



January 2001

**SOUTH MACCLESFIELD
DEVELOPMENT AREA
CHESHIRE**

Archaeological Assessment Report

Dane Gate - South Macclesfield Development Area
Cheshire

Archaeological Assessment Report

Report no 2000/2001/046/AUA8085

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

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SUMMARY

An archaeological assessment was undertaken in December 2000 by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) on behalf of Planit Environmental Development Consultants, in advance of a combined retail and business park development (centred on SJ 905718). The study area comprises an area of about 60ha, approximately 1km to the south of the centre of Macclesfield. The assessment was undertaken in accordance with a project design by LUAU that followed on from a project brief by the Archaeological Officer (Development Control) Cheshire County Council. The desk-based study consisted of a search of existing records held by the Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record, the Cheshire County Record Office and the Macclesfield Reference Library, with a systematic identification survey of the proposed development area.

The study area is situated within an area of former mossland which constituted part of Danes Moss, a former large mire filling a shallow basin. The earliest archaeological evidence from the region are imprecisely provenanced artefacts, which includes a perforated hammer and a barbed and tanged arrowhead. Prehistoric round barrows have also been identified from the area of Danes Moss, but none from within the study area.

By the thirteenth century Danes Moss had become an important resource for the town of Macclesfield. The earliest burgages within Macclesfield had turbary rights within Danes Moss and peat provided the main means of domestic heating; this continued to be the case well into the post-medieval period, despite the presence of coal pits on and near Macclesfield Common.

The reclamation of most mosslands had to await the agricultural improvements of the post-medieval period, and by the time of the earliest mapping in the nineteenth century the area was partially reclaimed and subdivided into parcels by physical and mappable boundaries, called moss rooms.

There are several sites of limited archaeological interest within the study area, which include wells (Sites 11, 12, 19 and 20) and extraction pits (Sites 13 and 14). Of more interest, however, is a series of tramways (Sites 15-17), and a portable hospital (Site 09) although no remains of these appear to survive within the study area. The landscape of the former moss rooms partially survives in the form of some boundary divisions and also different levels of peat deposits.

A series of sand ridges was identified across the study area within former mire. Sand ridges in similar contexts have been found to contain significant prehistoric sites, and there is some potential that these sites within the study area were also exploited in the prehistoric period. However, as the site has not been subject to recent ploughing, the present survey was not able to identify any artefactual assemblages within them.

While the present survey has not identified a significant archaeological resource within the area of the proposed development, it has identified areas, notably the sand ridges, that have archaeological potential and as such warrant further investigation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 An archaeological assessment was undertaken by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) on behalf of Planit Environmental Development Consultants, in advance of a combined retail and business park development (centred on SJ 905718). The study area comprises an area of about 60ha, approximately 1km to the south of the centre of Macclesfield (Fig 1).
- 1.1.2 The purpose of the assessment was to provide an accurate archaeological appraisal of the proposed development area, within its broader context. The aim of the field survey was to collate all available information relating to the archaeology of the site and to determine the significance of the archaeological resource.
- 1.1.3 In response to the proposed development Cheshire County Council provided a project brief (*Appendix 1*) for an archaeological assessment. At the request of the client LUAU compiled a project design (*Appendix 2*) for the work, which was accepted. The assessment comprised a desk-based study and a field identification survey. The desk-based study consisted of a search of existing records held by the Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record (CSMR), the Cheshire County Record Office in Chester (CRO), Macclesfield Reference Library (MRL), as well as available secondary sources held in Lancaster University Library and by LUAU. Both published and unpublished sources were examined. The desk-based survey and field identification survey were undertaken during December 2000.
- 1.1.4 This report provides a description of the archaeological and historical context of the study area, a statement of the methodology, a brief integrated text description of the results, an assessment of the archaeological potential within the study area, and an evaluation of the impact that the development will have upon the archaeological resource. Descriptions of sites of archaeological interest within the study area are presented in a gazetteer (*Appendix 3*).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 2*) was submitted in May 2000 by LUAU in response to a request by De Leuw Rothwell Consultants for an archaeological assessment of Dane Gate in advance of a proposed retail and business park development.
- 2.1.2 The project design was prepared in accordance with a brief (*Appendix 1*) by Mark Leah, Archaeological Officer (Development Control) Cheshire County Council. This provided for a desk-based study, an identification survey and the compilation of a written report. The survey has been carried out in accordance with this project design.

