

**LANCASTER**  
UNIVERSITY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
UNIT



June 2001

---

# **ASTLEY HALL, CHORLEY LANCASHIRE**

## **Archaeological Excavation Report**

---

Commissioned by:

Chorley Young Archaeologists Club

AstleyHall, Chorley  
Lancashire

---

Archaeological Excavation Report

Report no 2000-2001/078/AUA8915

Checked by Project Manager. ..... Date
Passed for submission to client. ..... Date

© Lancaster University Archaeological Unit  
Storey Institute  
Meeting House Lane  
Lancaster  
LA1 1TH

June 2001

---

## CONTENTS

---

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Circumstances of the Project.....	4
1.2 Background .....	4
<b>2. METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Excavation.....	6
2.2 Finds.....	6
2.3 Archive.....	6
<b>3. 1999 EXCAVATION SEASON RESULTS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Results.....	7
<b>4. THE FINDS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	10
4.2 The Pottery.....	10
4.3 The Glass.....	11
4.4 Other Finds.....	12
<b>5. DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>13</b>
5.1 Conclusion .....	13
<b>6. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Context List	
<b>ILLUSTRATIONS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
Figure 1: Site Location Map	
Figure 2: Trench Location Plan	
Figure 3: Plan of 1998 and 1999 Excavations	
<b>PLATES.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Plate 1 Working shot of 1999 excavation	
Plate 2 Slot [36] with ceramic vessel <i>in-situ</i> , looking south	
Plate 3 Pit [24], looking south	
Plate 4 General view of the site after excavation – looking south	

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

This excavation would not have taken place without the drive and determination of Rosemary Boyd and Simon Gilbertson (Chorley Young Archaeologists' Club), who devised the project and carried it through to completion. Thanks go to the staff of Chorley Borough Council for providing access and logistical support and to Peter McCrone of Lancashire County Archaeological Service for his assistance. Chorley Borough Council and Lancaster University Archaeological Unit also assisted the project financially and in kind. Above all, thanks are expressed to the members of the Chorley Young Archaeologists' Club, and their parents, who participated so enthusiastically during the excavation.

The excavations were directed by Nick Hair assisted by Richard Newman. This report was written by Nick Hair and edited by Richard Newman, Jamie Quartermaine and Rachel Newman. The illustrations were drawn by Peter Redmayne. The finds report was by Christine Howard-Davis. Thanks are also due to David Barker of the Potteries Museum, Stoke-on-Trent for his comments on part of the pottery assemblage.

---

## SUMMARY

---

A second season of excavation was undertaken in the walled garden of the late sixteenth / seventeenth century Astley Hall, Chorley, Lancashire (NGR SD 571484), between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July 1999. The project was conceived and undertaken by members of the Chorley Young Archaeologists' Club, supervised by staff from Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU).

The 1999 season's excavation trench was confined to an area in the east of the walled garden. The 1999 trench (12m x 10m) was a northward extension of the excavation carried out the previous year, and was designed to examine the area in the north-eastern corner of the garden, where medieval features had previously been found.

In the event, the 1999 season revealed no further evidence for medieval activity on the site, although it did produce two sherds of medieval pottery from a disturbed context. It did, however, reveal a series of pits and slots cut into the natural subsoils which yielded a fine collection of later seventeenth and early eighteenth century artefacts.

The principal feature recorded was a broad, post-medieval ditch, of unknown function, which drained down towards the hall; the southern extent of the ditch had previously been identified in the 1998 season. The pits and ditch features were sealed by garden deposits, which, on cartographic evidence, date back to the 1830s.

The finds assemblage from the 1999 excavations was mainly pottery and glass vessels, but also some clay pipe, brick fragments, iron nails, animal bone, and fragments of stone. Most of the finds were in good condition, and many of the vessels survived in large fragments, suggesting that they had not been significantly disturbed since their original deposition.

