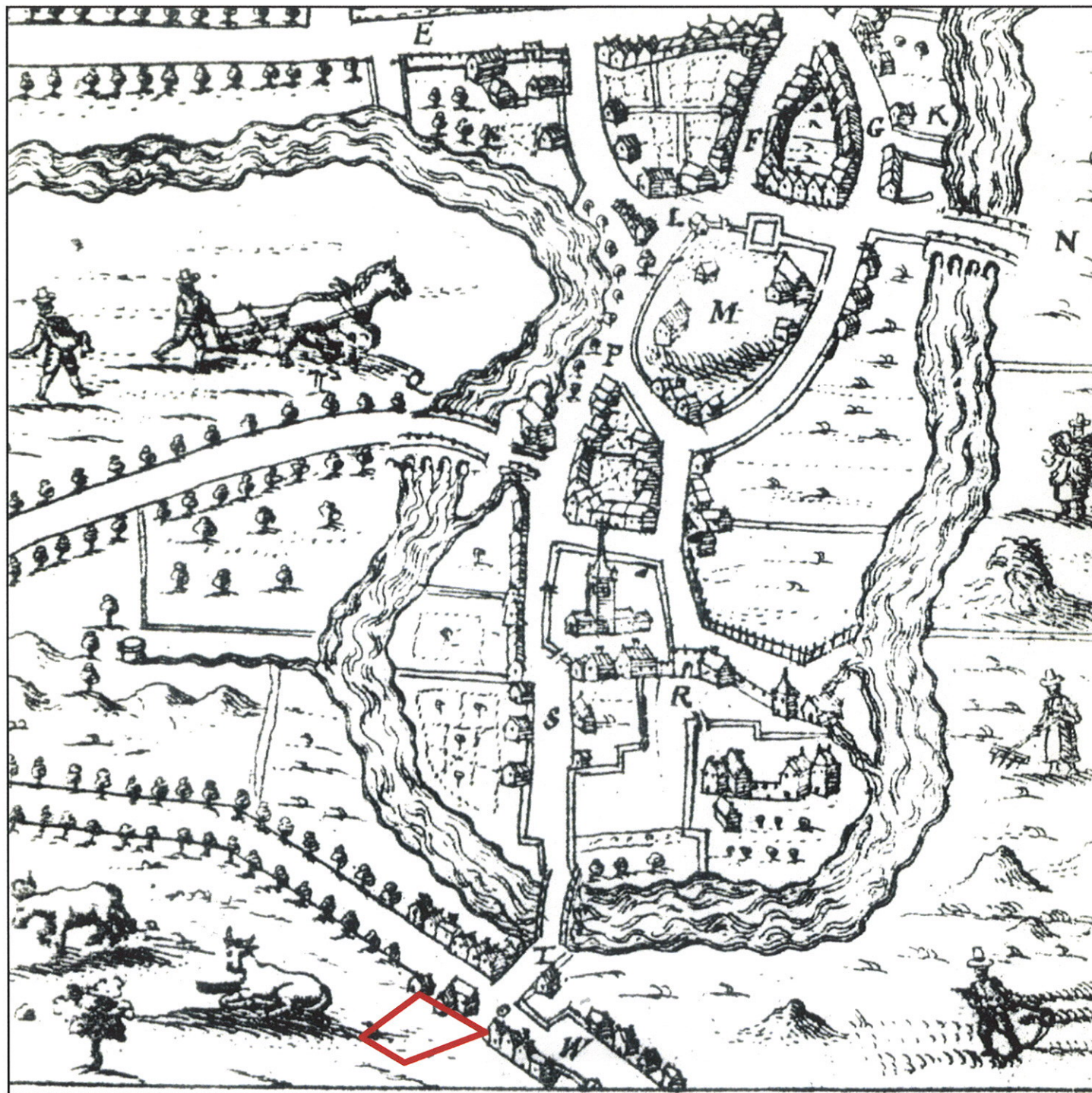
VCH 1925 *Victoria Country History. A History of Buckinghamshire 3*