2.2 DESK-BASED STUDY

- 2.2.1 Existing archaeological information was obtained from the Cheshire SMR. Manuscript maps and selected other documents were studied in the Cheshire Record Office and Macclesfield Reference Library, along with published antiquarian sources. Available maps and plans were restricted to the Ordnance Survey (OS) 1:2,500, 1st edition quarter sheets of 1871 (26.16; 43.4, 43.3) and 3rd edition quarter sheets of 1910 (26.16; 43.4, 43.3), and the OS 6 inches to one mile, 1st edition map of 1882 (Sheet 43) and 3rd edition of 1910 (Sheet 43), along with the Cowley map of 1838 and the Macclesfield tithe map of 1848 (CRO EDT 254).
- 2.2.2 There were very few directly relevant documents in the Cheshire Record Office; however, a list of the documents which were consulted is given in the bibliography (*Section 6*). A microfilm copy of *The Moss Booke of Dinsmosse* of 1611 was viewed in Macclesfield Reference Library (MRL MA T/1/41); the original is held by the Wirral Archives Service at Birkenhead Reference Library.
- 2.2.3 Air photographs held by Cheshire County Council were reviewed. These consisted of two vertical black and white photographs taken in 1971, one colour photograph taken in 1984, and two colour photographs taken in 1993. As a consequence it was not considered necessary to acquire details of the air photographic coverage held by the National Monuments Record.
- 2.2.4 LUAU has examined Danes Moss as part of the North West Wetlands Survey (NWWs) (Leah *et al* 1997), which was funded by English Heritage, and the present study involved the examination of the NWWs archive and consultation with the LUAU palaeoenvironmentalist (E Huckerby), who was involved with the earlier survey.

2.3 FIELD IDENTIFICATION SURVEY

- 2.3.1 A rapid inspection of the site was undertaken in accordance with RCHM(E) and LUAU level 1 survey guidelines (LUAU 1995). This consisted of a visual inspection to enhance an existing topographical survey of the site, undertaken as part of the North West Wetlands Survey (Leah *et al* 1997). This serves as the basis for planning and undertaking further archaeological work on the site; it represents the minimum standard of record and is appropriate for the discovery of previously

unrecorded sites. Its aim was to record the existence, location and extent of surviving surface features.

- 2.3.2 The survey was undertaken in the winter when the density of vegetation within the area was diminished. The reconnaissance was undertaken in a systematic fashion, walking on approximately 10m wide transects within the extent of the defined study area. As required in the brief, the survey involved the enhancement of the existing topographic survey to show greater detail than was already shown and to depict elements of features that were not already depicted. The identification of potentially significant topographical features such as sand ridges and hills also formed a core part of the survey. The features and topographical detail encountered were mapped using Global Positioning System (GPS) techniques to locate and record the features. GPS instrumentation uses electronic distance measurement along radio frequencies to satellites to enable a positional fix in latitude and longitude which can be converted mathematically to Ordnance Survey National Grid. The use of GPS techniques can achieve accuracy of better than $\pm 0.25\text{m}$. The survey data were superimposed with Raster 1:10,000 mapping within a CAD system to provide a general site map (Fig 9).

2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 The results of the work programme formed the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of archaeological projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. This archive is provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, as a printed document, and a synthesis (the evaluation report and index of the archive) will be submitted to the Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record. The archive will be deposited with the County SMR within six months of the end of the fieldwork.

3. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The study area is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SJ 905718, in an area of flat reclaimed mossland to the immediate south of the periphery of the urban area of Macclesfield; most of the study area lies within the historic borough of Macclesfield. The area is made up of a mix of residential properties, wasteland and sports pitches, with the latter having been placed on made-up ground.
- 3.1.2 The solid geology comprises rocks of the Triassic Age consisting of Upper Mottled Sandstone, overlain by drift deposits of sands and gravels of fluvio-glacial origin (Evans *et al* 1968, 206).

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL, PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 The study area is situated within an area of former mossland which constituted part of Danes Moss, a former large mire filling a shallow basin. By the time of the earliest known detailed mapping (nineteenth century), the area was partially reclaimed and subdivided. The previous information concerning the archaeology of Danes Moss is limited, despite a number of studies designed to examine the palaeoenvironmental and archaeological record contained within the wetland (see Leah *et al* 1997 for full bibliography).
- 3.2.2 The mossland, within which the site is situated, is part of an area of lowland mire situated to the south of Macclesfield, which in historic times formed part of an area of marginal land dividing the uplands of the Peak District from the productive agricultural land of the Cheshire Plain (Leah *et al* 1997). Much of the area was within the Forest of Macclesfield during the Medieval Period.
- 3.2.3 A palaeoecological study of the surviving peats at Danes Moss was first undertaken by HJB Birks in 1962 (Leah *et al* 1997, 50). A north/south stratigraphic transect taken at this time suggested that the moss contained important palaeoenvironmental evidence dating from at least late Flandrian I (*c*6000 cal BC) through to the mid Flandrian III (*c*1000 cal BC). This work was undertaken before destruction of much of the northern moss through landfill and thus it contains the only record of the peat stratigraphy from the northern end of the moss. It and the investigations undertaken by the North West Wetlands Survey (Leah *et al* 1997) indicate that the mire originated as a reed swamp, fringed by fen carr probably around 6000 cal BC; later it appears to have developed into a widespread willow and alder-dominated carr (*op cit*, 67). This was succeeded by the spread of acid plant communities, first as an *Eriophorum* / *Calluna* community then by *sphagnum* dominated ones. From its origins Danes Moss seems to have been affected by periodic burnings, possibly related to limited anthropogenic clearance activities (*op cit*, 79).
- 3.2.4 The earliest archaeological discoveries from within the vicinity of Danes Moss appear to relate to a site to the north-west of the Moss. This site consisted of an oval arrangement of pits grouped around a central pit; two further pits, outside the oval but seemingly associated with it, contained much burnt material. No chronologically or culturally diagnostic finds were recovered, though it has been suggested that the site was of Neolithic date and intended for ritual/calendrical purposes (Site 02; Leah *et al* 1997, 50; Rowley 1982, 11).