There was a series of groups of pottery, contained within pit fills underlying the later garden, which were dominated by well-preserved, large fragments of vessels in late seventeenth to early eighteenth century fabrics and were mainly of domestic origin. This assemblage, coming from well-stratified contexts, represents an important survival of broadly diagnostic finds; they have the potential to contribute to artefactual studies in the North West and as such warrant publication.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 A second season of excavation was undertaken in the walled garden of the late sixteenth / seventeenth century Astley Hall, Chorley, Lancashire (NGR SD 571484), between 19<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July 1999. The project was conceived and undertaken by members of the Chorley Young Archaeologists' Club supervised by staff from Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU). Lancashire County Archaeological Service, Chorley Borough Council, and LUAU provided professional assistance and supported the project financially and with help in kind.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 **Historical Background:** it has been postulated that a manor house may have existed on the site prior to the present hall, the earliest fabric of which dates to the late Tudor era (R Boyd and S Gilbertson pers comm). The property was in the hands of the Charnock family from the fifteenth century (Pevsner 1969, 97). Subsequently, three other families have been associated with the hall: in 1653 it passed from the Charnock family into the hands of the Brooke family who held it until 1787. Between 1787 and 1906 it belonged to the Townley Parker family, after which it came into the ownership of the Tatton family who lived there until 1922 (Chorley Borough Council nd, 4-5).
- 1.2.2 The earliest parts of the present hall are thought to have been constructed in the 1580s, when the Charnock family, who previously lived at Charnock Richard, moved to Astley (Chorley Borough Council nd), though a date-stone of 1577, situated in the garden, may indicate that development of the site occurred a little earlier (Pevsner 1969, 97). The present frontage of the hall is thought to date to the later part of the seventeenth century and is constructed out of red brickwork covered in grey stucco, with prominent fenestration. The original Tudor fabric of the building is clearly visible as a timber-framed structure immediately behind the later frontage.
- 1.2.3 **Previous Work:** excavations by the Young Archaeologists' Club and LUAU in 1998 in the eastern part of the walled garden (Hair and Newman 1998) did not reveal any prehistoric activity but did record some significant archaeological features. A large pit was excavated in the north-east of the trench with an associated small assemblage of medieval pottery. This in turn was cut by a large, 3m wide and c0.60m deep, ditch, aligned north-north-east to south-south-west. This ditch extended beyond the northern and southern limits of the trench. It produced artefacts which suggested that it had probably been constructed at around the same time as the present hall and was possibly used as a drain. Several other later features probably relating to gardening activity were also recorded within the 1998 trench.
- 1.2.4 **1999 Season:** the 1999 season's excavation trench was confined to an area in the east of the walled garden. The 1999 trench was a northward extension of the excavation carried out the previous year, and was designed to examine the area in the north-eastern corner of the garden.
- 1.2.4 The eastern end of the walled garden was chosen as a site for possible excavation, because it is presently unused ground but is considered suitable for future display purposes. Moreover, it lies close to the hall and near an area which has produced evidence of Bronze Age activity (Hallam nd), including a burial mound.

---

## 2. METHODOLOGY

---

### 2.1 EXCAVATION

- 2.1.1 The 1999 trench overlapped the northern edge of the 1998 trench slightly and measured 12m north/south by 10m east/west. The turf and topsoil were excavated by a tracked mini-digger, using a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket, working under full archaeological supervision. This mechanical excavation was undertaken carefully in level spits, typically of c100mm depth, although the depth was varied subject to the identified archaeological deposits. Following the removal of the topsoil, the excavation area was manually cleaned. Features exposed were manually excavated and negative features were half sectioned.
- 2.1.2 Recording was by means of the standard LUAU context recording system, with context records and supporting registers and indices. A full photographic record in colour slide, monochrome, and digital formats was made, and a scaled plan, together with section drawings, was made of the trenches at appropriate scales.
- 2.1.3 Samples for the assessment of palaeoenvironmental information were taken from soil horizons that appeared to have potential for environmental analysis, but in the event the material did not warrant further analysis at this stage.

### 2.2 FINDS

- 2.2.1 All finds were retained for analysis and bagged according to context. These were recorded and have been processed and temporarily stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines). The ceramics have been analysed by the LUAU in-house finds specialist.

### 2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive, along with the finds assemblage, will be deposited with Astley Hall Museum, Chorley.

---

### 3. 1999 EXCAVATION SEASON RESULTS

---

#### 3.1 RESULTS

- 3.1.1 It was decided to dig in the eastern part of the garden as the 1998 trench had revealed two interesting archaeological features, a postulated medieval pit (although its fill produced no dating evidence directly) and a later ditch, which suggested that significant activity may have continued to the north.
- 3.1.2 Natural subsoil, [17], comprised light orange compact sandy clay which contained occasional patches of sand, gravel and small stones. It was identical to that encountered within the 1998 trench (LUAU 1998 (3)). Several features were identified cutting into this material although it is not inconceivable that some of these may have also cut the disturbed horizon, [16], that sealed subsoil [17], but were not recognised at the higher level.
- 3.1.3 A north/south aligned slot, [36], was revealed in the north-east of the trench; it was 1.10m wide and continued beyond the northern limit of the excavation. It was first recorded in plan where it cut into subsoil [17]; however, it was subsequently evident in the northern section, where it apparently cut disturbed layer [16]. Slot [36] had uniform steeply sloping sides and a relatively flat base; it had a rounded terminal 2m to the south of the northern edge of the trench. Its primary fill, [44], consisted of a mid-brown sandy loam which was probably deposited as an erosion product whilst the feature was open. This deposit produced fragments of a wine bottle dated to the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, as well as portions of a medicine bottle, a plate and a press-moulded dish thought to date to the eighteenth century. The primary fill, [44], was sealed by a dark greyish brown sandy loam deposit, [37], which was at least 0.20m thick and produced a relatively large and significant assemblage of artefacts. Several early eighteenth century pottery vessels were within this context, including two tankards, a deep-sided bowl, a handled bowl, a press-moulded plate and two ointment pots. A clay pipe, dating to the late seventeenth century, was also recovered. Fill [37] produced several glass objects, including four medicine phials and fragments of what appeared to be a thin walled bottle; all are thought to date to the late seventeenth century. These objects, which are discussed in more detail below (*Section 4.2*), had clearly been dumped into the slot, perhaps as deliberate infilling material. Fill [37] was sealed by a, 0.10m thick, mixed horizon of mid-brown and orange sands, [43], which contained occasional mixed pebbles and charcoal and formed the uppermost fill within the feature. This slot probably pre-dates the present walled garden as it appears to have extended beneath the substantial garden wall.
- 3.1.4 A large subcircular pit, [24], was situated in the north-east of the trench; it cut subsoil [17], and measured at least 3.20m east/west by 2.60m north/south. It had steep, almost vertical, sides and was over 1.16m deep in its centre; it was not possible to excavate this pit in its entirety, because of health and safety considerations. Its fill, [25], consisted of a light brown compact loam which contained a few small pebbles and produced an assemblage of post-medieval artefacts, including pottery sherds, tile and brick fragments, window glass and a clay pipe stem.
- 3.1.5 The western side of pit [24] was cut by ditch [18], which was the northern continuation of ditch [10] in the 1998 trench. This ditch cut into subsoil [17] and extended along the entire eastern side of the 1999 trench; as in the 1998 trench it appeared to be sealed by disturbed layer [16]. Ditch [18] was aligned north-north-east / south-south-west and was c1.30m wide, and 0.35m deep in the south of the trench and c0.20m deep in the north. Three sections were cut through it in the north, centre and south of the trench, and these revealed