Speed's Map of 1610

OS Map 1881

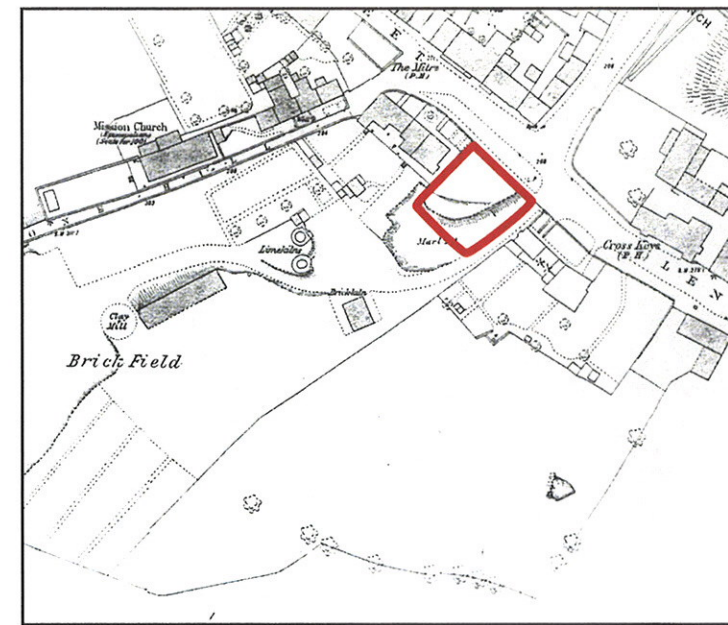
OS Map 1920

Figure 1: Site location

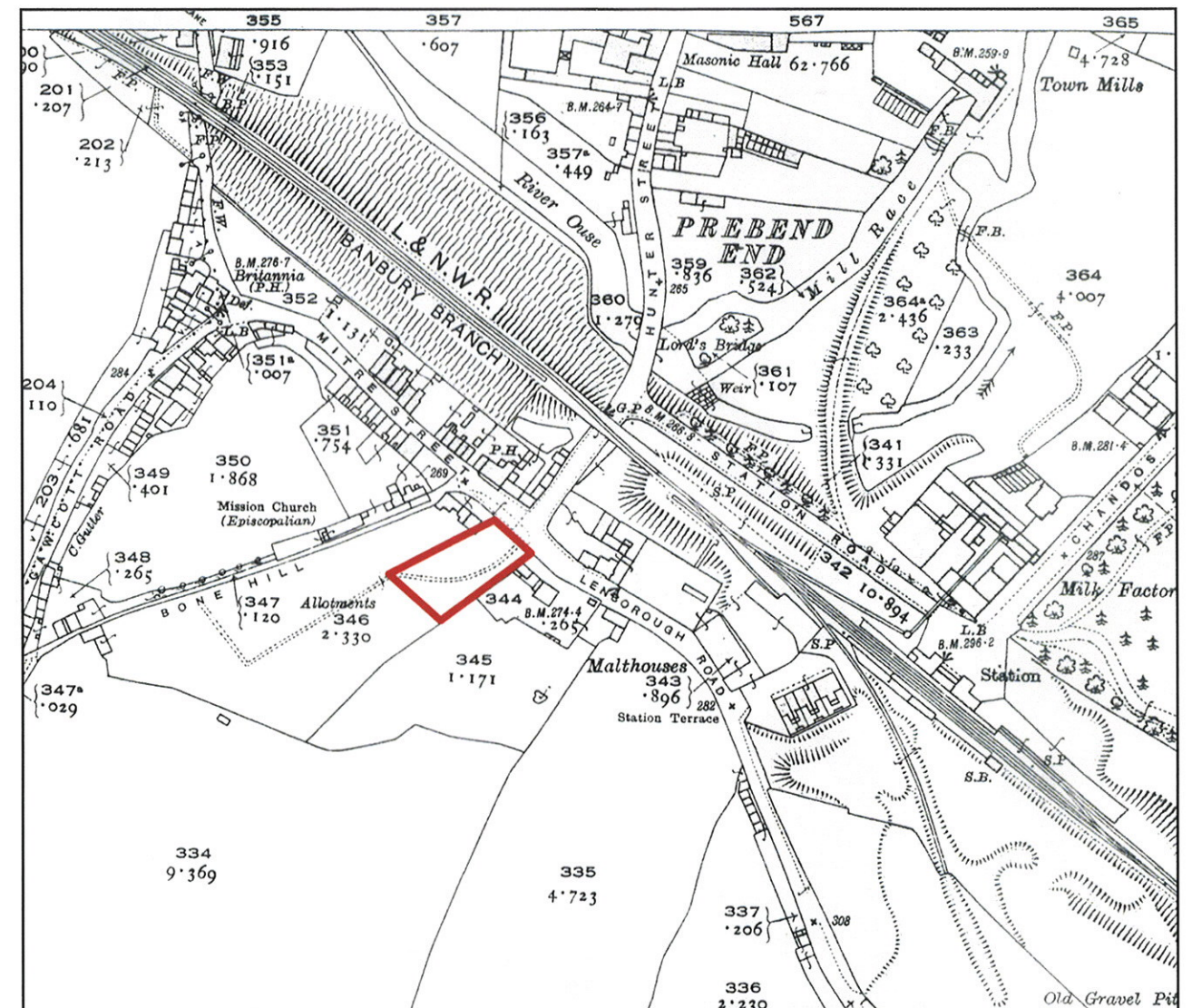


Speed's Map c.1610