- 3.2.5 In the nineteenth century the naturalist JD Sainter (1878) referred to a number of finds of archaeological interest recovered from Danes Moss, but unfortunately the precise locations of most of these discoveries are unknown. However, a perforated limestone hammer of probable Bronze Age date (Site 04) was found to the south of the study area (*op cit*, 124). Reference was also made to both animal and human bones recovered from the Moss during peat digging, which might be of prehistoric date (*op cit*, 122). Given the famous recovery of prehistoric human bog bodies from other wetlands in Cheshire, and in particular from neighbouring Lindow Moss (Turner and Scaife 1995), there is a possibility that similar remains could be recovered from Danes Moss. The land-use history of the study area, however, would make any such discoveries there extremely unlikely. The only other evidence from within Danes Moss which can be definitely attributed to prehistory is a barbed and tanged flint arrowhead of Bronze Age date, found in peat workings south of the study area (CSMR 1536; Leah *et al* 1997, 50).
- 3.2.6 Further evidence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity comes from nearby the study area but outside the Moss. Bronze Age barrows, containing cremations, have been identified and investigated to the south-west of Sutton Hall (CSMR 1539; NGR 9248 7132) and at Woodhouse End (CSMR 1511, NGR SJ 9146 6955), 600m to the south of Danes Moss (Leah *et al* 1997, 50, Rowley 1982, 1-34), is a round barrow considered to be the earliest in Cheshire (Longley 1987, 61). Two other barrows may have existed in the vicinity of Danes Moss as it has been noted that the names Great Lowe and Pye Lowe were in use during the nineteenth century in the area (Leah *et al* 1997, 50). The suffix of these names is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *hlaw*, meaning a mound, although the term could be applied to man-made mounds of both medieval and prehistoric date, and was also often applied to natural features. In any case no evidence was found for any such mounds during fieldwork undertaken for the North West Wetlands Survey (*ibid*).
- 3.2.7 Throughout the wetlands of the north-west of England it has been noted that small islands of higher land within the mosslands often contain evidence of prehistoric activity, usually in the form of worked flint scatters. During the North West Wetlands Survey, one such island (Site 07; SJ 9051 7024), formed of sand, was examined in the southern half of Danes Moss. The sand mound had been extensively disturbed by animal burrowing but no artefacts were discovered; nevertheless all such sand mounds were considered by the survey to have a high archaeological potential (Leah *et al* 1997, 63-4).
- 3.2.8 During the construction of the railway south of Macclesfield in the mid nineteenth century, two disc querns were found in Danes Moss, one complete and the other a fragment (Site 05; Sainter 1878, 124-5). These were donated to Stoke-on-Trent Museum (Sainter 1878, 124), and are considered to be of Iron Age derivation, although they could also be of Romano-British date.
- 3.2.9 The precise locations of later artefacts found within the moss are not known, but Sainter referred to various items having been found during peat digging, including a cross-bow, swords, muskets, spearheads, a horse harness and coins (Sainter 1878, 124). The unusually prolific items of weaponry suggest that the area may have been used for mustering and target practice, as such open areas were frequently chosen for local militia training.
- 3.2.10 The first historical references to the moss occur in the thirteenth century (Oxenham 1988, 14), from whence the earliest known variants of its name are derived:

Dunismosse, Dinnysmoss, and Donnesmoss. These clearly demonstrate that the name was not derived from any association with the Danes, but rather is likely to originate from the Anglo-Saxon personal name *Dun(n)* or *Dun(n)a* (Mills 1991). An alternative explanation is proposed in the English Place-Names Society volume for Cheshire which links the prefix to the old township name of Sutton Downes (Dodgson 1970, 67). Not only does this seem etymologically unlikely but, given the divided nature of the moss amongst three townships, of which Sutton, as its name probably implies, was subordinate to Macclesfield, it seems strange in terms of the tenurial development of the landscape. Locally Danes Moss was also known as Turf Moss (Oxenham 1988, 14) and the lane, shown to the east of the railway line in 1871 as extending from Moss Lane through the moss rooms, was known as Turf Lane (OS 1871). Both these names indicate the local importance of the moss for providing peats.