that it had an irregularly-shaped profile with steeply sloping sides and a gently rounded base. Its profile implies that it had become more truncated in this area of the site by comparison with its form in the 1998 trench, where it was both wider and deeper; however spot levels on its base suggest that it drained southwards towards the hall, which would also in part account for this change in profile. The central section through the ditch revealed a central cross ridge of very hard iron panning, which divided the ditch into two separate channels. The ditch fill, [19], comprised a homogeneous orange/brown compact sandy clay which contained some post-medieval pottery and glass fragments, as well as tile and brick and some fuel ash. Fill [19] was similar in character to fill [11] identified in the 1998 trench.

- 3.1.6 Pit [24] was cut to the south by circular pit [26], which was first identified cutting subsoil [17], although it may have also cut disturbed layer [16], but not been identified at this level. Pit [26] measured 1.50m east/west by 1.30m north/south; it was 0.60m deep and had vertical sides extending down onto a slightly irregular base. Fill [27] comprised a dark brown friable organic-rich loam, very similar to topsoil, [15], and it produced fragments of window and bottle glass and pottery sherds dating to the post-medieval period. It also contained undated fragments of tile, brick, flint and an iron nail.
- 3.1.7 A large, roughly rectangular, shallow feature, [34], cut subsoil [17] in the west of the trench. It measured 4.80m north/south by 2.30m east/west, with almost vertical sides and was at maximum 0.30m deep in its centre. Its fill, [35], comprised a mid-brown sandy loam which contained a few small pebbles. It produced pottery sherds thought to be of eighteenth century date, some of which were probably from a jug (*Section 4.2*). This feature may represent an area of deep digging for the base of a Chinese-type bed associated with activity within the walled garden.
- 3.1.8 Feature [34] was cut by a very shallow circular pit, [32], which also cut into disturbed layer [16]. The pit measured *c*2m in diameter and 0.20m deep and had gently sloping sides and a rounded base. It was filled with a dark brown slightly sandy clay loam, [33], which produced building material including fragments of hand made brick, as well as post-medieval pottery and fragments of wine bottle, some of which date to the late seventeenth century.
- 3.1.9 Layer [16] sealed subsoil [17] and was in turn sealed by topsoil, [15]; both layers [16] and [15] were removed by the mini-excavator. Layer [16], comprised a homogeneous deposit of dirty orange brown sandy loam, which was *c*0.10m thick in the east of the trench but thickened to 0.30m in the west. It appeared to represent a disturbed subsoil deposit which had probably been created as a result of ploughing or hand-digging. Layers [16], and [15], produced post-medieval window and bottle glass, as well as a large quantity of pottery sherds, most of which were of post-medieval date, although three sherds were probably medieval. These layers also produced a lead and iron object as well as fragments of brick, coal, flint and fuel ash.
- 3.1.10 Pits [20] and [28], like [32] above, cut disturbed layer [16] and contained building destruction material. They were situated in the extreme north-east and north-west corners of the trench respectively.
- 3.1.11 Pit [20] measured 1.70m in length, was at least 0.60m wide, and continued beyond the eastern limit of the trench. It was 0.55m deep and had steeply sloping sides and a slightly irregular base. Its fill, [21], comprised a very dark brown/black clay loam which contained at least three large dressed masonry blocks, one of which had a large iron fitting inserted into it. The largest of these masonry blocks measured *c*0.40m x 0.30m x 0.20m. Fill [21]

also produced large brick fragments, as well as a fragment of a post-medieval ceramic vessel which was possibly a colander.

