



**Gibfield Park,
Atherton,
Wigan
Greater Manchester**

**Archaeological
Evaluation**



Oxford Archaeology North

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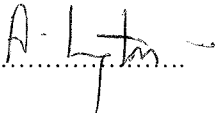
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SUMMARY

In July 2013, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by the Gibfield Park Group Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation following an outline planning approval (A/11/75372) for a proposed development of land to the west of North Road in Atherton, Greater Manchester (centred on NGR 366585 404080). The principal objective of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains pertaining to the post-medieval settlement of Bag Lane and, if any were such remains were found to survive, enable a strategy to be devised that would mitigate the loss of significant archaeological remains as part of the proposed redevelopment of the site.

The evaluation comprised the excavation of a six trenches, which were targeted across the footprint of buildings depicted on historical mapping, and specifically the Ordnance Survey plans of 1849 and 1894. The results obtained from the evaluation demonstrated that well-preserved historic fabric survives as buried remains across the majority of the area investigated, with the exception of the northern terrace of the mid-twentieth century factory, where all archaeological remains had been destroyed entirely. The remains of archaeological interest that survived in the central and southern parts of the site mainly comprised walls, floors, yards and tracks, most of which were not depicted in detail on the sequence of historical mapping.

The structures revealed within Trench 5 appeared to relate to a farmstead, or larger house, with a high-quality cobbled track to its rear. The structure within Trench 6, representing elements of the former Knight's Farm, was of stone and brick construction, suggesting that it represented the earliest fabric on the site, possibly dating from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

The results obtained from the evaluation have demonstrated that buried archaeological remains of local or borough interest survive *in-situ* at a shallow depth across the central and southern parts of the site, and these are likely to be damaged or destroyed by the groundworks required by the proposed development. Whilst the archaeological remains are not of such significance to merit preservation *in-situ*, their damage or destruction during development works should be subject to appropriate mitigation. The scope and extent of any such mitigation would be devised in consultation with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, although it may be anticipated that a programme of further archaeological excavation, with a commensurate level of post-excavation analysis and dissemination, will be required.

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Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Jim Keyte of Arup and Jim Stokes of Black Country Properties Ltd, acting on behalf of the Gibfield Park Group Ltd, and William Fish of the Gibfield Park Group Ltd, for logistical support. Thanks are also expressed to Norman Redhead of the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service for his advice and guidance.

The evaluation was carried out by Chris Wild, assisted by Graham Mottershead and Phil Cooke. The report was written by Chris Wild, and the illustrations were prepared by Mark Tidmarsh. The report was edited by Ian Miller, who was also responsible for project management.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 The Gibfield Park Group Ltd is preparing a reserved matters planning application following an outline approval dated 1 June 2012 (ref A/11/75372) for a proposed development of land to the west of North Road in Atherton, Greater Manchester. The outline approval proposes a mixed-use redevelopment of the site, comprising residential, commercial and public open space. An Environmental Statement was produced by ARUP in 2011 at an early stage in the development design process, which included an Archaeological Technical Appraisal. This document reviewed the documentary sources available, and revealed that there are no known archaeological sites within the boundary of the application site. The report concluded, however, that there was some potential to encounter post-medieval remains of archaeological interest relating to the former Bag Lane settlement, and associated farming and residential structures shown on historic mapping. The Archaeological Technical Appraisal recommended that further investigations should be undertaken to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.1.2 Following the submission of the Environmental Statement, the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) was consulted in their capacity as archaeological advisor to Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, and condition 15 of the outline approval called for an appropriate scheme of archaeological investigation of the site. GMAAS confirmed that in the first instance archaeological investigation should be aimed at establishing the potential for evidence relating to settlement and rural activity, in particular the Bag Lane settlement, Knight's Farm and former workers' housing. It was intended that the investigation would seek to clarify the nature of any archaeological remains that may exist within the application site, and thus enable appropriate mitigation measures to be agreed, if required. The scope of an appropriate scheme of works was presented in a Project Brief, which allowed for the excavation of a series of trial trenches across the footprint of buildings depicted on historical mapping.
- 1.1.3 In July 2013, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by the Gibfield Park Group Ltd to produce a Written Scheme of Investigation for the programme of works outlined in the Project Brief. Following the formal acceptance of this Written Scheme of Investigation (*Appendix 1*), OA North was commissioned to carry out the work. This comprised the excavation of six trial trenches, which were excavated in August 2013. The trenches were intended to determine the extent, depth, character and relative significance of any buried archaeological remains that survive, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 128. It was acknowledged that in the event of significant archaeological remains being discovered in the trenches, further archaeological investigation is likely to be required. This report presents a summary of the results obtained from the trial trenching.

1.2 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

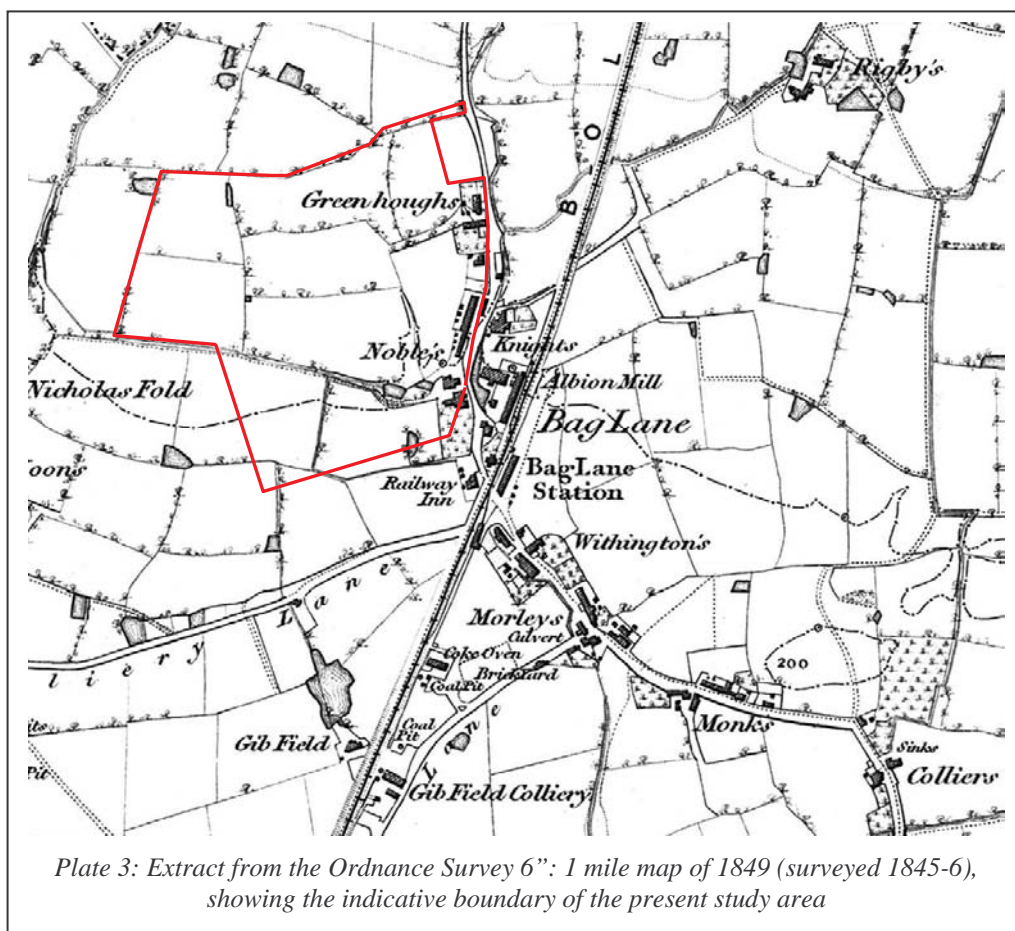
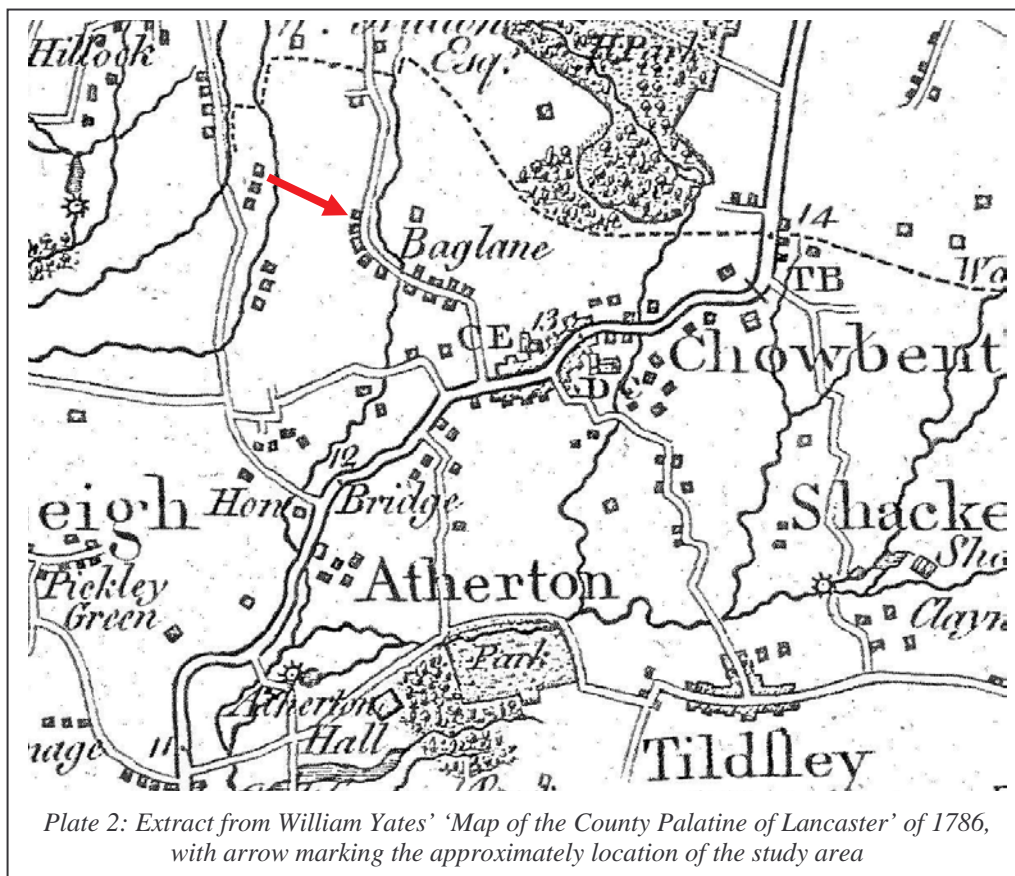
- 1.2.1 The study area lies on the north-western fringe of Atherton in the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan, Greater Manchester (centred at NGR 366618 404004). Atherton town centre is situated approximately 1km to the south-east of the study area, and the urban centre of Wigan lies some 11km to the west (Fig 1). The site is bounded to the east by North Road, and the south by Gibfield Park Avenue.
- 1.2.2 The central part of the site is dominated by the concrete hard-standing for a demolished industrial building that was occupied until recently by AG Barr Ltd, soft-drinks manufacturer, within the former Southside Industrial Park (Plate 1). A small reservoir lies to the south, whilst the western part of the site is undeveloped and supports scrub vegetation.
- 1.2.3 The solid geology of the area is composed of the carboniferous rock of the Middle Coal Measures, which forms part of the Manchester Coalfield. This is overlain by glacial clays.