- 3.2.11 By the thirteenth century Danes Moss had become an important resource for the town of Macclesfield. It has been suggested that Macclesfield was a place of some importance prior to the Norman Conquest and that, by the time of Domesday (1086; Morgan 1978), was the Earl of Chester's principal residence in eastern Cheshire (Higham 1993, 172-5). It was not a town at the time, however, and was not granted borough status until 1261 (West 1983, 75, 100). The earliest burgages within Macclesfield had turbary rights within Danes Moss and these were very important to the burgesses of Macclesfield as the peat provided the main means of domestic heating (Davies 1961). This continued to be the case well into the post-medieval period, despite the presence of coal pits on and near Macclesfield Common (Burdett 1777). As late as 1850 it was noted in a report on Macclesfield that '*there is an extensive bog to the south of Macclesfield, from which much cheap and useful moss [peat] is cut and dried and driven into Macclesfield for sale*' (Davies 1961, 100).
- 3.2.12 The cutting of peat from at least the thirteenth century, with large-scale commercial harvesting in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries until 1965, has truncated the peat stratigraphy (Leah *et al* 1997, 63). The effect of peat digging was considered to have resulted in the moss subsiding by around 6ft (1.83m) in the later nineteenth century, although the moss was still considered to have a depth of about 40ft (12m) in the centre (Sainter 1878, 122). By 1962 the average depth of peat was shown to be only 3-4m, reaching 5m in places (Leah *et al* 1997, 51). Only 25 years later the average depth of peat was found to be only 1.2m (Burton and Hodgson 1987, 63), supporting the description of the moss in 1971 as a '*devastated peat bog*' (Oxenham 1988, 18); however, more recent work indicates that these results were erroneous and that there has been no further reduction in peat depth since the early 1960s (Leah *et al* 1997, 51).
- 3.2.13 The reclamation of most mosslands had to await the agricultural improvements of the post-medieval period, when widespread drainage and land reclamation projects were carried out throughout the wetland areas of England (Taylor 2000). The chronology of reclamation at Danes Moss is not clear, though some investigators have suggested that the moss originally extended far to the west of Danes Moss Farm. It has been estimated that the original mire area was about one square mile but that only 25% survives today (Evans *et al* 1968, 206-7). Some enclosure of the moss appears to have taken place in the medieval period; it is likely that the creation of Macclesfield Deer Park (to the immediate north of the study area) by the late thirteenth century (CSMR 1561/3), may have taken in part of Danes Moss. In

1401 reference is made to the ‘turbary of the park’ and Bailey Ridding Moss was within the park (Leah *et al* 1997, 92). The general extent of the moss, as persisted throughout the later medieval and post-medieval periods, is broadly depicted on Burdett’s county map of Cheshire of 1777 (Fig 2). This shows the moss as having extended to the west of the Macclesfield-Gawsworth road, a situation which is not depicted on the nineteenth century maps, and these changes in the mossland area may reflect shrinkage and reclamation. Earlier reclamation is suggested by the depicted settlement pattern in 1777 (Burdett 1777); on place-name evidence the settlements established by the medieval period all lie well away from the Moss: Macclesfield to the north, Sutton to the east, and Gawsworth to the south. Reclamation and later settlement in the south may be suggested by the settlement named Moss Houses, which is depicted on Burdett’s map between Danes Moss and Gawsworth.

- 3.2.14 Unlike some other Cheshire mosses, Danes Moss was not parcelled out under an Act of Parliament; the Enclosure Act for Macclesfield of 1796 did not include land in Danes Moss (CRO QDE 2/10; Leah *et al* 1997, 94). Even so, by 1838 an area of Danes Moss, described as ‘Moss Rooms’ and lying within the current study area, was divided up into parcels by physical and mappable boundaries (Fig 3; Cowley 1838). Furthermore, at least one building, seeming to form a semi-detached property, had been erected at the northern-end of the moss rooms (Cowley 1838). The tithe award of 1848 (Fig 4; CRO EDT 254), shows the moss room divisions as further subdivided forming a series of small closes.
- 3.2.15 The vicinity of the study area appears to have been partially reclaimed from moss and was in part farmed and settled by the mid-nineteenth century. By then the area was already being exploited for sand, and peat was being extracted on an industrial scale.
- 3.2.16 In the late twentieth century about 50ha of Danes Moss, to the immediate south of the study area, were lost to landfill. The southern part of the Moss, which has peats surviving in excess of 5m, is managed for conservation purposes by the Cheshire Wildlife Trust (Leah *et al* 1997, 63-81).