- 3.1.12 Pit [28] measured 2.40m in length, was at least 0.60m wide, and continued beyond the western edge of the excavation. It was 0.21m deep and was filled with a light brown friable sandy loam, [29]. Fill [29] contained two very large dressed stone blocks, with iron fittings embedded within them. The larger of these blocks measured 0.55m x 0.35m x 0.30m and both were very similar in character to those within pit [20].
- 3.1.13 Pits [20] and [28], and to a lesser extent [32], contained building debris (brick fragments and large blocks of dressed masonry). This suggests the former existence of a structure that was demolished in the vicinity of the excavation trench, almost certainly before the walled garden was created. No such structures have been identified on a map dated 1830 held at Astley Hall or later cartographic sources, perhaps implying that it pre-dated this source.
- 3.1.14 Three north/south aligned slots, [22], [30] and [39] from east to west respectively cut subsoil [17] and probably also disturbed layer [16] in the south of the trench. Slot [22] was insubstantial; it was 2m in length, 0.30m wide and 0.15m deep and had steeply sloping sides with a flat base. It was filled with a friable dark brown sandy loam, [23], which produced modern pottery sherds, window and vessel glass. Slot [30] was 2.80m long, 0.30m wide and 0.25m deep. Its northern end has steeply sloping, almost vertical sides and a flat base, whereas to the south it appeared to widen slightly and its sides were much less steeply sloping. Its fill [31], comprised a dark brown sandy clay, which produced modern gardenware pottery as well as fragments of tile and brick and eighteenth century window glass. Slot [39] was 1.90m long, and 0.65m wide; it was only 0.12m deep and had neatly rounded terminals, vertical sides and a flat base. Fill [40] was very like topsoil, [15], and consisted of a brown friable sandy clay; it produced no artefacts. Slots [22], [30] and [39], like Chinese bed [34], probably relate to features created as a result of deeper gardening activity.
- 3.1.15 Topsoil, [15], sealed the entire site and consisted of a black humic clay loam between 0.30m and 0.40m thick. It contained a few small rounded stones and produced a large assemblage of post-medieval artefacts. Its depth was consistent with the site being used as a garden for a prolonged period of time.

---

## 4. THE FINDS

---

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 A total of 578 fragments of artefacts and ecofacts was recovered from the 1999 excavations. Approximately half of the assemblage was pottery and glass vessels, the remainder comprising clay pipe, brick fragments, iron nails, animal bone, and fragments of stone, coal and fuel ash, a mix typical of garden soils improved by the addition of the contents of domestic middens. Most of the finds were in good condition, and many of the vessels survived in large fragments, suggesting that they had not been significantly disturbed since their original deposition.

### 4.2 THE POTTERY

- 4.2.1 In all, 123 fragments of ceramic vessels were recovered during the excavations, deriving from contexts [15]/[16], [19], [21], [23], [25], [27], [31], [33], [35], [37], and [44] (see *Appendix 1* for a definition of these contexts). With the exception of three small and relatively undiagnostic body fragments from disturbed soil layers [15]/[16], which might be medieval, all were of post-medieval or later date, with little earlier than the last decade of the seventeenth century. The group was dominated by well-preserved, large fragments of vessels in late seventeenth to early eighteenth century fabrics. While there was later material (to the present day) present in several contexts, this was for the most part abraded and fragmentary in comparison, suggesting that it had reached the site in the course of gardening activity; this contrasted markedly with the earlier material which had been more systematically dumped.
- 4.2.2 Apart from the possible medieval fragments from layer [15]/[16], only two small fragments appear to pre-date the bulk of the group, both also from [15]/[16]; one is from a slip-trailed Metropolitan ware dish, the other a small rim sherd from a tin-glazed plate. Both sherds are badly abraded, and may well have travelled some distance from their original place of deposition; nonetheless they are indicators of earlier seventeenth century activity in the vicinity.
- 4.2.3 The late seventeenth to early eighteenth century assemblage comprised mainly domestic vessels, predominantly kitchen wares, although some finer table wares were present. Fabrics were mainly black-glazed redwares, probably from the Prescott kilns (although other local producers cannot be ruled out), buff-bodied yellow-wares, and manganese-speckled wares, also probably locally produced, although forms closely imitate those of the major Staffordshire producers of the time. White salt-glazed stonewares are represented amongst the table wares, some of them lathe-turned.
- 4.2.4 The small group of vessels from slot [34] (fills [44] and [37]) typify the group. Those from the primary fill, [44], are more fragmentary, whilst several of those from fill [37] are largely complete. The group from [37] appears to be a deliberate dump, comprising a large black-glazed storage vessel, two tankards, one stoneware, the other slip-coated with a black glaze, a small stoneware tea cup, a deep-sided bowl or dish, a handled bowl, a slip-decorated press-moulded plate, and two ointment pots in a buff-bodied yellow ware. Several small glass medicine phials were also found (*Section 4.3*) and a single clay pipe, of a type dated to the late seventeenth century. With the exception of the clay pipe, all the other items were contained within the black storage vessel.

- 4.2.5 The group can be dated with confidence to the first decades of the eighteenth century. The stoneware tankard, possibly produced in Liverpool, bears an ale mark of William III (1689-1702), but it must be noted that this mark continued in use beyond the death of William (D Barker, pers comm), and the vessel itself probably dates to the first decade of the eighteenth century. The small teacup, also in white salt-glazed stoneware, and likely to have been produced in Stoke on Trent, was probably made in the 1720s, reflecting the burgeoning fashion for tea drinking and chinoiserie at that period. A second tankard, with a buff fabric dipped in dark slip before glazing, dates to the period 1710-1730/40 and is probably closely contemporary with the deep-sided bowl in a manganese-speckled ware, and the handled bowl in yellow ware. All three are likely to have been produced relatively locally and can be paralleled in groups like that from South Castle Street, Liverpool (Davey and McNeil 1980-81). A relatively small press-moulded plate, with combed and feathered slip decoration, is again likely to have been relatively locally produced, and like the vessels described above can be paralleled at South Castle Street, where the ceramics were recovered from contexts dating to the period 1710-1726. Finally, two small ointment pots in yellow-ware have a common form, albeit unusual in the domestic context (D Barker pers comm), and these examples probably derive from the Stoke potteries. They first appeared in the late seventeenth century, but were common in the early eighteenth century.
- 4.2.6 The nineteenth and twentieth century material from the site requires little discussion, except to note, as might be expected in a garden, that plain terra cotta flowerpots make up a reasonable proportion of the group, and other fragments are likely to have arrived at the site as composted domestic waste used as a fertiliser.