Plate 1: Recent satellite view of the site, prior to the demolition of the modern factory, showing the indicative boundary of the application area

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.3.1 Virtually nothing is known of the earliest human activity in the Atherton area, and there is no firm evidence for any occupation during the prehistoric or Roman periods. However, the course of the Roman road from Wigan to Manchester is projected to take a route a short distance to the south of the study area, broadly following the line of the modern A577 (Miller and Aldridge 2011, 20). In 2003, a metalled surface was exposed during an archaeological excavation at Gadbury Fold, situated approximately 1km to the south of Gibfield Park. The excavated surface comprised a spread of riverine water-borne cobbles. In addition, a sherd of a Roman mortaria vessel was also recovered from the excavation, although not in association with the road. Whilst the excavation did not produce any absolute dating for this road surface, it was clearly of considerable antiquity and, in all probability, represented the remains of the Roman road from Wigan to Manchester (UMAU 2006, 51).
- 1.3.2 It has been suggested (Farrer and Brownbill 1907, 435) that the name 'Atherton' derives from the Anglo-Saxon *Adre* (watercourse) and *tun* (settlement), implying that there may have been some settlement in the area during the early medieval period. However, as with the earlier periods, firm evidence is lacking. At the time of the Norman Conquest, Atherton formed a dependant manor of the manor of Warrington, later being made part of that manor by Henry I.
- 1.3.3 The earliest documentary references to Atherton date to the thirteenth century, at which date the township was one of six vills comprising the parish of Leigh (Lunn 1971, 1). There is an entry in the parish registers of Lichfield, in which diocese Atherton was then situated. The entry regards the 'Grange' farm and Chapters Farm House, and records that in December 1360 Sir William de Atherton had a licence granted enabling him to have divine service celebrated by a fit Chaplain within the Manors of Atherton and Ashton for two years. According to tradition, the old Grange was situated about a quarter of a mile to the south-west of Lodge Hall (Lunn 1971). There is no trace of Grange Farm in the modern landscape, and no indication of the medieval building. However, situated approximately 800m to the north of Gibfield Park are the remains of a medieval moated site at Langleys Farm. In addition, a former deer park is present to the south, whilst Platt Lane to the north is thought to have been an historic routeway of potential medieval origin.
- 1.3.4 During this period, Atherton emerged as an important centre for the manufacture of nails, reflecting the numerous outcrops of coal in the vicinity. The significance of this trade locally expanded during the post-medieval period, although the area also became an important centre for clock-making and, during the second half of the eighteenth century, textile-machinery manufacturers.
- 1.3.5 The extent and development of Bag Lane during this period is not documented, although a linear settlement had evidently been established by the late eighteenth century, as it is annotated on William Yates' *Plan of the County Palatine of Lancaster*, which was published in 1786 (Plate 2).



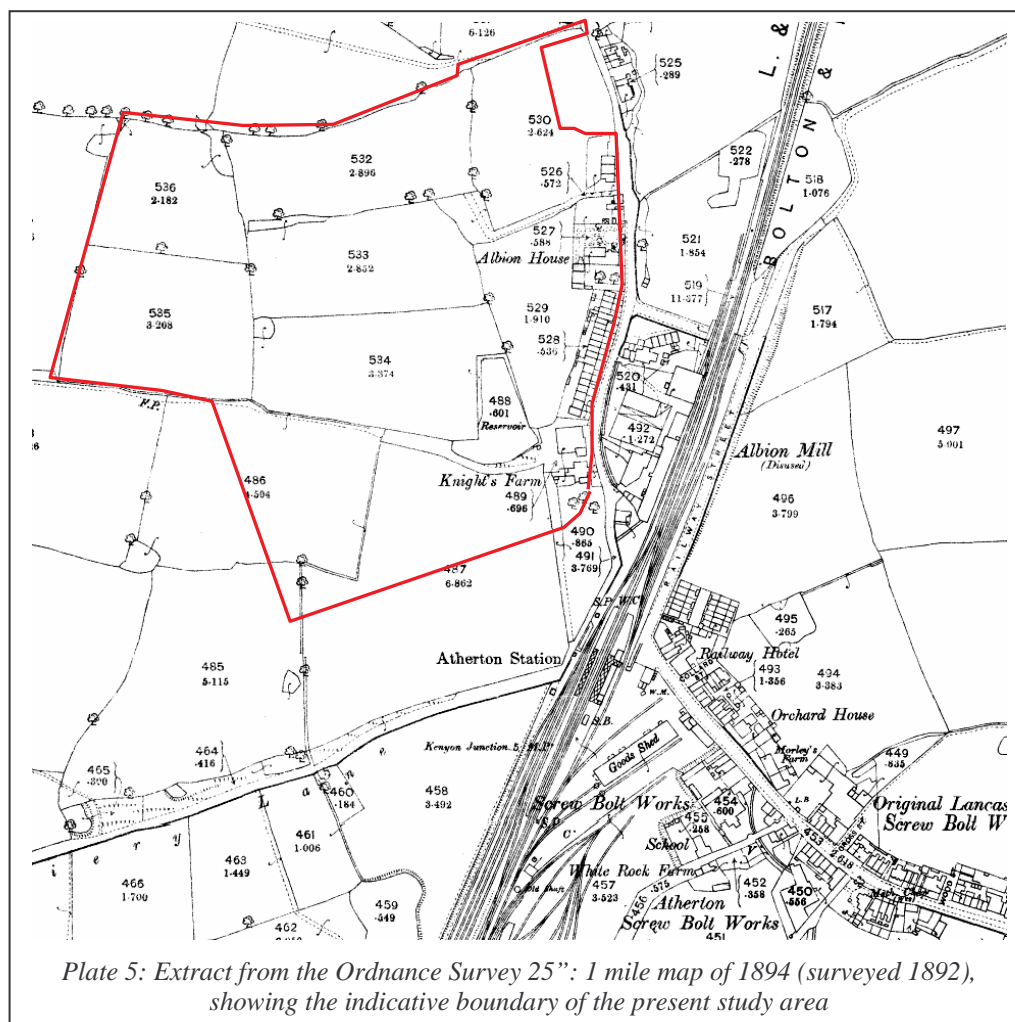
- 1.3.6 An indication of the development and expansion of Bag Lane during the first half of the nineteenth century can be gained by comparing Yates' map with the Atherton tithe map of 1839 (Fig 2) and the Ordnance Survey 6": 1 mile map, which was surveyed in 1845-6 and published in 1849 (Plate 3). These maps provide the first accurate surveys of the study area, showing the density and distribution of buildings in Bag Lane. It is of note that the settlement benefitted from the economic advantages afforded by a railway connection.
- 1.3.7 Bag Lane Station was situated on the Kenyon Junction to Bolton line, which had opened in stages from 1828 to 1831 as the Bolton and Leigh Railway. This early railway had been engineered by George Stephenson and it was one of his locomotives, the Lancashire Witch, that made the inaugural run in 1828. The station was renamed as Atherton before 1847, and again renamed to Atherton Bag Lane on in 1924. The station lay immediately to the south-east of the present study area, and was provided with two platforms and substantial booking and waiting facilities on both platforms (Plate 4). However, by the 1950s, traffic levels had dwindled to six services running between Bolton and Kenyon Junction or Warrington, and the line was closed to regular passenger services in 1954.



Plate 4: Atherton Bag Lane station in 1954

- 1.3.8 Situated adjacent to the railway station was Albion Mill, which was built in 1834 by Thomas Manley and Philip Newton on a part of the landholding of Knight's Farm. Manley and Newton were both nailmasters, who diversified into textile manufacturing. Additional land had been purchased by 1845-6 to enable a reservoir for the mill to be constructed, together with a new mill block, which are both depicted on the 1849 Ordnance Survey map. However, the mill was destroyed by fire in December 1889, and it was abandoned thereafter. The Atherton Local Board attempted to obtain the site using their powers of compulsory purchase, with an intention of building a sewage works and an isolation hospital. However, 79 local residents signed a petition opposing the proposals, and the scheme was dropped (Lunn 1971, 167).

1.3.9 One of the local residents opposing the Local Board's proposals was Robert Stothert of Albion House, the footprint of which lies in the study area (Plate 5). Stothert had established a firm of chemists in 1852, which proved to be immensely successful. He manufactured a wide range of medicaments in Albion House, which his itinerant travellers sold in all parts of the county. Latterly, the firm diversified into the manufacture of soft drinks and mineral waters, although their business was absorbed by AG Barr of Glasgow in 1967.



1.3.10 Another large building that occupied the area in the nineteenth century was Knight's Farm. This was built in c 1800 (LRO DDLi Box 103), and is recorded on the title apportionment of 1839 as a house and shippon (LRO DRM1/9). The Ordnance Survey map of 1849 annotates Knight's Farm on the eastern side of Bag Lane, although the subsequent editions of mapping all show it to have been in the south-eastern corner of the present study area. Another large farmstead in the study area is annotated on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849 as 'Greenhoughs' (Plate 3). However, it seems that this building was demolished during the second half of the nineteenth century, as the Ordnance Survey map of 1894 depicts a different arrangement of buildings (Plate 5). The farm is not listed in a trade directory for 1885, although a Richard Greenhough is named as a railway guard residing on Bag Lane (Porter 1885, 51).

- 1.3.11 Situated between Greenhoughs and Knight's Farm was a row of terraced cottages, which are annotated on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849 as 'Nobles' (Plate 3). Whilst this is shown to have formed a continuous row, it is evident that it was built in at least two phases, as only the southern portion is depicted on the tithe map of 1839. This original element seemingly comprised smaller houses, with those added to the north subsequently having a larger footprint to the rear (Figs 3 and 4). Further detail of these workers' cottages is provided by the Ordnance Survey map of 1894, which shows the row to have comprised 20 houses (Plate 5).
- 1.3.12 Entries in nineteenth-century trade directories provide very little information on the buildings within the study area, or to Bag Lane in general. One of the earliest references is provided in a directory for 1841, which lists Thomas Blakemore as screw-bolt and nail maker, shop keeper and beer retailer on Bag Lane, although his precise address is not given (Pigot and Slater 1841, 68). Mannex's directory for 1854 similarly contains several entries for Bag Lane, but does not give specific addresses. Amongst those listed are a boot and shoe maker, a bricklayer, and two nail-makers (Mannex 1854).
- 1.3.13 Bag Lane is listed in a trade directory for 1885, and whilst house numbers are given, these are somewhat irregular and are incomplete. However, Richard Stothert is listed as a manufacturing chemist at Albion House, 291 Bag Lane, and Hugh Hampson is a farmer at Knight's Farm, 268 Bag Lane (Porter 1885, 84). Six houses adjacent to Knight's Farm, listed as 276-310 Bag Lane, were occupied by Thomas Gregory, a collier (276), Thomas Pillington, a labourer (302), William Wood, a minder (304), John Walker, a minder (306), Joseph Harrison, a carter (308), and George Barnes, a collier (310). Whilst it is not possible to attribute these residents to specific properties shown on the historical mapping, it is nevertheless clear that the occupants were engaged in labouring trades.
- 1.3.14 A flavour of Bag Lane in the early twentieth century is provided by entries in contemporary trade directories (*eg* Kelly 1909; Aubrey 1938, 50-7). These lists a variety of trades on Bag Lane, consistent with an Edwardian small manufacturing settlement. The trades named include several beer sellers and three inns, two screw and bolt works, Stothert's manufacturing chemical business, three confectioners, a draper, a butcher, three general dealers and seven grocers, a hairdresser, a jeweller, a marine store dealer, tobacconist, wardrobe dealers, and an undertakers.
- 1.3.15 Surviving aerial photographs of this period provide views across the study area (Plates 6 and 7). These show Albion House to have been subsumed by Stothert's Albion Works, whilst the worker's cottages along the western side of Bag Lane are clearly all of two storeys. Knight's Farm is also visible in the background, and evidently comprised several buildings, although the farmhouse appears to have been at the southern end.



Plate 6: Aerial view across Bag Lane in 1929



Plate 7: Aerial view across Stothert's chemical works in 1929

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

2.1.1 In response to a request from Arup, acting on behalf of the Gibfield Park Group Ltd, OA North devised a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to carry out a scheme of archaeological evaluation at Gibfield Park, Atherton (*Appendix 1*). Following the formal approval of the WSI by the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), which provides archaeological advice to Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council, OA North was commissioned to undertake the work. The evaluation was required to inform a decision as to whether any further archaeological evaluation or mitigation is required prior to the development of the site for mixed residential and commercial purposes.

2.2 EVALUATION TRENCHING

2.2.1 The programme of archaeological evaluation allowed for the excavation of six trenches, each targeted on the site of buildings depicted on historical mapping. The uppermost levels were excavated by a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The same machine was then used to define carefully the extent of any surviving walls, foundations and other remains, after which all excavations were undertaken manually.

2.2.2 All information was recorded stratigraphically with accompanying documentation (plans, sections and high-resolution digital photographs, both of individual contexts and overall site shots from standard view points). Digital photography was extensively used throughout the course of the fieldwork for presentation purposes. Photographic records were also maintained on special photographic *pro-forma* sheets.

2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 A full archive of the work is in production to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (2008) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). It is intended that the results obtained from the various investigations will be combined to form a single, integrated archive. When completed, the project archive will be deposited with the Museum of Wigan Life in Wigan. In addition, a copy of the report will be forwarded to the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER), and a summary sent to the National Monuments Record (NMR).