4. ASSESSMENT RESULTS

4.1 SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD AND NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORD

4.1.1 There are five entries recorded on the Cheshire SMR relating to Danes Moss and two others within the near vicinity of the assessment area, none of which actually lie within the study area itself. The five sites within Danes Moss are as follows:

CSMR 1536 (Site 03) Prehistoric barbed and tanged flint arrowhead

CSMR 1537 (Site 04) Prehistoric perforated limestone hammer

CSMR 1538 (Site 05) Iron Age disc quern

CSMR 2589 (Site 06) Various nineteenth century finds reported as being found at Danes Moss

CSMR 2707 (Site 07) Sand hill within the moss identified during the North West Wetlands Survey and a possible site for prehistoric activity.

To the north-west of Danes Moss was the site of a putative Neolithic ritual site (CSMR 1376/1; Site 02). In addition, to the north of the study area lay the medieval deer park of Macclesfield (CSMR 1561/3; Site 01) which belonged to the Earl of Chester.

4.1.2 The National Monuments Record contains two additional sites within the study area and its vicinity, Moss Lane Smallpox Hospital (NMR 102005; Site 09) which lies within the study area, and Macclesfield Infectious Diseases Hospital (NMR 102004 (Site 08)), now the Weston Park Nursing Home, which is not within the study area but is surrounded by it.

4.1.3 The area does not contain any scheduled monuments or listed buildings. It does not contain any conservation areas, registered historic parklands or registered battlefields.

4.2 MACCLESFIELD'S MOSS ROOMS

4.2.1 The study area forms the northern part of Danes Moss as defined in the nineteenth century. By mid century the western portion of the study area was still unenclosed mossland belonging to the township of Gawsworth (CRO EDT 165), whilst the eastern portion formed the moss rooms of the borough of Macclesfield (CRO EDT 254: Fig 4). The area was still referred to as moss rooms in 1838 (Cowley 1838; Fig 3). By 1871, when a number of the moss rooms had become inhabited properties, the area was known as Moss-side (OS 1871 sheet 43.4; Fig 5) and by 1910 went by the name of Moss Lane (OS 1910 sheet 43.4; Fig 8).

4.2.2 Moss rooms were the divisions made in the moss as part of the allocation of turbary rights, and appears to be a term unique to Cheshire (Leah *et al* 1997, 215). Each moss room was one rod wide (about 5m), but could be extended as far into the moss as was considered necessary (Oxenham 1988, 6-7). The moss rooms on Danes Moss were held by Macclesfield burgage plot owners who held turbary rights, and, as with selion divisions in a common field, more than one room could be held by an individual. On Danes Moss the turbary rights were restricted to the

burgage plot owners in Chestergate, Wallgate, the Market Place, Jordangate, Church Side, Mill Street and Dog Lane (Davies 1961, 100; Oxenham 1988, 7).

- 4.2.3 The earliest full record of the Macclesfield moss rooms is contained in *The Moss Booke of Dinsmosse*, which dates to 1611 (MRL MA T/1/41) but refers to an earlier document made at the time of a division of Danes Moss in 1509. In 1611 a further 34 rooms were added to the total of 1509 (Oxenham 1988, 7), presumably signifying expansion in Macclesfield. More than 80 rods are enumerated in the list, giving a total width for the moss rooms of in excess of 400m (MRL MA T/1/41). This tallies closely with Sainter's estimate in 1878 that the area being cut for peat was '300-400yds' broad in places (Sainter 1878, 121), and matches the area of narrow strip plots depicted on mid-nineteenth century mapping as moss rooms.
- 4.2.4 The moss rooms formed a locally distinctive landscape on some Cheshire mosses. This was commented upon by the agricultural observer William Marshall in 1810, who noted that '*in the neighbourhood of the peat bogs there are, at the present day, a great number of extraordinary long and narrow fields*' (Davies 1961, 11; Leah *et al* 1997, 215). By then many of the Cheshire moss rooms had been regularised by Enclosure Acts and bounded by fences and/or hedges. This did not happen on Danes Moss so it is not known when the boundaries were marked by anything other than ditches. Certainly they appear to have been defined by drainage ditches, for in 1658 it was stipulated that any inhabitant of Macclesfield possessing a moss room in Danes Moss had to contribute to maintaining the moss ditches (CRO LBM1/2, 31; Leah *et al* 1997, 94, 215). The former courses of some of these ditches can clearly be seen on aerial photographs (CSMR 1971, 4106, 4168; 1993 177/92/225, 177/92/226), which echo the moss room layout shown on nineteenth century maps. By the later nineteenth century, however, when the moss rooms had become ordinary properties, the boundaries are shown as hedged containing many mature deciduous and coniferous trees (OS 1871; Fig 5). As the moss rooms became regular properties, so houses appeared on the Moss Lane frontage and wells were dug at the rear of some properties (OS 1882).
- 4.2.5 The moss rooms seem to have gone out of use for turbarry well before 1871 but after 1838 (Cowley 1838). Nevertheless, the layout of the field system fossilised the pattern formed by the moss rooms and although, during the twentieth century, many property boundaries off Moss Lane were modified or removed, the moss room pattern can still be broadly interpreted from the present-day landscape.