### 4.3 THE GLASS

- 4.3.1 A relatively large assemblage of glass was recovered from the site, comprising 123 fragments. Again the majority were of late seventeenth century and early eighteenth century date. The thick-walled wine bottle is characteristic of this period, and fragments of several were recovered from contexts [15]/[16], [27], [33], [37] and [44] (*Appendix 1*). Whilst these bottles are typically a dark olive green in colour, earlier examples can be a lighter sea-green, and fragments from layer [15]/[16] and pit [32] (fill [33]) can probably be dated to the later seventeenth century on both form and colour. Dark olive green fragments from the fills of slot [34] ([44] and [37]) are both likely to be from earlier forms, again around the end of the seventeenth century. Interestingly, that from fill [37] is much abraded, unlike other glass from the same fill, suggesting that it could be residual in the deposit.
- 4.3.2 The principal focus of interest lies with vessels from slot [34] (fill [37]). At least five vessels are represented, two of them complete medicine phials in a pale natural bluish metal. A third, more fragmentary example, is in greenish metal, and a fourth vessel, without the characteristic out-turned rim, is also pale blue. A fifth vessel, of which only the base and a small fragment of rim survives, is much larger, presumably a thin-walled bottle in a greyish-green metal. The medicine phials are a well-known and widespread type and can be paralleled at a number of early eighteenth century sites, including Temple Balsall in Warwickshire (Gooder 1984, 221-5), where a similar thin-walled bottle was also noted (*op cit*, fig 45.80).
- 4.3.3 A few fragments of thin greenish window glass were present in layers [15]/[16]. This, too, is likely to be of late seventeenth to early eighteenth century date.

#### 4.4 OTHER FINDS

- 4.4.1 Late objects, and those such as iron nails which cannot be dated, are not discussed in this report. Full catalogues of the finds can be found in the site archive.
- 4.4.2 Apart from the pottery and glass vessels discussed above, there was little of interest amongst the other finds. A clay pipe of late seventeenth century date was recovered from fill [37] of slot [34] and, like the fragment of wine bottle from the same context, could be slightly residual, as it seems earlier than the tightly dated group of pottery and glass vessels. A shattered stone pot lid with iron fittings from the same context was large enough to have been used to close the blackware storage vessel (*Section 4.2.4*), and was dumped at the same time, judging by its close physical association with the storage vessel when excavated.
- 4.4.3 Other fragments of clay pipe were largely undiagnostic, although the small bowl fragments suggest late eighteenth or nineteenth century types.

---

## 5. DISCUSSION

---

### 5.1 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 During the first season's excavations a possible medieval pit, [13], was identified in the north of the excavation trench, and it was partly for this reason that this season's excavations concentrated on the area to the north of the 1998 trench where it was considered that more medieval features might be discovered. No evidence for medieval activity, however, was identified during this season's work, although the site yielded a fine collection of later seventeenth and early eighteenth century artefacts (*Section 4*).
- 5.1.2 This 1999 season's results suggest that pit [13], from the 1998 season, was possibly an isolated medieval feature, as the only medieval evidence in the 1999 excavations comprised three residual medieval pottery sherds recovered from disturbed layers [15]/[16].
- 5.1.3 Slot [36], aligned north/south, terminated 2m to the south of the 1999 northern site section and continued beyond the excavation trench to the north. It produced an exceptionally fine assemblage of ceramic and glass objects, the majority of which date to the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The assemblage includes several types of ceramic vessel, including tankards, bowls, a tea cup, storage jar and ointment pots. Glass objects recovered from the slot include medicine phials and a thin-walled bottle. All of these objects appear to have been deliberately dumped into the ditch during its infilling. The date of the assemblage suggests that slot [36] was almost certainly infilled during the first part of the eighteenth century, although its function remains somewhat enigmatic.
- 5.1.4 Ditch [10], first encountered during the 1998 excavations, continued to the north on the same alignment where it was numbered [18]. Spot levels on its base suggest that it drained southwards towards the hall, which would also account for its gradual change in profile, from north to south. Artefacts recovered from its fill suggest that it dated to the post-medieval period; the ditch was not shown on a map dating to 1830, which depicts the walled garden, perhaps implying that it had been infilled by this date. Pit [24] appears to pre-date the ditch and produced predominantly eighteenth century artefacts. This suggests that ditch [10]/[18] had possibly been excavated and backfilled in the later eighteenth or early part of the nineteenth century.
- 5.1.5 Pits [20] and [28], located in the extreme north-east and north-west of the 1999 site respectively, contained building debris, including large blocks of dressed masonry which incorporated iron fittings. They suggest that a structure was demolished in the vicinity of the excavation trench, at some date prior to the establishment of the walled garden.
- 5.1.6 Features [22], [26], [30], [34] and [39] were probably created as a result of deeply dug horticultural activity within the walled garden. Cartographic evidence indicates that the garden was created before 1830, with archaeological evidence indicating its construction as after *c*1740.