3. EVALUATION TRENCHING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 The archaeological evaluation comprised the excavation of six trenches, each measuring approximately 20 x 2m, with the exception of Trench 5, which was excavated in two parts with a combined total length of 32.4m. Each was placed across the footprint of buildings depicted on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1849 and 1894. Due to the topography of the site, the precise location of the site boundary, and the position of barriers placed to restrict the movement of the native newt population, the positions of Trenches 1, 3, and 5 were adjusted slightly (Figs 2-4).

3.2 TRENCH 1

3.2.1 The proposed position of Trench 1 was placed across a rectangular structure depicted on the tithe map of 1839, and the Ordnance Survey maps of 1849 and 1894 (Figs 2, 3, and 4), being marked as 'Greenhoughs' on the earlier Ordnance Survey edition (Fig 3). However, the trench location spanned an extant wall within the late twentieth-century factory occupying the site, which had an accompanying change in ground level of 0.85m. The principal entrance to the northern part of the site was also placed immediately to the west of the proposed position of Trench 1. For these reasons, the excavation of Trench 1 was undertaken in two parts: the northern section was extended to the north and west, within the footprint of the targeted structure, and measured 15 x 4m; and the southern element was placed on the lower building platform, as close to the boundary wall as feasible, and measured 5 x 2m. No archaeological remains of interest were encountered in the excavated trench, and it was concluded that twentieth-century development had destroyed all the foundations of Greenhoughs.

3.2.2 Removal of an asphalt car park surface in the northern part of the trench revealed a 0.10m thick concrete slab. This was of comparatively low quality to those observed elsewhere within the site, and although it included steel reinforcing bars, had large aggregate inclusions within a relatively soft matrix. The uneven lower surface demonstrated that the concrete had been poured directly onto the exposed soil below, which comprised banded deposits of natural plastic silty clay with rounded pebble inclusions (Plate 2). No features of archaeological interest were cut into this natural deposit within the trench, and it is probable that the proximity of such deposits to the present ground surface represents a significant truncation of the deposits to produce a level platform for the concrete slab, almost certainly in the second half of the twentieth century, when the factory was rebuilt.

- 3.2.3 The southern section of Trench 1 was placed to the south of a boundary wall, within an area of exposed concrete slab, 0.85m lower than that in the vicinity of the northern section of the trench. The concrete base was formed of large slabs and comprised a 0.15m thickness of hard concrete with steel reinforcing bars. This was laid on a 0.20m thickness of MOT grade angular aggregate, which overlay orangey-brown plastic natural boulder clay, similar to that observed in the northern part of the trench. This part of the trench was similarly devoid of any archaeological remains.



Plate 2: General view of Trench 1, looking north

3.3 TRENCH 2

- 3.3.1 Trench 2 was placed within the main body of the former twentieth-century factory, which had been erected on a concrete slab at a level 0.85m lower than that at the southern end of Trench 1. The trench measured 20 x 2m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.65m, at which point clean natural subsoil deposits had been established. These comprised plastic silty boulder clays, similar to those in Trench 1.
- 3.3.2 The western part of the trench was devoid of features (Fig 5), probably representing the area to the rear of the former houses. A 3.5m wide concrete surface (**201**), cut the natural clay, was exposed at a distance of 4m from the western end of the trench. This overlay a cobble sett surface (**202**) at its eastern side, which comprised large rectangular cobble setts laid in east/west-aligned rows, sloping gently to the east. This almost certainly represented a former road surface.
- 3.3.3 The setts were bounded by a dressed sandstone kerb (**203**) of approximately 1' (0.30m) width, raised slightly above the cobbled surface to the west. Kerb **203** was butted on its eastern side by another cobbled surface (**204**). This differed from **202**, comprising smaller, more-rounded cobbles, more akin to river pebbles than quarried setts. The surface survived to a width of 1m, with a ragged eastern edge, which appears to have been cut for the insertion of a drain. A vertical down-pipe survived within this cut.
- 3.3.4 The probable drain cut was bounded on its eastern side by a concrete edging of 0.18m width, forming a border to another concrete floor (**205**), similar to **201** to the west (Fig 5). This survived for a width of up to 5.1m, and overlay a fragmented sandstone flag floor (**206**) at its eastern end. A more substantial 2'2 (0.61m) flagstone survived *in-situ* 0.9m to the east, and was probably more representative of the original flooring, which was only 0.30m below the level of the top of the concrete slab.
- 3.3.5 Both elements of floor **206**, and concrete floor **205**, were bounded on their northern sides by an approximately east/west-aligned wall (**207**) of full-brick thickness. This extended beyond the limit of excavation at either end, and comprised mould-thrown hand-made brick, bonded in a pale lime mortar, almost certainly representing the division between two of the houses fronting Bag Lane. A further concrete surface (**208**) butted the northern face of the brick wall, and was of apparently similar construction to that to the south (**205**).

3.4 TRENCH 3

- 3.4.1 Trench 3 was placed across a car park to the south of the modern factory, and was targeted on a row of presumed dwellings depicted on the tithe map of 1839 (Fig 2). The trench measured 22 x 2m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m, with natural subsoil deposits encountered at a depth of only 0.35m below the car park surface (Plate 3).
- 3.4.2 Removal of 75mm of asphalt revealed 90mm of MOT grade aggregates. This typically overlay 0.2m of dark brown silty clay, containing fragments of rick and other rubble inclusions. This deposit was much deeper towards the centre of the trench, where it contained greater quantities of broken brick, within a heavily indurated dark matrix. In the western part of the trench this overlay plastic natural mottled clay with rounded pebble inclusions. A sondage at the eastern end of the trench revealed this deposit to be at least 1m in thickness, which clearly represented the natural post-glacial subsoil.



Plate 3: General view of Trench 3 looking west

- 3.4.3 Towards the centre of the trench, three hand-made bricks, pushed into the clay, formed the footing for a vertical timber post of unknown date (Plate 4). Approximately 3m from the east end of the trench, a single-skin wall of hand-made brick (301) was butted on either face by remnants of flagstone flooring (302; Fig 5). On the eastern side of the wall, which comprised bricks typically measuring $9\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{5}{8}$ "", the displaced flagstone sat on red printed roofing felt (Plate 5), used as a cheap linoleum substitute. This was overlain by up to 40mm of a pale sandy deposit which was almost certainly wall plaster, containing fragments of dolly-blue paint and timber laths from partition walls.
- 3.4.4 Approximately 2m to the west, a wall of full-brick thickness (303) was placed on a similar alignment to wall 301, and had a possible westward stub in its lower of two extant courses (Plate 6). It was also butted by a poorly-preserved flagstone surfaces on either face (304), that to the west also having a 0.55 x 0.44m section of rounded pebbles (305) placed in rows aligned perpendicular to the wall. These, and the flagstones to the north and south, were bordered with vertically set, well-worn, 2½" thick flagstones (Plate 6) that formed the edge of an apparent curb, with a recessed cobble sett drain in the road to the west (Plates 6 and 7). This was plaster lined at its northern end, and was sunken 40mm below five part-rows of extant cobble setts (306) to the west (Plates 6 and 7). This cobbled surface had a butt joint with a full-brick thickness wall (307) on its western side (Plate 8), adjacent to the northern limit of excavation. Wall 307 was butted on its western face at its southern end by a machine-made brick wall, or narrow floor (308), of two full-bricks thickness (Fig 5), bonded in a black sooty mortar (Plate 8). This clearly represented a later feature, which sloped markedly from west to east (Plate 8).



Plate 4: Three bricks packing a broken timber post, pushed into natural clay in Trench 3



Plate 5: Brick wall 301, with printed roofing felt floor and flagstone 302



Plate 6: Wall 303 with possible stub in lower course, with cobbling 304, 305, and 306



Plate 7: Detail of drain and cobbling 305 and 306



Plate 8: North/south-aligned wall 307, butted by slightly lower wall / floor (308)

3.5 TRENCH 4

- 3.5.1 Trench 4 was also placed within the car park to the south of the former modern factory, on an approximate east/west alignment, and was targeted at the southern end of the same row of presumed dwellings as shown within the area of Trench 3 on the 1839 title map (Fig 2). The trench measured 20 x 2m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.50m, with natural subsoils encountered at a depth of only 0.25m below the car park surface (Plate 9).



Plate 9: General view of Trench 4, looking east

- 3.5.2 Removal of asphalt revealed 0.15m of aggregate gravel MOT. This overlay 0.08m of silty dark brown garden soil/subsoil with rubble inclusions. This in turn sealed mottled, mid-brown, natural plastic clay. At the west end of the trench this was cut by a black, slightly organic feature (**401**), containing brick rubble and other dumped waste, including a metal walking stick handle and a 'TC cola' bottle. The feature was observed for a width of 2.6m, extending beyond the western limit of excavation, and had an eastern edge that merged with the natural clay subsoil, possibly suggesting that it represented a boundary ditch that had been open for a significant period. The feature was not excavated fully due to waterlogging of the trench at this point.
- 3.5.3 A series of walls ran parallel to Bag Lane at the eastern end of the trench (Fig 6). The eastern of these (**402**), was well-preserved, comprising up to five courses of hand-made brick, surviving to within only 0.14m of the present ground surface (Plate 10). The large bricks were typically $9\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{5}{8}$ " in size, similar to those encountered within Trench 3, bonded in pale lime mortar in either English or English Garden Wall bond, with the lower two courses being edge-set and unbonded to form a foundation plinth (Plate 10). At the northern end, a broken 4" thick sandstone block overlay the course above the foundation (Plate 10), probably representing a threshold step. The wall was placed within a 0.11m wide cut, infilled with similar clay to the natural subsoils, but containing fragments of brick rubble (Plate 10).



Plate 10: Wall **402**, with probable threshold step on left side

- 3.5.4 A further full-brick thickness wall (**403**) cut the natural clay 3.6m to the west (Fig 6), and comprised similar fabric to **402**. All but the southern five exposed bricks were edge-set into the clay, with a mortar scar on their surface suggesting that they carried a single-skin wall above (Plate 11). The remains of a similar wall (**404**), situated 2.75m to the west, retained a full-brick thickness course above the foundation course (Plate 12), but again had a mortar scar above this suggesting only a single-skin wall was erected above (Plate 12).

- 3.5.5 Two broken bricks on the western face of wall **404** (Plate 12) possibly represented the remains of an abutting wall, and a putative rounded cobble surface to the west (**405**) was cut by a trench housing a modern plastic pipe (Plates 12 and 13). This also cut the edge of a 0.68m wide cobble sett surface (**406**), sloping gently to the east, and bounded by edge-set flagstones (Fig 6). This was partly overlain by broken flagstones and welsh slate roof tiles (Plate 13).



Plate 11: Edge-set and bed-laid foundation of wall 403, with mortar scar of single-skin wall above



Plate 12: Walls 404 and 407, with kerb 406 bounded by vertically-set flagstones

- 3.5.6 This surface butted a narrower wall (**407**), comprising a mixture of two edge-set bricks, and a single skin of brickwork (Plate 13), forming a wall foundation. This did not extend across the whole trench (Fig; Plate 13), with a butt joint to large rounded cobbles (**408**) at its southern end. It was butted on its west face by the remains of two sandstone flags (**409**) and a rough surface of small rounded cobbles and broken brick fragments (Plate 13).



3.6 TRENCH 5

- 3.6.1 Trench 5 was placed at the southern end of the car park, and was targeted on a much larger, isolated structure shown on the 1839 tithe map (Fig 2), and possibly marked as 'Noble's' on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1849 (Fig 3). The position of both the boundary fence of the modern factory, and a newt fence placed on its eastern side, meant that the eastern end of the intended 30m length of trench could not be excavated, and as a result the trench was excavated in a cruciform plan, across both axes of building.
- 3.6.2 The main east/west-aligned axis measured 18.6 x 2.5m, with the perpendicular part of the trench measuring 13.8 x 2.3m (Fig 7). Archaeologically significant deposits were encountered at a much greater depth than in the other trenches (Plate 14), with the trench having a maximum depth of 1.10m.
- 3.6.3 Removal of the 0.1m thickness of modern surfacing and an associated levelling layer of 0.2m of MOT grade aggregate revealed 0.65-0.80m of demolition rubble (Plate 14). This comprised fragments of broken bricks, concrete, Welsh slate, and modern plastics and dumped rubbish, within a dark silty clay matrix.