4.3 NINETEENTH CENTURY EXPLOITATION OF DANES MOSS

- 4.3.1 The 1871 OS first edition map demonstrates extraction activity as tramways (Sites 15 and 16) are shown running east/west across the western portion of Danes Moss. They would, at least in part, appear to have serviced a marl pit (Site 14) in the south-west corner of the study area (OS 1871); by 1910 the marl pit had closed and been backfilled, with only remnants of the tramways surviving, however, a new tramway ran north/south from the southern edge of the study area, servicing a factory of the British Moss Litter Company (OS 1910). The tramroad had a three foot gauge, was horse-powered (Morgan 1976, 59; Leah *et al* 1997, 94), and remnants of it survive in the southern part of Danes Moss today. The earlier tramroads may have been similar and inspired the design of the later one.

4.3.2 As well as the marl pit there was a small sand pit (Site 13) situated within the study area in 1871; this too had closed by 1910 (OS 1871; OS 1910). One other industrial enterprise situated within the study area in the nineteenth century was the Patent Fire Light Works (Site 18), the first indication of commercial/industrial scale exploitation of the peat from Danes Moss. This was established after 1848 and before 1871 (CRO EDT 254; OS 1871), and seems to have ceased operation by 1910, though its premises were still standing (OS 1910).

4.4 THE HOSPITALS

4.4.1 By the 1870s, following the worst epidemic of smallpox ever known, there was considerable national pressure for the establishment of infectious diseases hospitals (Richardson 1998, 138). Macclesfield Corporation's Sanitary Committee applied for a loan of £5000 towards establishing one in 1876 but no further progress was made (Davies 1961, 250). In 1882 the notification of infectious diseases was made compulsory by statute, which, plus a further outbreak of smallpox in 1886, prompted the Corporation to buy a portable Ducker Hospital of twelve beds (*op cit*, 251). Such hospitals were purpose-built portable cabins and were often the response sought by urban authorities to the problem of isolating cases of infectious diseases (Richardson 1998, 139).

4.4.2 Infectious diseases hospitals were commonly situated in isolated locations near to urban areas and Danes Moss was the ideal location for such a hospital to serve Macclesfield. The Ducker Hospital was placed near Moss Lane and in 1900 it was extended by a further ten beds in two blocks of five, in order to be able to isolate three separate diseases (Davies 1961, 251). It seems these are likely to have been the three buildings described as Isolation Hospital (Smallpox) on the 1910 OS 1: 2,500 map (Site 09; Fig 8), rather than Moss Lane Hospital (Site 08) to the north, which was described as for 'infectious diseases'.

4.4.3 The Moss Lane Hospital for Infectious Diseases was established by 1910 and became a permanent establishment operational for much of the twentieth century. It was also known as the Macclesfield Infectious Diseases Hospital and remained a hospital for infectious diseases until at least the 1960s; it is now the Weston Park Nursing Home. Little relevant recorded information was found relating to either hospital, though there are documents in Cheshire Record Office relating to Macclesfield Infectious Diseases Hospital that were noted but not studied during the present assessment (CRO NHM13).

4.4.4 Macclesfield Infectious Diseases Hospital is excluded from the assessment area, but the site of the former Moss Lane Smallpox Isolation Hospital falls within it. As stated within the recent RCHME volume on hospitals, however, such portable structures have left no tangible trace (Richardson 1998, 139).

4.5 FIELD IDENTIFICATION SURVEY

4.5.1 The survey was carried out as detailed within the methodology (*Section 2.3*), and revealed relatively little in the way of extant archaeological features, despite the activity within the region in prehistory, and for over 700 years in the historic period as an area for peat-cutting (Leah *et al* 1997). The area is now used as pasture, and the only evidence of peat-cutting is preserved in several field boundaries of the

former moss rooms. Of the definable archaeological features, only a small sand quarry (Site 13) was identified, which consisted of a sub-circular cutting into the higher ground, to the south-west of the present main focus of habitation. Little evidence is now visible of the peat cuttings themselves, apart from slight lynchets within the area of the moss-rooms, which may represent peat-cutting faces (Site 21.2).