---

## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

Chorley Borough Council, nd, *Astley Hall*, Chorley

Davey, PJ, and McNeil, R (eds), 1980-81 Excavations in South Castle Street, Liverpool 1976 and 1977, *J Merseyside Archaeol Soc*, **4**

English Heritage, 1991 Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edn, London

Gooder, E, 1984 The finds from the cellar of the Old Hall, Temple Balsall, Warwickshire, *Post Medieval Archaeol*, **18**, 149-249

LUAU, 1998 *Excavations in Astley Hall Walled Garden 1998*, LUAU unpubl rep

Hallam, J, nd, Astley Hall Farm, *Bronze Age Ritual Burial Site, Chorley, Lancs*, Central Lancashire Archaeol Res Unit Unpubl rep, **20**

Pevsner, N, 1969 *Lancashire: 2 Rural North, The Buildings of England*, London

## APPENDIX 1 CONTEXT LIST

<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Form</b>
1	Deposit	Topsoil layer
2	Deposit	Ploughsoil layer
3	Deposit	Natural sandy subsoil
4	Cut	North/south aligned ditch
5	Fill	Fill of ditch [4]
6	Cut	East/west aligned ditch
7	Fill	Fill of ditch [6]
8	Cut	Rectangular feature
9	Fill	Fill of feature [8]
10	Cut	Large ditch aligned north-east/south-west
11	Fill	Fill of ditch [10]
12	Fill	Fill of pit [13]
13	Cut	Pit
14	Fill	Lower fill of pit [13]
15	Deposit	Topsoil
16	Deposit	Orangey brown ploughsoil
17	Deposit	Natural sandy subsoil
18	Cut	Irregularly shaped north-south aligned ditch
19	Fill	Brown/orange sandy clay fill of ditch [18]
20	Cut	Sub-rectangular pit
21	Fill	Dark brown clay loam fill of pit [20]
22	Cut	Irregular north/south aligned ditch
23	Fill	Dark brown sandy loam fill of ditch [22]
24	Cut	Large sub-circular pit
25	Fill	Light brown loam fill of pit [24]
26	Cut	Small circular pit
27	Fill	Dark brown loam silt fill of pit [26]
28	Cut	Rectangular pit



29	Fill	Brown-orange sandy loam fill of pit [28]
30	Cut	North/south aligned slot
31	Fill	Dark brown sandy clay fill of slot [30]
32	Cut	Sub-circular pit
33	Fill	Dark brown sandy loam fill of pit [32]
34	Cut	Extensive rectangular garden feature
35	Fill	Mid brown sandy loam fill of [34]
36	Cut	Terminus of north/south aligned ditch
37	Fill	Greyish brown sandy loam fill of ditch [36]
38	Fill	Greyish brown clayey sand fill of feature [41]
39	Cut	Rectangular pit
40	Fill	Brown sandy clay fill of pit [39]
41	Cut	Sub-circular feature filled by [38]
42	Deposit	Brown sand layer
43	Fill	Mixed sandy loam – upper fill of ditch [36]
44	Fill	Brown sandy loam - lower fill of ditch [36]