Plate 14: General view of Trench 5, looking west

- 3.6.4 A modern drain had cut through any earlier remains at the eastern end of the trench. The drain was set within a trench filled with pea grits to a depth in excess of 1.1m. This cut two east/west-aligned, full-brick thickness walls (**501** and **502**) that were exposed at a depth of 0.8m below the present ground level (Plate 14). The two parallel walls were placed 1.17m apart, and comprised similar bricks and mortar to those revealed in Trench 4. Both walls were constructed in English bond, observed to up to five courses high in the southern wall (**501**), but continuing below the depth of excavation. At the upper extant level, a floor of edge-set broken and whole bricks (**503**) formed a floor between the two walls, above a 0.06m thick levelling layer of boiler clinker (Plate 14). The northern wall (**502**) was butted on its northern side by another edge-set brick floor (**504**), but this was of later date, comprising machine-made bricks (Plate 14), and was capped with a 55mm thickness of fragmented concrete (**505**). At its western end, wall **502** and brick floors **503** and **504** appear to have been cut by a 0.41m wide trench, infilled with brick and concrete fragments. However, this appeared to overlay a full-brick thickness wall (**506**) in the western part of this cut, placed on a perpendicular alignment to those to the east, and of similar construction (Plate 15).



Plate 15: Apparent cross wall 506, at the west end of surface 503

- 3.6.5 Wall 506 was butted on its western face by a perpendicular cobble sett yard or road surface (507; Fig 7)). This appeared to have a slight camber (Plate 16) and had two perpendicular rows of cobble setts along its western edge (Plate 17). It was butted by two very large sandstone flags with four rows of cobbles infilling the gap between (Plate 17). Cobbling and broken flagstones continued to the west but were truncated by a later ceramic drain pipe, again placed in a wide trench infilled with pea grits. To the south of the pipe trench further large flagstones appeared to form part of the backfill, even though they all lay at a similar level. In the northern limb of the trench a cobbled surface (508) continued either side of the drain cut, apparently forming a road or track way with a well defined western edge curb also of cobbles (Plates 18).



Plate 16: Cobble sett road / track 507



Plate 17: Perpendicular edging and large sandstone blocks within surface 507



Plate 18: Cobbled track 508, from the north

3.7 TRENCH 6

- 3.7.1 Trench 6 was placed at the southern end of the site, across the footprint of Knight's Farm, in an area of rough scrub ground. The east/west-aligned trench measured 23m long, and up to 2.5m wide, and was targeted on a detached structure that is shown on the 1839 tithe map (Fig 2), and marked as 'Knight's Farm' on the Ordnance Survey edition of 1894 (Fig 4). The exposed fabric almost certainly represented the farm buildings, including brick, flagstone, and slate protruded from the ground surface over this area of the site, suggesting that little landscaping had been undertaken following demolition. Indeed, historic fabric was revealed immediately below the thin deposit of topsoil in many parts of the trench, which had a maximum depth of 0.50m (Plate 19).



Plate 19: General view of Trench 6, looking east

3.7.2 At the eastern end of the trench, which was determined by the position of a ditch and bund bounding the field, a damaged concrete floor (**601**) was revealed only 0.09m below the present ground level (Fig 6). This continued beyond the limit of excavation to the north, south, and east, being visible within the trench for a width of only 0.60m, where it was bounded on its western side by a wall of full-brick thickness (**602**). The floor was heavily fragmented and was approximately 0.10m thick, but appeared to have comprised a relatively high-quality smooth surface, suggesting that it formed an internal floor, probably of early or mid-twentieth-century date. Wall **602** was only revealed in plan (Fig 6), comprising hand-made, mould thrown bricks, laid in stretcher bond (Plate 20), and bonded in a pale lime-based mortar. The wall had a 0.50m return on its western side, where it butted two intact 2' x 18" (0.61 x 0.45m) sandstone flags (**603**). The short length of wall did not appear to underlie the flags, suggesting that it possibly represented the side-wall of a chimney-breast. Several fractured fragments of sandstone flags survived against the southern section of the trench (Plate 20), demonstrating not only that floor level lay at almost present ground level, but that it had been damaged by the demolition and subsequent site clearance.



Plate 20: Wall **602** and broken floor **603**

3.7.3 Approximately 4.25m to the west of wall **602**, and on an apparently similar alignment, a further wall (**604**) was revealed (Fig 6). This wall was of sandstone construction, measuring 0.65m wide, and comprising a double faced wall of large angular sandstone slabs (Plate 21). It continued beyond the northern limit of excavation, and had a similarly constructed return (**605**) at its southern end. The trench was expanded slightly to establish that the junction of the two walls was keyed, but it remains unclear whether wall **604** continued beyond wall **605**. Wall **605** was more badly damaged than wall **604** (Plate 21), but was almost certainly placed on a perpendicular alignment, and appeared to be of similar approximately 2' (0.61m) width, and faced with angular sandstone blocks. The wall ran for a length of only 13' (3.96m), where it had a further northward return (**606**), placed parallel to wall **604** (Plate 21). This was similarly of approximately 2' (0.61m) width, comprising at least two courses of angular sandstone blocks interspersed with an unbounded rubble core.



Plate 21: Stone walls **604** and **605**, and brick partition **607**

3.7.4 A single-skin brick wall (**607**) survived 4' (1.21m) to the north of Wall **605**, and placed on a similar alignment (Plate 21). It was of hand-made, mould-thrown brick construction, exposed to only a single course in plan, and ran between the perpendicular stone walls, **604** and **606**, which it butted at either end. On its northern side a single broken remnant of a sandstone flag floor (**608**) survived within the angle to wall **604** (Plate 21). Although the wall was of different fabric to the outer walls of the structure, it is not implausible that they represent contemporary features, as brick provided the ability to erect narrow internal partitions that had little structural requirement.

- 3.7.5 A rectangular brick chamber (**609**) was revealed 2.3m to the west of the stone structure, and comprised single- and full-thickness brick walls around a 2'6" x 1'6" (0.76 x 0.45m) rectangular chamber (Plate 19). All walls were of hand-made brick construction, with the full-brick thickness western wall, which continued beyond both the chamber, and the limit of excavation to the south, apparently being constructed in Flemish bond (Plate 19). The northern wall also continued to the west of the chamber, which possibly represented an ash pit or privy, where it was overlain by the make-up layer of demolition rubble below an indurated, metallised surface (**610**). The 3m wide feature was cambered, being 0.15m higher in the centre than on either side, suggesting that it represented the base of a road. This was supported by the observation of broken asphalt within the topsoil in this area. It remains unclear whether this represents the make-up for a late road, or whether the asphalt represents the re-surfacing of an earlier feature.
- 3.7.6 Two parallel brick walls (**611** and **612**), set 3' (0.91m) apart, were exposed to the west of the probable road. Both were of full-brick thickness, and were constructed with Hesketh & Wild plastic bricks, produced locally in Atherton. This company was listed in Slater's *Directory for Atherton* in 1898, as being located on Wigan Road, but was dissolved in 1899, when John William Wild took sole control of the works (*London Gazette*, 2 June 1899), suggesting that the bricks for the wall were extruded slightly before this date. The walls were also bonded in black sooty mortar, again consistent with a date of construction around the turn of the twentieth century. A perpendicular single-skin wall (**613**) formed an internal partition between the two walls against the northern limit of excavation, suggesting some complexity to the structure which is of unknown function, although its small width suggests that it may represent agricultural pens.
- 3.7.7 The structure was bounded on its western side by a rough brick floor (**614**), comprising two distinct elements. The northern part of the floor, which probably represented a yard, comprised edge-set bricks, similar in style to that observed within Trench 5, only 21m to the north. The southern 0.7m of the exposed floor however, comprised hand-made bricks laid on bed, suggesting a possible repair, different phases of construction, or possibly differing functions, such as a path.

3.8 FINDS

- 3.8.1 A very small assemblage of artefact fragments was recovered during the course of the evaluation. It comprises eight fragments of pottery, 11 of glass, and three of clay tobacco pipe. All of the material was recovered from demolition overburden, and may thus be considered as essentially unstratified. The material is in good condition, the pottery especially in reasonably large fragments, but the glass shows some sign of flaking, as a result of deposition conditions. The entire assemblage can be placed broadly within the period spanning the second half of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

- 3.8.2 The pottery comprises transfer-printed refined white earthenwares, together with a few fragments of dark-glazed coarsewares. A blue and white underglaze transfer-printed plate in the pattern 'Asiatic Pheasants', possibly produced by the company of Thomas Fell and Co, of Newcastle upon Tyne, can probably be dated to between 1817-90 (www.asiaticpheasants.co.uk). The dark-glazed coarsewares almost certain represent utilitarian storage vessels that were ubiquitous in nineteenth-century domestic contexts.
- 3.8.3 The fragments of glass were largely from vessels. These included a soft drinks bottle that retained a 'CL Cola' manufacturer's label.
- 3.8.4 In conclusion, the artefacts of are limited archaeological interest, and do not enable a further understanding of the site. It is recommended that the finds are discarded.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 DISCUSSION

4.1.1 The evaluation has demonstrated that significant physical remains of the structures adjacent to Bag Lane depicted on historical mapping survive *in-situ*; buried remains of all buildings, except those in the northern part of the site were revealed, despite significant alterations in present ground level associated with the factory that occupied the site during the twentieth century.

4.2 TRENCH 1

4.2.1 This trench was targeted at a relatively large building complex at the northern end of the site. However, excavation of the two parts of Trench 1, at two different levels of the terraced factory base, revealed this part of the site to be heavily truncated. Given the shallow depth of deposits encountered, and the substantive nature of the historic buildings formerly located within this position, it is unlikely that any further remains survive that may be associated with these structures.

4.3 TRENCH 2

4.3.1 The excavation of Trench 2 revealed well-preserved archaeological deposits at a shallow depth, representing several phases of activity, although it was not possible to ascribe dates to with any certainty within the confines of the evaluation trench. The structures encountered were erected between the production of a tithe map in 1839 (Fig 2), and the first edition Ordnance Survey 6": 1 mile map of 1849 (surveyed in 1845-6), which depicts a linear row of buildings enclosed with a boundary wall to the west, and with three much smaller structures placed against this boundary wall (Fig 3). The following 25": 1 mile edition map of 1894 depicts the structures in more detail (Fig 4), showing that the buildings had enclosed yards or small gardens along the Bag Lane frontage, whilst access to the rear appeared to have been partially blocked by an increase in the number of outbuildings (Fig 4). This would suggest that they comprised large narrow through-houses.

4.3.2 Wall **207** represented a cross wall between two of the dwellings within the row of houses, with floor **206** forming part of the original, or more probably relaid internal floor. Concrete floors **205** and **208** represent a secondary phase of flooring, with **205** almost certainly covering the rear, western wall of the property, perhaps suggesting the insertion of a wide doorway in this position, or possibly the partial demolition of the dwellings prior to the insertion of the floor, which may relate to the Albion Works.

4.3.3 The cobbled surface to the west (**202**) and associated kerb (**203**) suggest the presence of a pavement within the original construction, not shown on any of the mapping, and supporting a suggestion that the front and rear of the block of dwellings originally had separate entrances.

4.4 TRENCH 3

- 4.4.1 Trench 3 was placed 30m to the south of Trench 2, within the same row of dwellings, in the northern part of a block of structures depicted on the 1839 tithe map (Fig 2). These clearly represent an earlier phase of houses, and are shown as less-uniformly constructed on the more detailed map of 1894 (Fig 4). This may possibly indicate that an early row of single-room cottages, perhaps of only a single storey, constructed on the Bag Lane frontage were expanded subsequently.
- 4.4.2 The evaluation trench revealed brick walls that were clearly associated with these structures, along with poorly-preserved flooring materials. A pavement to the rear of the dwellings was also revealed, and was of different style to that in Trench 2, possibly indicative of an earlier phase of construction. Bricks bonded in black sooty mortar to the east represent remodelling, and extension of the dwellings, which local knowledge suggests were not finally demolished until the 1960s.