 Evaluation area



Ordnance Survey 1881



Ordnance Survey 1920

Figure 2: Historic maps of the area

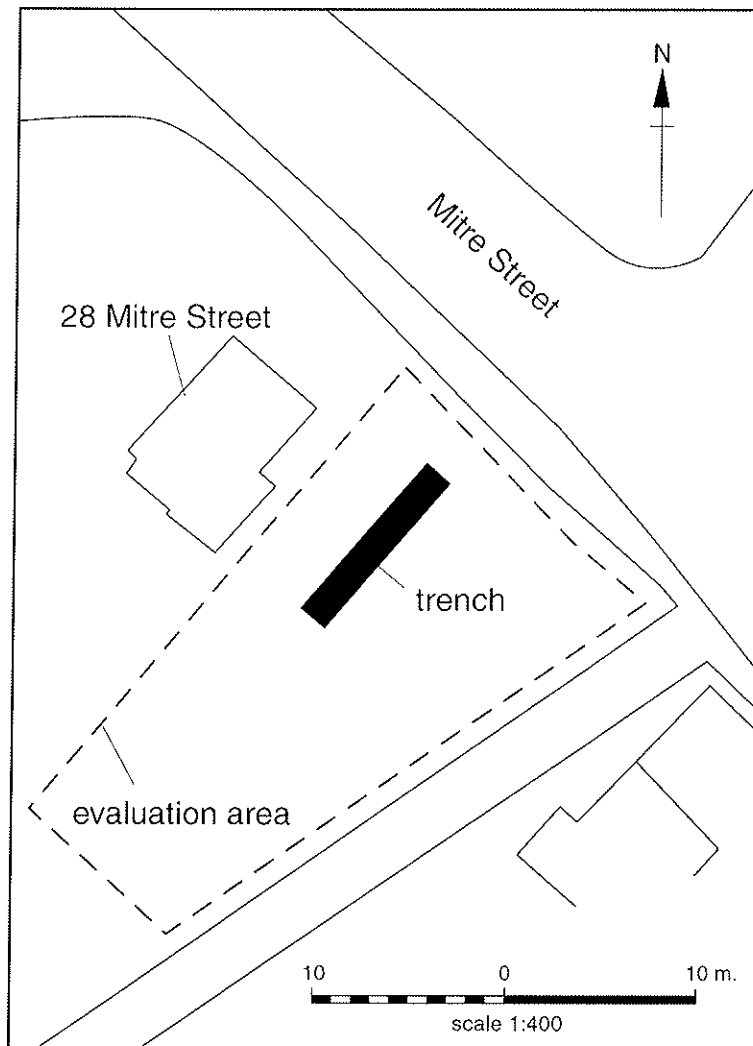


Figure 3: Trench location