---

## ILLUSTRATIONS

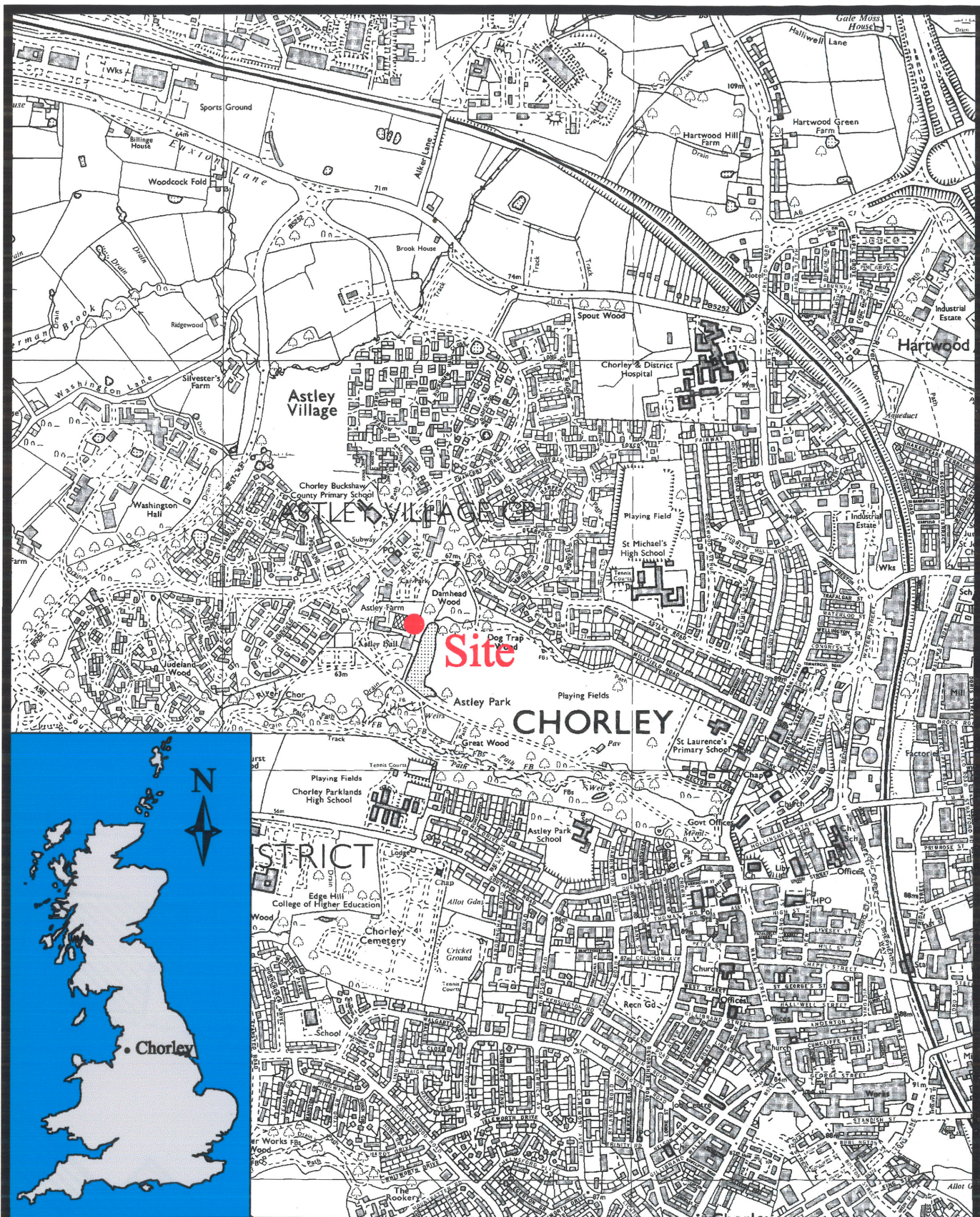
---

Figure 1: Site Location Map

Figure 2: Trench Location Plan

Figure 3: Plan of 1998 and 1999 Excavations





based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10000  
 with the permission of the controller of HMSO  
 © Crown Copyright