4.5 TRENCH 4

- 4.5.1 Trench 4 was placed in the same phase of the dwelling block shown on the 1839 tithe map, but at its southern end (Fig 2). The series of parallel walls revealed (**402**, **403**, and **404**) revealed important information about the internal plan of the structures, demonstrating that the eastern exposed room was 12' (3.63m) wide, whilst that to the west was significantly narrower, at only 9' (2.74m) wide (Fig 6). The presence of a possible threshold step within the eastern wall provides information regarding the original floor level, and that a return cross wall almost certainly lay immediately to the north of the evaluation trench, as doorways were generally placed at one end of the façade in single-fronted cottages. The disparity between the room sizes is typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century through cottages (OA North 2011).
- 4.5.2 The wide organic feature in the western end of the trench probably represents an infilled boundary ditch, and aligns approximately with a boundary shown on all the historic mapping. The rectangular nature of the boundary on the mapping suggests that it was formed by a wall, but this may have replaced an earlier infilled ditch boundary.

4.6 TRENCH 5

- 4.6.1 Trench 5 had the deepest overburden above the archaeological deposits, sealing well-preserved walls and floors. The building was substantially larger than the cottages to the north, and probably represents elements of a farmstead. Excavation revealed a 3' (0.91m) probable passageway, with a brick floor, overlain on its northern side by a late nineteenth or early twentieth-century modification. Whilst it is tempting to suggest that the passage forms evidence for a cross-passage plan-type, stylistically dating the house to between the late sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries (Brunskill 1992, 125), these represent the only observed remains of the structure, making it very difficult to generalise about its overall plan.

- 4.6.2 Overlaying a plan of the excavated remains onto the detailed Ordnance Survey map of 1894 suggests that the extant passage lay in the south-western corner of the building, rather than in its centre, with the majority of the structure laying to the north-east beyond the feasible limit of excavation.
- 4.6.2 Cobbled setts to the rear of the building appear to form a track, or more realistically, a well-constructed road of approximately 17' (5.18m) width. This had large sandstone bases set within it, possibly representing the position of smaller structures or pens within a yard. No such features are depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1894. The cobbling also suggests that the enclosed area around the structures shown on this map was also substantively cobbled.

4.7 TRENCH 6

- 4.7.1 Trench 6 lay outside the boundary of the mid-twentieth century factory, and was targeted on structures marked as 'Knight's Farm' on the historic mapping. Excavation revealed the well-preserved remains of several phases of construction, with a concrete floor in the eastern end of the trench representing a replacement of an earlier floor, almost certainly of flagstones, as observed immediately to the west. The structure also appears to have comprised a mixture of stone and brick walls, and whilst the latter may represent a secondary phase of construction, wall 607 in particular, probably represents an original internal partition within the stone-built structure.
- 4.7.2 The exposed remains of the stone structure reveal a room of 13' (3.96m) width, which, when overlain on the historic mapping, appears to form part of the narrow western wing. The presence of a possible ash pit to the west, suggests good preservation of outbuildings, as do the later structures at the western end of the trench, which appear to represent an extension to the complex at the end of the nineteenth century. This extension employed locally-supplied brick, comprising relatively early 'plastic' brick, presumably made from the clay deposits extracted from the nearby Gib Colliery.
- 4.7.3 Some truncation was caused by the insertion of a metalled base for a trackway, which appears to have linked the site to the colliery via Colliery Lane prior to 1894 (Fig 4). The track aligns with the Ordnance Survey mapping, and also appears to have continued to the north, affording access to the rear of the 'Noble's' complex.

4.8 CONCLUSION

- 4.8.1 In conclusion, the results obtained from the evaluation indicate that well-preserved remains of archaeological interest survive *in-situ* across the majority of the eastern fringe of the site. These represent multi-phase structures and associated roads and yards. The two probable farmstead at the southern end of the site differ both in form and fabric, with that in Trench 6 retaining well-preserved walls of stone construction, suggesting an early nineteenth century date of construction at the latest.

5. POTENTIAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 The programme of archaeological evaluation at Gibfield Park has provided a valuable opportunity to investigate the physical remains of the post-medieval settlement of Bag Lane. The evaluation has also demonstrated that well-preserved buried remains of archaeological interest survive *in-situ* across the site, and has provided an indication of their depth, nature, character and significance. A brief review of the available primary and secondary written sources has indicated that there is a paucity of documentary evidence for the development of Bag Lane, which increases the evidential value of the physical remains.
- 5.1.2 The results obtained from the evaluation could potentially help address a series of regional research objectives drawn from the initiatives for archaeological research of the industrial and modern periods stated in the current *Archaeological Research Framework for North West England* (Newman and McNeil 2007; McNeil and Newman 2007). These include:
- *Initiative 7.6*: ‘A study of the development of workers’ housing in Greater Manchester should be undertaken to examine the development of different housing types...’ (McNeil and Newman 2007, 139);
 - *Initiative 7.7*: ‘Study the material culture of industrial workers’ households...’ (*ibid*);
 - *Initiative 7.25*: ‘Where threatened with possible redevelopment excavations are required of now undeveloped and cleared former working class areas regarded as slums’ (*op cit*, 147);
- 5.1.3 For the purposes of summarising the archaeological potential, the study area may be usefully considered as comprising three components, based on the topography of the site: the lower terrace in the northern part of the study area, investigated by Trench 1; the upper terrace in the central part of the site, investigated by Trenches 2-5; and the southern part of the site that was examined via Trench 6.

5.2 POTENTIAL

- 5.2.1 ***Northern Part of the Site***: the results obtained from the evaluation have demonstrated that the lower terrace in the northern part of the site has no archaeological potential. This reflects the considerable earth-moving works that this part of the site has been subject to previously, which evidently destroyed all physical remains of the nineteenth-century buildings depicted on historical mapping.

- 5.2.2 **Central Part of the Site:** it is clear that the central part of the site has considerable archaeological potential, with well-preserved remains of the nineteenth-century buildings surviving *in-situ*. These remains have potential to provide an understanding of the form and development of the buildings depicted on nineteenth-century mapping, but for which there is little other documentation.
- 5.2.3 **Southern Part of the Site:** the southern part of the site also has considerable archaeological potential, with well-preserved remains of Knight's Farm surviving *in-situ*. These remains have potential to provide an understanding of the form and development of the farm complex depicted on nineteenth-century mapping, but for which there is little other documentation.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.3.1 Design proposals allow for the construction of new houses and an access road across the footprint of the nineteenth-century buildings in the northern part of the site (Fig 8). However, further archaeological investigation in this area, which was investigated initially via Trench 1, is unlikely to be merited.
- 5.3.2 The design proposals for the central part of the site similarly allow for the construction of new houses across the footprint of the nineteenth-century buildings (Fig 8). Further investigation of this area in advance of any construction works is merited.
- 5.3.3 The footprint of Knight's Farm in the southern part of the site, investigated via Trench 6, lies beyond the footprint of proposed new houses (Fig 8). However, this part of the site is in a contaminated area, which will require remediation. The buried archaeological remains of Knight's Farm would merit further investigation in the event of them being damaged or destroyed during the course of any future remediation works.
- 5.3.4 In conclusion, the current design proposals necessitate earth-moving works that will almost certainly impact upon the buried archaeological remains across the central part of the site (Fig 8). Whilst the remains encountered in this area during the archaeological evaluation are not considered to be of national importance, which would merit preservation *in-situ*, their damage or destruction during the course of the proposed development will require an appropriate mitigation strategy to be formulated. The most appropriate form of any further investigation will be decided in consultation with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council; the level of investigation will be commensurate with the nature of the impacts that would occur at each location.

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APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

July 2013

Oxford
Archaeology
North

**GIBFIELD PARK,
ATHERTON,
GREATER MANCHESTER**



Extract from the Atherton tithe map of 1839

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION**

Proposals

The following Written Scheme of Investigation is offered in response to a request from Mr J Keyte of Arup, acting on behalf of the Gibfield Park Group Ltd, for an archaeological evaluation in advance of a proposed development of land off Wigan Road in Atherton, Greater Manchester.

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Gibfield Park Group Ltd is developing proposals for a mixed use commercial, residential and public open-space development of former industrial land off Wigan Road in Atherton, Greater Manchester (centred on NGR 366585 404080; Plate 1). The proposed development will necessitate considerable earth-moving works with a potential to have a negative impact on any buried archaeological remains. The archaeological resource of the area has been summarised in an Archaeological Technical Appraisal, which was compiled by ARUP in 2011. This study concluded that there is some potential for post-medieval remains relating to the former Bag Lane settlement to survive as buried structures and deposits, which would be of archaeological interest. The study concluded that further investigations should be undertaken to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site.



Plate 1: Aerial view of the study area prior to the recent demolition of the industrial buildings

- 1.1.2 Based on the conclusions drawn by the Archaeological Technical Appraisal, the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), which provides archaeological advice to Wigan Borough Council, recommended that a programme of trial trenching was merited in advance of development, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Paragraph 128. In particular, it was recommended that the evaluation should seek to establish the potential for evidence relating to rural activity associated with the post-medieval Bag Lane settlement, including Knight's Farm and former workers' housing.

1.1.3 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been formulated in response to a Project Brief devised by GMAAS, and allows for the excavation of six trial trenches. In the event of significant archaeological remains being discovered in the trenches, further archaeological investigation is likely to be required. Any such additional works will be carried out in accordance with an Updated WSI.

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

1.2.1 Oxford Archaeology is an educational charity under the guidance of a board of trustees with over 35 years of experience in archaeology, and can provide a professional and cost-effective service. We are the largest employer of archaeologists in the country (we currently have more than 300 members of staff), and can thus deploy considerable resources with extensive experience to deal with any archaeological obligations you or your clients may have. OA is an Institute for Archaeologists Registered Organisation (No 17). We have offices in Lancaster and Oxford, trading as Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) and Oxford Archaeology South (OA South) respectively, enabling us to provide a truly nationwide service. All work on the project will be undertaken in accordance with relevant professional standards, including:

- IfA's *Code of Conduct* (1999); *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (1999); *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* (1999);
- English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991;
- The European Association of Archaeologists *Principles of Conduct for Archaeologists Involved in Contract Archaeological Work* (1998).

1.2.2 OA North has unrivalled experience in the assessment, evaluation and excavation of post-medieval sites, particularly in the context of Greater Manchester. Of particular relevance, OA North has recently undertaken a series of evaluations and excavations of former rural workers' housing and farmsteads in the county, including those at Bottling Wood near Wigan, Kingsway near Rochdale, and Clayton near Manchester.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 ACADEMIC AIMS

2.1.1 The main research aim of the investigation, given the commercial nature of the development, will be to establish the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains on the site and, if present, characterise the level of preservation and significance, and provide a good understanding of their potential.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 The objectives of the project may be summarised as follows:

- to determine the presence, character, and extent of structures associated with the former post-medieval settlement at Bag Lane;
- to inform a decision as to whether further archaeological investigation will be required in advance of development ground works;
- to compile an archival record of any archaeological remains within the development area.

3 METHOD STATEMENT

- 3.2 Experience has shown the importance of a close working relationship between the client and their archaeological contractor on complex development projects. Such a relationship will help to ensure the timely and successful completion of the project in an efficient and cost-effective manner, achieving high technical and academic standards, whilst meeting all the requirements of the tender documentation, and fulfilling all the client's archaeological obligations.
- 3.3 The development area will be investigated initially via the excavation of six targeted evaluation trenches (Figures 1-3). In the event of significant archaeological remains being discovered in the trenches, it is likely that further archaeological investigation will be required. Any such additional works will be carried out in accordance with an Updated Written Scheme of Investigation, which will be devised in consultation with GMAAS.

3.2 EVALUATION

3.2.1 **General Methodology:** it is proposed that the site be investigated initially via six trenches (Figure 1). In addition, a contingency of 10m of trenching may be implemented to resolve specific questions arising from the initial excavation of the trenches. This trenching will be placed at the Site Director's discretion, but in consultation with the Client and GMAAS.

- *Trench 1:* will be 20m in length, and will be aligned north/south across the footprint of the farmstead annotated 'Greenhoughs' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849 in the northern part of the site (Fig 2);
- *Trench 2:* will be 20m in length, and will be aligned east/west across the north part of a terrace of workers' cottages depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849 (Fig 2);
- *Trench 3:* will be 20m in length, and will be aligned east/west across the northern end of a narrow terrace of cottage annotated 'Nobles' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849 (Fig 2);
- *Trench 4:* will be 20m in length, and will be aligned east/west across the southern end of a narrow terrace of cottage annotated 'Nobles' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849 (Fig 2);
- *Trench 5:* will be 30m in length, and will be aligned east/west across an irregular-shaped building shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849;
- *Trench 6:* will be 20m in length, and will be aligned east/west across an irregular-shaped building shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849, and annotated 'Knight's Farm' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1894.