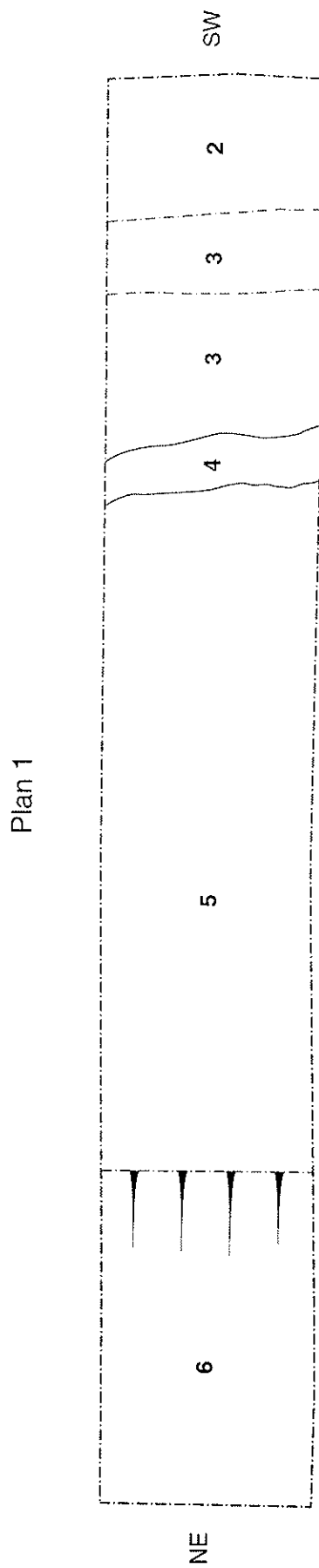
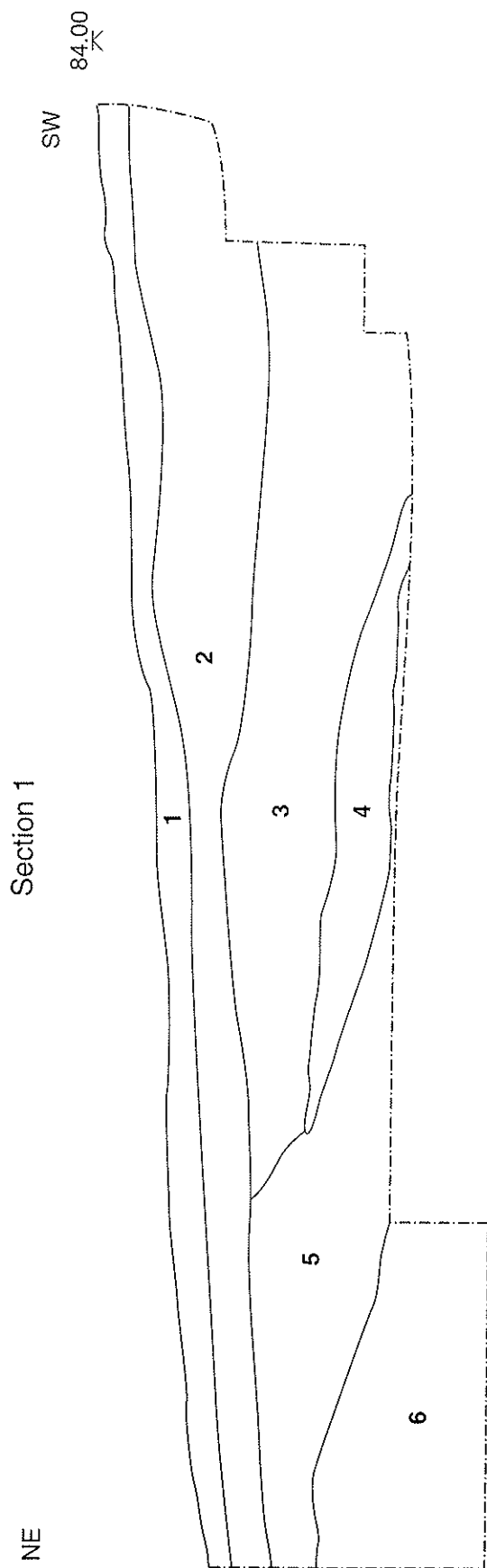


Figure 4: Section and plan of trench



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