0 200 300 400 500  
 metres

Figure 1: Astley Hall, Chorley Location Map



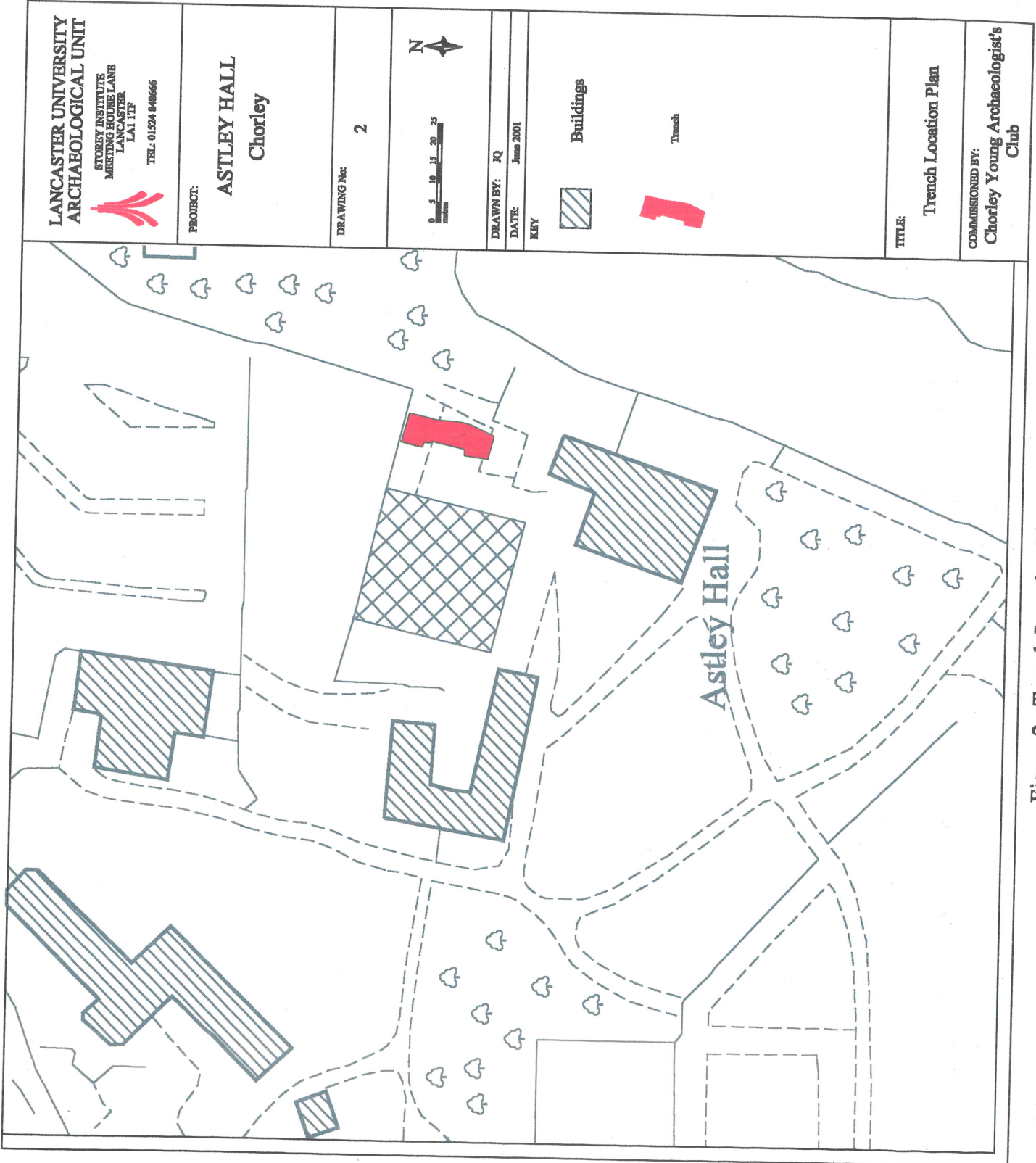


Figure 2 : Trench Location Plan

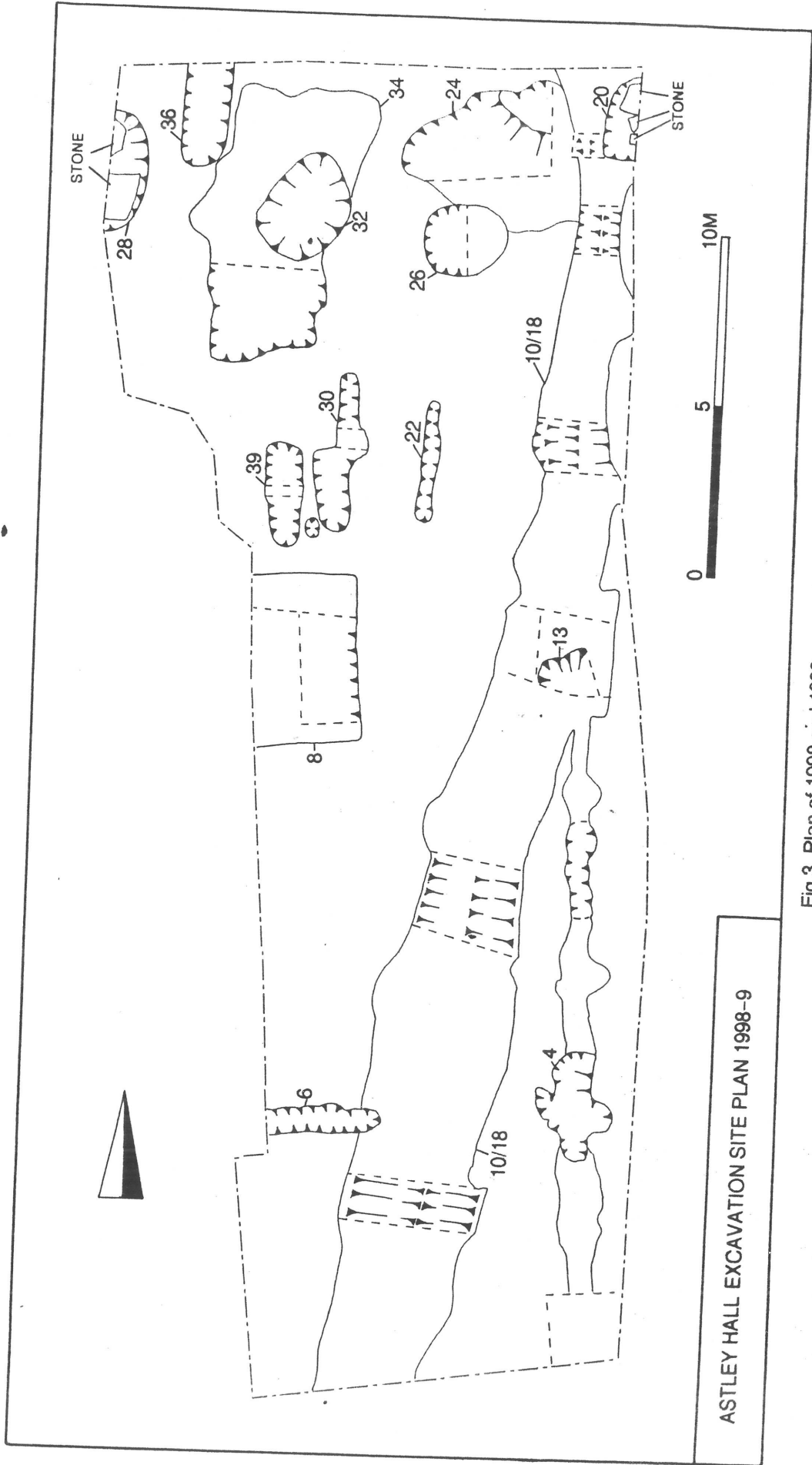


Fig 3 Plan of 1998 and 1999 excavations

---

## PLATES

---

- Plate 1 Working shot of 1999 excavation
- Plate 2 Slot [36] with ceramic vessel *in-situ*, looking south
- Plate 3 Pit [24], looking south
- Plate 4 General view of the site after excavation – looking south



Plate 1 Working shot of 1999 excavation



Plate 2 Slot [36] with ceramic vessel *in-situ*, looking south





Plate 3 Pit [24], looking south



Plate 4 General view of the site after excavation – looking south