- 3.2.2 Excavation of the modern ground surface will be undertaken by a machine of appropriate power using a toothed bucket and, where necessary, a breaker. The uppermost levels of overburden/demolition material will then be removed using the same machine, but fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to the top of the first significant archaeological level.
- 3.2.3 Machine excavation will then be used to define carefully the extent of any surviving foundations, floors, and other remains. All machine work will be supervised closely by a suitably experienced archaeologist. Thereafter, structural remains will be cleaned manually to define their extent, nature, form and, where possible, date. If the excavation is to proceed below a depth of 1.2m, then the trenches will be widened sufficiently to allow the sides to be stepped in.
- 3.2.4 All information identified in the course of the site works will be recorded stratigraphically, using a system adapted from that used by the Centre for Archaeology Service of English Heritage. Results of the evaluation will be recorded on *pro-forma* context sheets, and will be accompanied with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and both black and white and colour photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features.
- 3.2.5 **Context Recording:** all contexts will be recorded using *pro-forma* sheets, and details will be incorporated into a Harris matrix. Similar object record and photographic record *pro-formas* will be used. All written recording of survey data, contexts, photographs, artefacts and ecofacts will be cross-referenced from *pro-forma* record sheets using sequential numbering.
- 3.2.6 **Photography:** a full and detailed photographic record of individual contexts will be maintained and similarly general views from standard view points of the overall site at all stages of the evaluation will be generated. Photography will be undertaken using high-resolution digital cameras. All frames will include a visible, graduated metric scale. Photographs records will be maintained on special photographic *pro-forma* sheets.
- 3.2.7 **Planning:** the precise location of the evaluation trenches, and the position of all archaeological structures encountered, will be surveyed by EDM tacheometry using a total station linked to a pen computer data logger. This process will generate scaled plans within AutoCAD, which will then be subject to manual survey enhancement. The drawings will be generated at an accuracy appropriate for 1:20 scale, but can be output at any scale required. Sections will be manually drafted as appropriate at a scale of 1:10. All information will be tied in to Ordnance Datum.
- 3.2.8 Human remains are not expected to be present, but if they are found they will, if possible, be left *in situ* covered and protected. If removal is necessary, then the relevant Home Office permission will be sought, and the removal of such remains will be carried out with due care and sensitivity as required by the *Burials Act 1857*.

- 3.2.9 Any gold and silver artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act, 1996.
- 3.2.10 **Finds policy:** finds recovery and sampling programmes will be in accordance with best practice (following current Institute for Archaeologists' guidelines) and subject to expert advice in order to minimise deterioration. OA North employs in-house artefact and palaeoecology specialists, with considerable expertise in the investigation, excavation, and finds management of sites of all periods and types, who are readily available for consultation. Finds storage during fieldwork and any site archive preparation will follow professional guidelines (UKIC).

3.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 3.3.1 Full regard will be given to all constraints during the course of the project. OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Safety Policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers.
- 3.3.2 OA North undertakes to safeguard, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its staff and of others who may be affected by our work. OA North will also take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of all persons not in their employment, such as volunteers, students, visitors, and members of the public (this includes trespassers).
- 3.3.3 OA North is fully familiar with and will comply with all current and relevant legislation, including, but not limited to:
- The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974);
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999);
 - Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002);
 - The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (2007);
 - The Control of Asbestos Regulations (2006);
 - The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (1992);
 - Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (1996);
 - The Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (2002);
 - The Work at Height Regulations (2005);
 - The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002);
 - The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations (1981);
 - The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005);
 - The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (1998);
 - Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (1998).
- 3.3.4 OA North has professional indemnity to a value of £2,000,000, employer's liability cover to a value of £10,000,000 and public liability to a value of £15,000,000. Written details of insurance cover can be provided if required.

3.4 PROJECT MONITORING

3.4.1 The aims of monitoring are to ensure that the archaeological works are undertaken within the limits set by the Written Scheme of Investigation, and to the satisfaction of the curatorial archaeologist at the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS). The curatorial archaeologist will be given at least five days' notice of when work is due to commence, and it is anticipated that there will be at least one formal monitoring meeting during the course of the evaluation.

3.5 POST-EXCAVATION AND REPORT PRODUCTION

3.5.1 **Report:** a report will be produced within four working weeks of the completion of the fieldwork, and will include:

- a summary statement of the findings;
- the background to the evaluation, including location details;
- an outline of the methodology of the evaluation;
- a description of the site's setting, including topography and geology;
- an account of the documented historical background to the site;
- a summary, assessment, and interpretation of the results;
- an assessment of any finds and samples recovered from the trenches;
- a description of the significance of the site in its local and regional context;
- recommendations for any further archaeological investigation that is considered merited to mitigate the impact of the development works;
- a catalogue of archive items, and details of the final deposition of the project archive.

3.5.2 **Archive:** 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* (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IfA in that organisation's code of conduct. As part of the archiving process, the on-line OASIS (On-line Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations) form will be completed.

- 3.5.3 The paper and finds archive for the archaeological work undertaken at the site will be deposited with the Museum of Wigan Life in Wigan. The archive will be deposited with the museum within six months of the completion of the fieldwork. Except for items subject to the Treasure Act, all artefacts found during the course of the project will be donated to the museum.

4 WORK TIMETABLE

- 4.1 A one-week period should be allowed to excavate and record the evaluation trenches. On the first day of the fieldwork, OA North will accurately locate through measured survey the exact position of the trenches to be excavated. The trench locations will then be scanned for live services with a CAT prior to any mechanical excavation.
- 4.2 In the event of significant archaeological remains being discovered in the evaluation trenches, a programme of further investigation may be anticipated. The time required for any additional investigation cannot be determined until the results of the evaluation are known.
- 4.3 A report will be submitted within four weeks of the completion of the fieldwork.

5 STAFFING PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The project will be under the overall charge of **Ian Miller BA FSA** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed. Ian has over 20 years experience of commercial archaeology, and has a particular interest in the archaeology of the Industrial Period, and particular that of Greater Manchester and Lancashire. His role will be to ensure that the Written Scheme of Investigation is implemented within the framework of the Project Objectives. He will be responsible for all aspects of staff and resource logistics, ensuring the smooth running of the project programme. He will liaise with the Client and GMAAS with regard to progress, and will maintain relationships with other contractors.
- 5.2 The fieldwork is likely to be undertaken by **Graham Mottershead BA** (OA North Project Supervisor). Graham is an highly experienced field archaeologist, with over 20 years continuous experience of field archaeology. It is not possible to provide details of specific technicians that will be involved with the fieldwork at this stage, but all shall be suitably qualified archaeologists with proven relevant experience. It is anticipated that up to two technician will be required for the initial stage of the fieldwork.
- 5.3 Assessment of any finds recovered from the evaluation will be undertaken by OA North's in-house finds specialist **Christine Howard-Davis BA** (OA North Finds Manager). Christine has extensive knowledge of all finds of all periods from archaeological sites in northern England, and is a recognised expert in the analysis of post-medieval artefacts.

ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Location map
- Figure 2: Trench locations superimposed on the tithe map of 1839
- Figure 3: Trench locations superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 6": 1 mile map of 1849
- Figure 4: Trench locations superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 25": 1 mile map of 1894
- Figure 5: Plans of evaluation trenches 2 and 3
- Figure 6: Plans of evaluation trenches 4 and 6
- Figure 7: Plans of evaluation trench 5
- Figure 8: Evaluation trenches superimposed on proposed development scheme