- 4.5.2 The survey served to identify areas of potential for the recovery of prehistoric activity, in the form of the identification of areas which may potentially have been exploited for transient settlement in prehistory, particularly from the Mesolithic and early Neolithic periods. These have been identified previously as being located mostly on sand-ridges and hills adjacent to the open waters of small lakes, which subsequently formed the mosses and mires which are now visible today (Leah *et al* 1997). Several areas of potential were identified (21.1-21.7), of which those with most potential were sites 21.6 and 21.7; the latter has a sand pit (Site 13) set into its top, confirming that the mound was naturally formed as a sand ridge. These mounds would have been noticeable promontories at the time of the water-logging of the area. By contrast, Sites 21.2 and 21.5 are linear mounds within the peat rooms and were potentially individual peat rooms that have been subject to less intensive extraction and hence survive to a greater height. Sites 21.3 and 21.4 form a large irregular raised area within the peat rooms and may be an irregular sand deposit that was in existence prior to the establishment of the peat rooms and has hence been exposed to a greater height by peat cutting around it, or it may perhaps reflect dumping subsequent to the abandonment of the area for peat extraction. Investigation of mole-hills and rabbit burrows throughout the area revealed no flint finds, despite careful inspection.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 THE NATURE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

- 5.1.1 There are several sites of limited archaeological interest within the study area, which include wells (Sites 11, 12, 19 and 20) and extraction pits (Sites 13 and 14). Of more interest, however, are the former tramways (Sites 15-17), but no remains appear to survive within the area, and the same is the case with the portable hospital (Site 09). Although no obvious archaeological remains survive associated with Moss Rooms (Site 10), other than the boundary divisions, the former landscape is interpretable and the importance of these rooms to the history of Macclesfield makes the present character of the landscape of some considerable historical significance.
- 5.1.2 The sand hills found during the assessment have great archaeological potential as sites of prehistoric activity (Site 21); however, as the sand hills are presently under pasture it was not possible to field walk them for artefacts during the present survey, and it has, therefore, not been established if there was any prehistoric activity on the site.
- 5.1.3 The removal of the peat through history and the subsequent land-use of the area, including importing and extracting material and conversion to occupied properties, will have reduced considerably the value of any surviving mossland organic soils. Those areas that appear mire-like today are likely to reflect regeneration of wetland rather than it relate to the historical wetland. Nevertheless, it may be prudent to test the nature of the wetter areas by coring.

5.2 IMPACT

- 5.2.1 The proposed development will involve the establishment of a bulk retail unit over the western part of the site with a business park established over the eastern part of the site. Those areas that are not directly affected by either of these major developments are likely to be subject to general landscaping, for car parks, and for roads. Overall it is assumed that the whole area will be subject to either direct development or lesser landscaping and any archaeological sites and the moss room landscape will be impacted to a greater or lesser extent. There is little that can be done to mitigate impact on the area of former moss rooms as the proposed development will alter the historical nature of the local landscape. Here it is the character of the landscape rather than the value of the information contained within it that might be considered the more important issue.
- 5.2.2 The raised sand mounds contain the greatest potential for surviving evidence of prehistoric activity, but, as the sites are presently under pastoral land-use it was not possible to undertake artefact field walking of the sites. The sand ridges have sufficient potential to warrant further investigative in order to establish any evidence for prehistoric activity.

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Documents noted but not examined:

CRO NHM13 Patient Registers for Macclesfield Infectious Diseases Hospital, Twentieth century

6.1.2 *Macclesfield Reference Library (WRL)*

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6.2 PUBLISHED CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