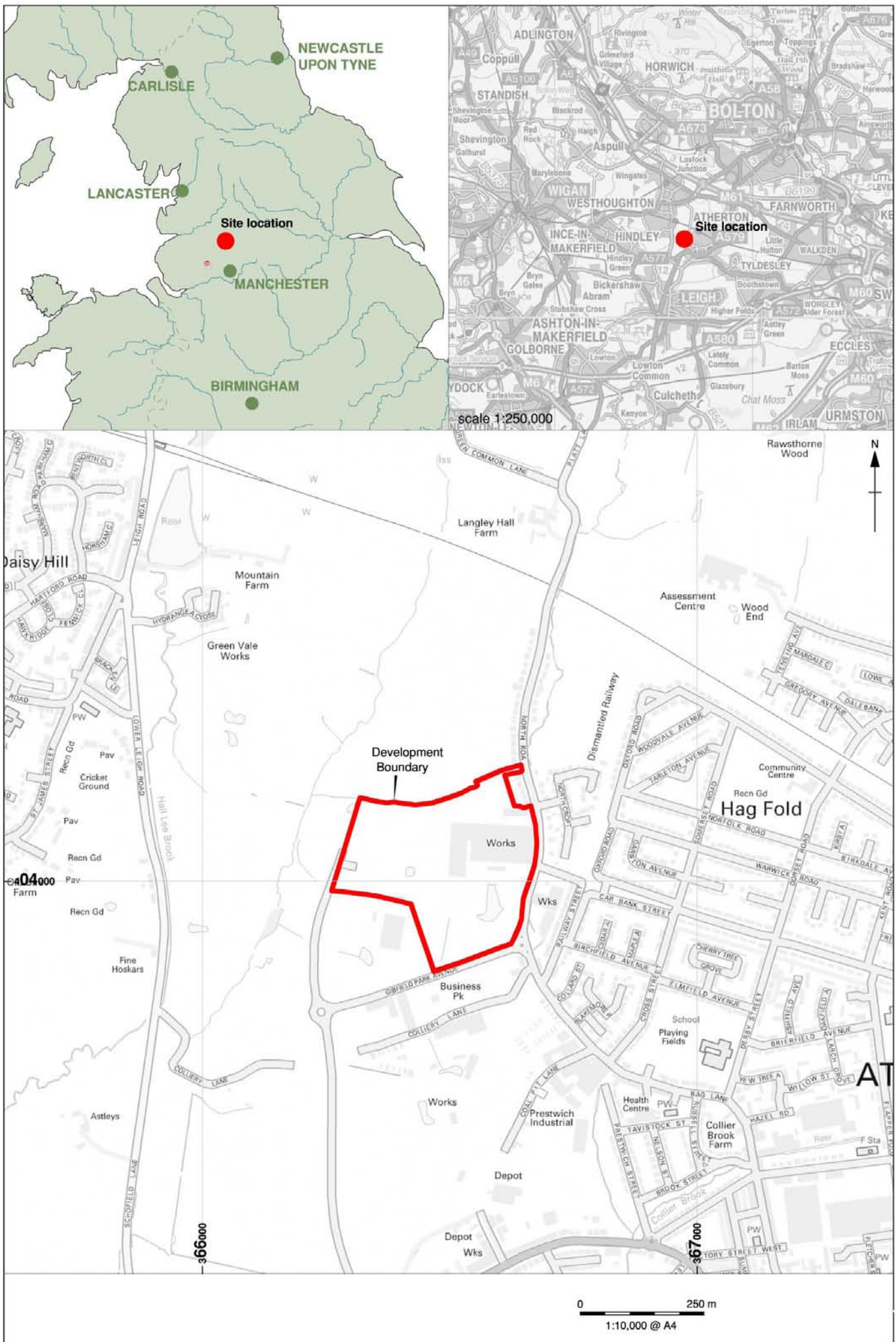


Figure 1: Site location

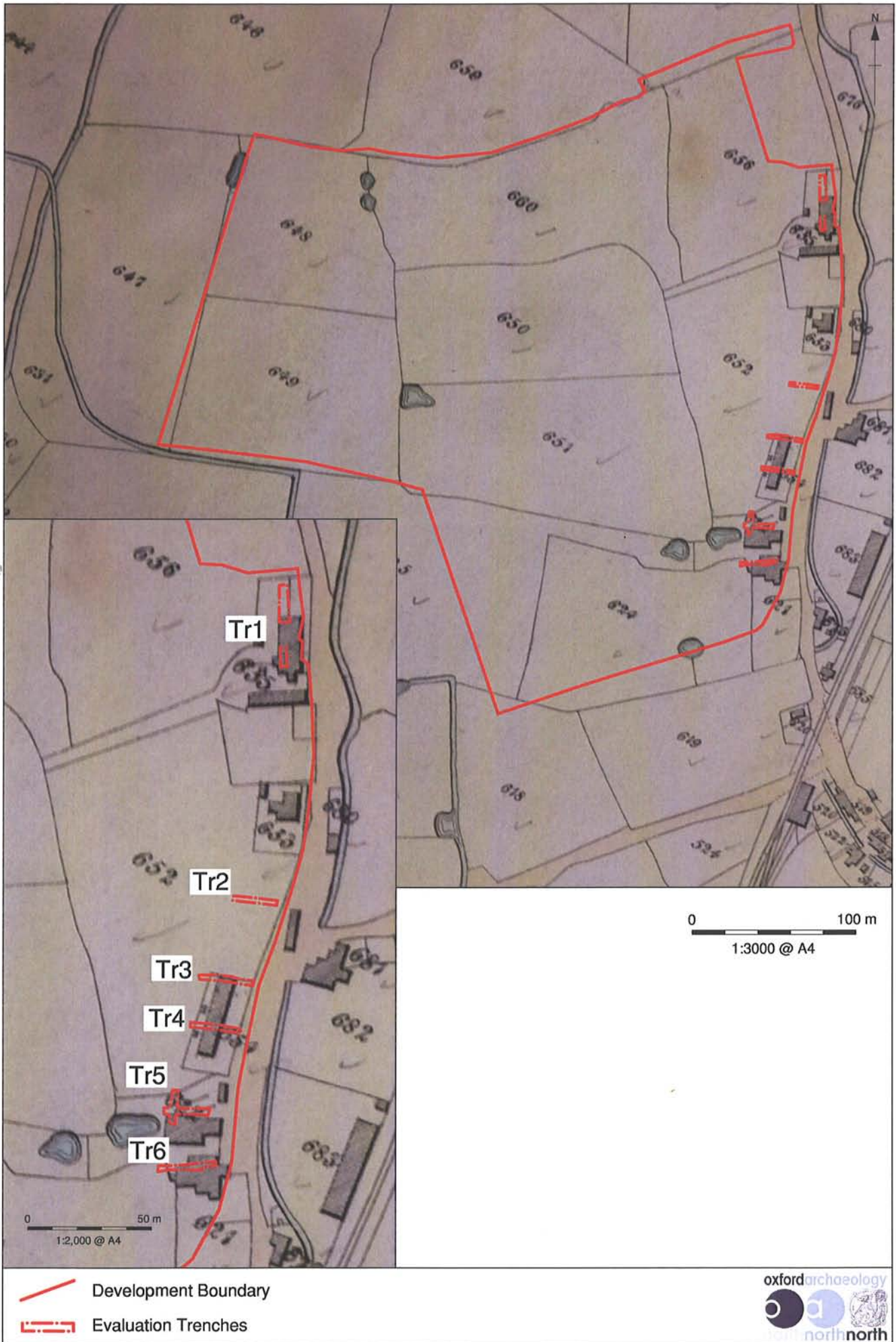


Figure 2: Trench locations superimposed on the tithe map of 1839, showing indicative site red line boundary

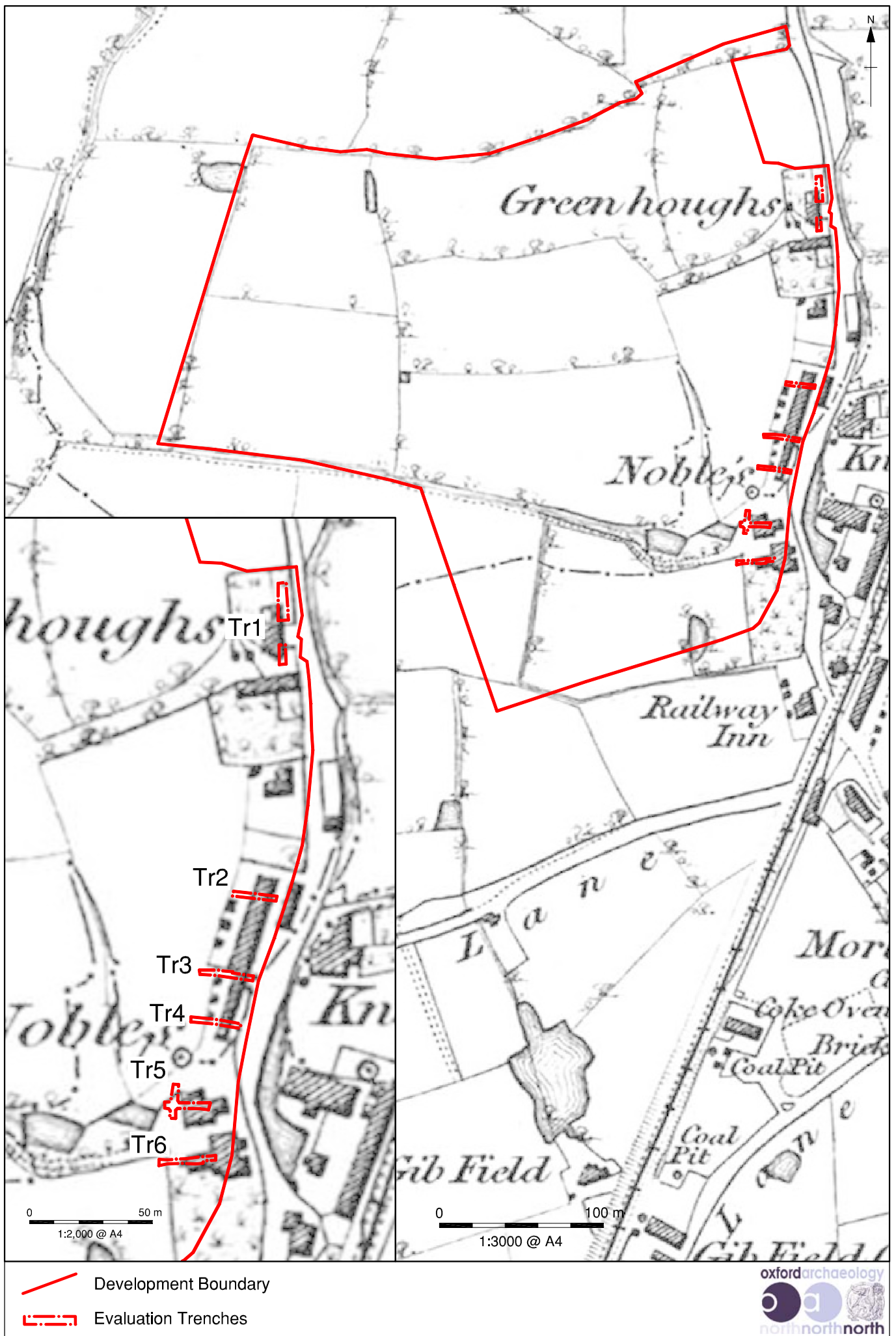


Figure 3: Trench locations superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 6":1 mile map of 1849, showing indicative site red line boundary

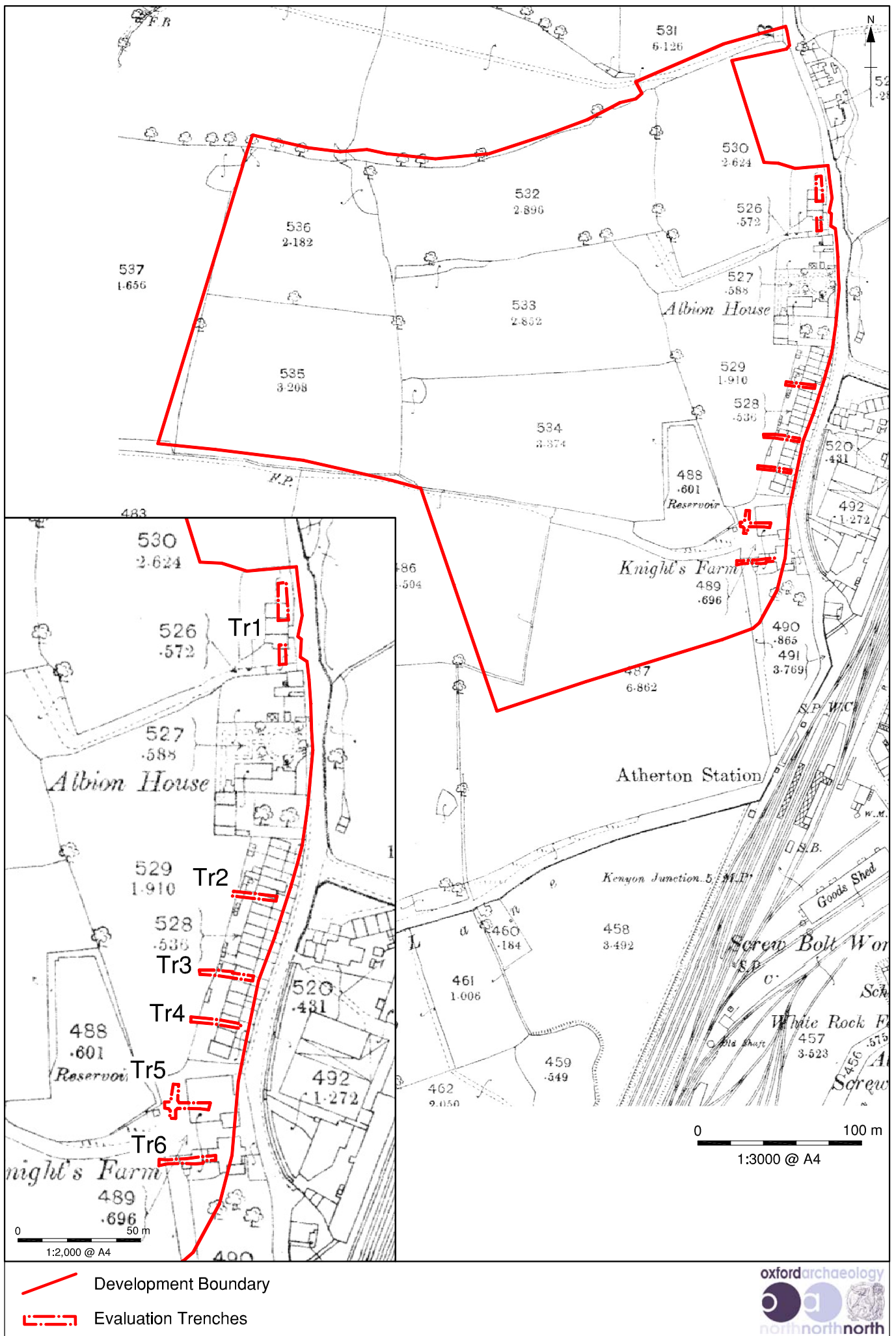
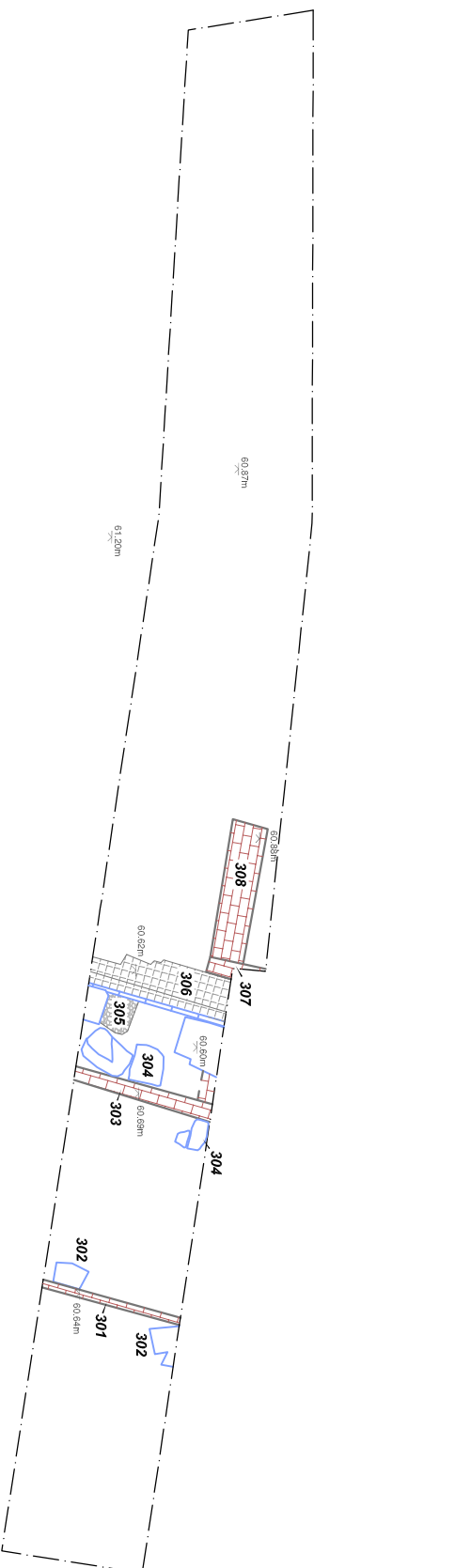
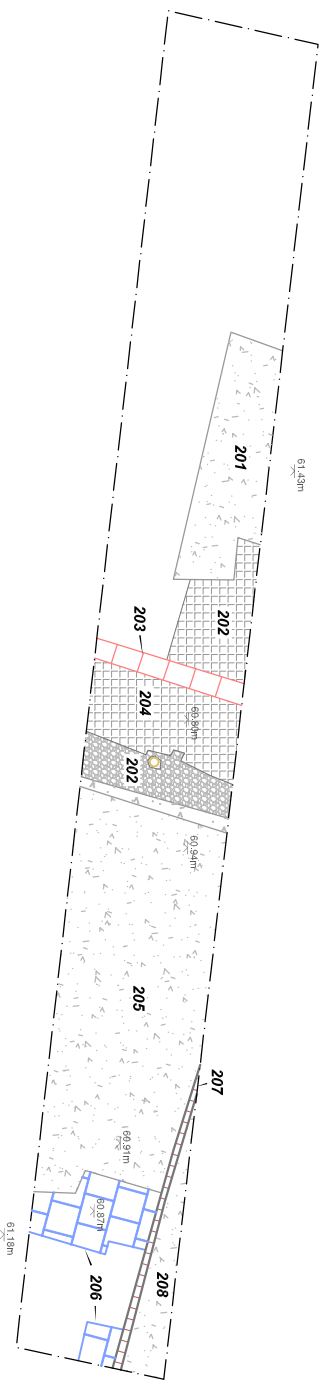










Figure 4: Trench locations superimposed on the Ordnance Survey 25":1 mile map of 1894, showing indicative site red line boundary



Trench 3



Trench 2

-  Evaluation trench
-  Brickwall
-  Sandstone
-  Modern truncation
-  Cobble setts
-  Flags
-  Cobble rounded
-  Concrete

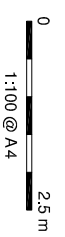
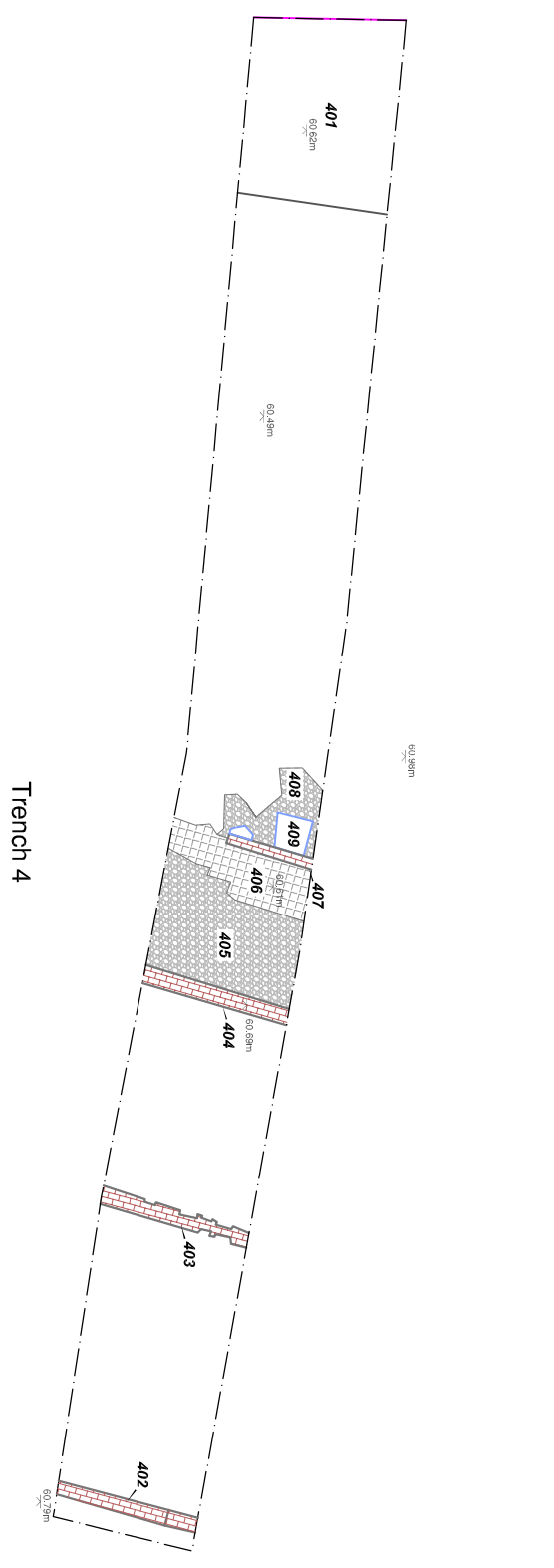
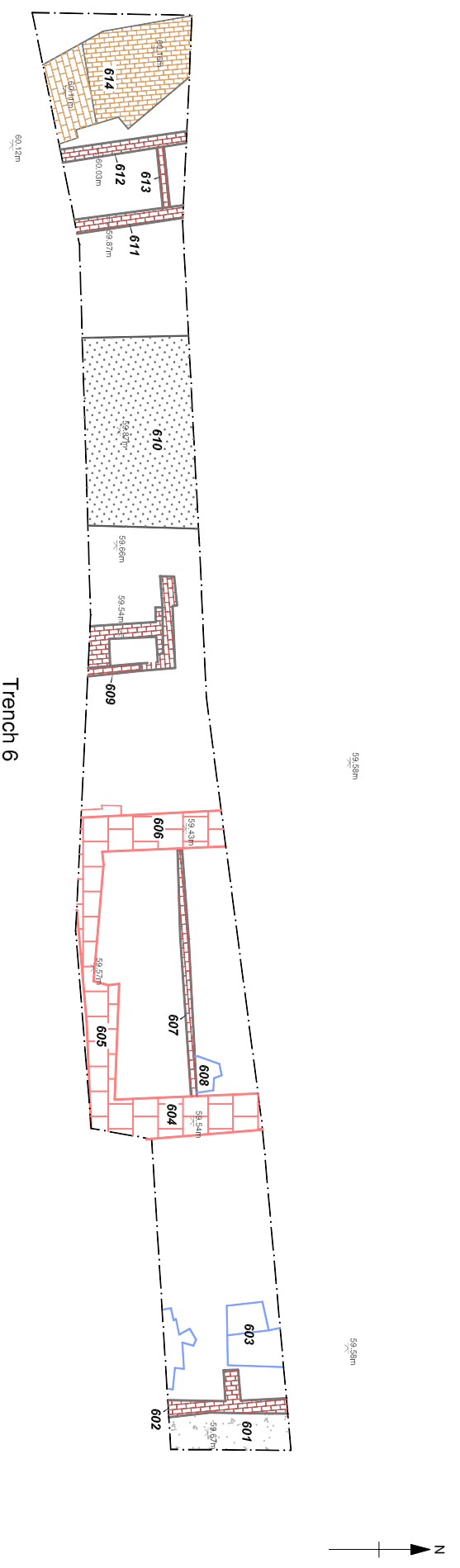


Figure 5: Plans of evaluation trenches 2 and 3



- Evaluation trench
- Brickwall
- Sandstone
- Modern truncation
- Cobble setts
- Flags
- Cobble rounded
- Concrete

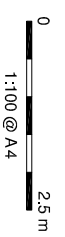
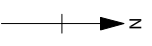
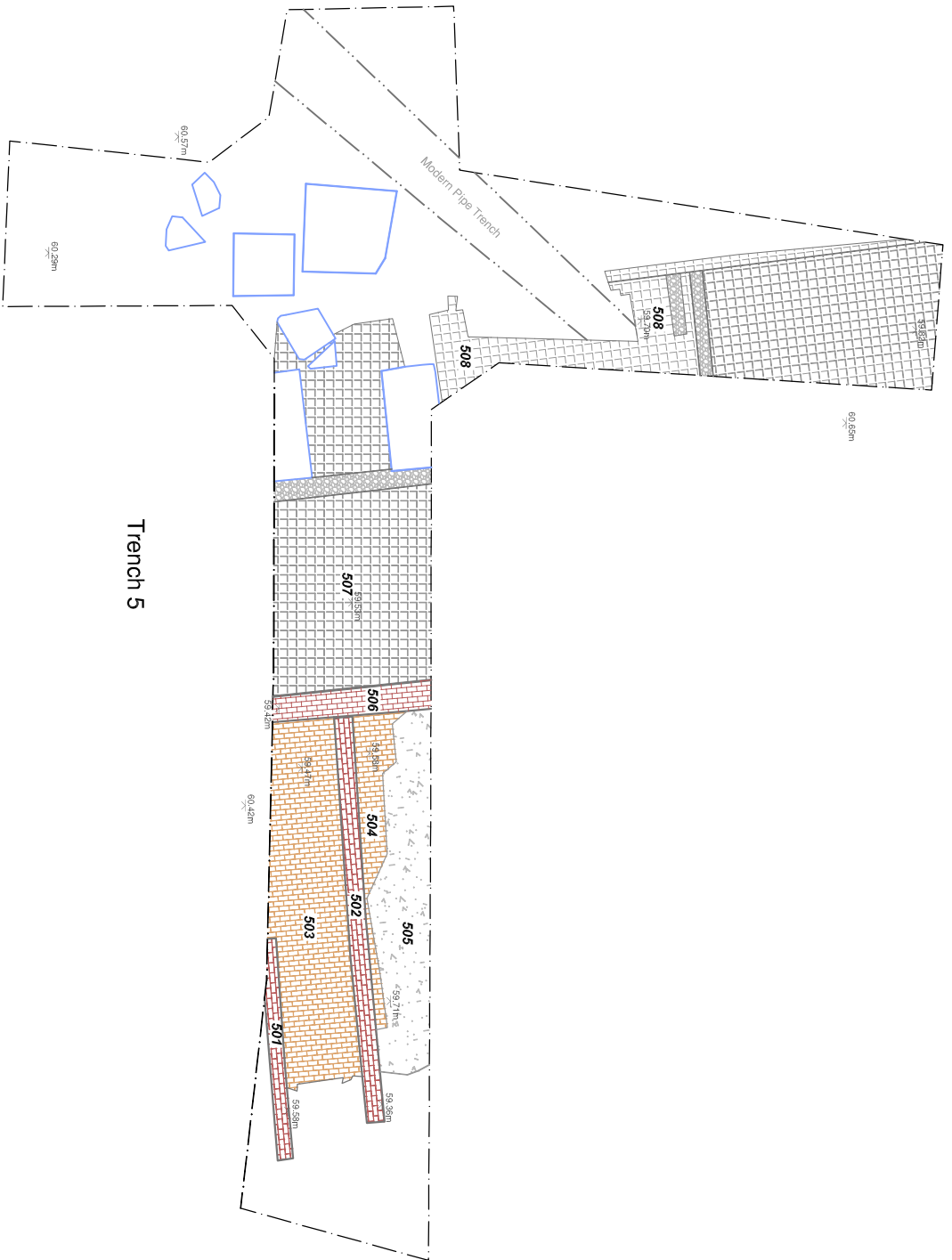









Figure 6: Plans of evaluation trenches 4 and 6



-  Evaluation trench
-  Brickwall
-  Sandstone
-  Modern truncation
-  Cobble setts
-  Flags
-  Cobble rounded
-  Concrete

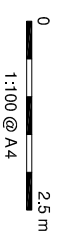



Figure 7: Plan of evaluation Trench 5

- Key
- Phase 1 boundary
 - Ecological Zone / Wildlife Corridor
 - Existing Hedgerow - retained
 - Existing Hedgerow - removed
 - Existing Path
 - Existing Tree - retained
 - Existing Tree / Planting - removed
 - New Tree

Notes:
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All dimensions must state the size and direction.
 All construction information should be shown in the plan view.
 Any discrepancies between drawings should be the attention of the originator.
 This drawing is for planning purposes only. It is not intended to be used for construction purposes, and it is not intended to be used for any other purpose.
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 Evaluation trenches

0 50 m
 1:1500 @ A4



Figure 8: Evaluation trenches superimposed on proposed development scheme

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