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APPENDIX 1 PROJECT BRIEF

APPENDIX 2
PROJECT DESIGN

May 2000

Lancaster
University
Archaeological
Unit

**SOUTH MACCLESFIELD DEVELOPMENT AREA
CHESHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
PROJECT DESIGN

Proposals

The following design is offered in response to a request from De Leuw Rothwell Engineering Consultants for an archaeological assessment in accordance with a brief for a desk-based assessment prepared by Cheshire County Council Environmental Planning Service.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An archaeological assessment is required by De Leuw Rothwell Engineering Consultants for a site the South Macclesfield Development Area, on the southern outskirts of Macclesfield, as part of an exercise in constraints identification in relation to the proposed mixed building development. A brief for assessment was prepared by the Archaeology Officer of Cheshire County Council Environmental planning Service.
- 1.2 The site comprises 60ha of pasture and recreation grounds at SJ 9050 7180.
- 1.3 The site lies adjacent to Danes Moss, a lowland raised mire, partially destroyed by land fill. The southern part of Danes Moss is under the management of Cheshire Wildlife Trust and about 4-5m of well preserved peats are considered to survive there. LUAU has an archive of information from its North West Wetlands Survey project which relates to this area.
- 1.4 LUAU has considerable expertise undertaking assessments of this type. The unit is also experienced at working in Cheshire having carried out a county wide survey of the archaeological potential of the wetlands there and undertaken numerous projects in the vicinity, including at Lyme Park and Alderley Edge.
- 1.5 LUAU are a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists No 27. It is, therefore, directly bound by the provisions of the Institute of field Archaeologists.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The principle purpose of the study is to identify areas of archaeological potential and to assess the significance of any features of archaeological interest and the likely impact of development upon them, so far as is reasonably possible by means of a desk-based assessment and rapid field inspection. Such surveys provide information on the known and potential archaeological resource.
- 2.2 The study is not intended to provide a comprehensive coverage of the archaeological resource but should seek to define the known resource and areas of likely archaeological potential. The study will define further levels of archaeological mitigation should such be merited by the results of the assessment.

3. METHOD STATEMENT

- 3.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the summarised objectives of the archaeological work.

3.2 Desk-Based Survey

- 3.2.1 Documentary, cartographic and photographic sources will be examined for the site.
- 3.2.2 Maps: all relevant early editions of Ordnance Survey, tithe, estate and other historic maps will be consulted.
- 3.2.3 Documentary sources both published and unpublished will be consulted at the following repositories:
 - ❖ the Cheshire Sites and Monuments Record
 - ❖ English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens
 - ❖ the County Record Office (Chester)
 - ❖ the Macclesfield local studies library
 - ❖ Chester and Stockport museums
 - ❖ National Monuments Record, Swindon
 - ❖ the Lancaster University Library
 - ❖ LUAU's North west Wetlands Survey archive

- 3.2.4 Photographic sources: any relevant photographic material lodged in either the County Sites and Monuments record or the County Record Office will be consulted. A web search will be submitted to the National Archaeological Record.
- 3.2.5 The client will be asked for any geotechnical logs held by them or their clients.
- 3.2.6 Physical environment: a rapid compilation of geological (both solid and drift), pedological, topographical, and palaeoenvironmental information will be undertaken.

3.3 RAPID FIELD INSPECTION

- 3.3.1 A rapid inspection of the site will be undertaken in accordance with RCHM(E) and LUAU level 1 survey guidelines. This will consist of a visual inspection.
- 3.3.2 All archaeological information collected during the course of the inspection will be pro forma recorded. This will form the basis of a gazetteer of features to be submitted as part of the study report. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously and if necessary sketch plans will be made.
- 3.3.3 Liaison for site access will be undertaken as a matter of courtesy, but it is assumed that the necessary access agreements will be obtained in advance by the client.

3.4 THE STUDY REPORT

- 3.4.1 The data generated by the desk-based survey and the field inspection will be compiled into a report, which will cover all the aspects detailed in the brief. In general it will consist of a non-technical summary, details of sources consulted, a summary of results, a site gazetteer, a consideration of impact, an assessment of significance and an identification of implications. The report will also include a copy of the brief, this project design and any agreed variations from the project design.
- 3.4.2 The report may also include copies of relevant photographs, maps and copies of antique prints.
- 3.4.3 A report will be submitted to the client within 20 days of written permission to proceed.
- 3.4.4 Four bound and fully illustrated copies and one unbound copy of the report will be submitted to the client for distribution. One further copy will form part of the project archive.
- 3.4.5 The report will be a document for the specific use of the client, for the particular purpose defined in the project brief and this project design. It will not be suitable for publication as an academic report without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and design, or for any other specific purpose, can be fulfilled but will require separate negotiation and funding.
- 3.4.6 With the written agreement of the client a summary report will be if appropriate in *LUAU's Review*.
- 3.4.7 The report and the collected data will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd ed. 1991). 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 Institute of Field Archaeologists in their Code of Conduct, to which LUAU subscribes and conforms. On receipt of permission from the client the project archive would be deposited with the Cumbria County Record Office.
- 3.4.8 The report will include all the sections and information detailed in Cheshire County Council's brief section 6.2. Its internal format and appearance will be similar to this project design.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 LUAU conforms to all health and safety guidelines as contained in the Lancaster University Manual of Health and Safety and the safety manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (rev ed 1999). A risk assessment will be completed in advance of the project's commencement.

5. PROJECT MONITORING

- 5.1 The Cheshire planning Archaeologist will be informed of the start date of the project, in writing not less than seven days before commencement.

6. TIMETABLE

- 6.1 The project can be implemented within 10 days of written notice of the acceptance of this project design and costing.
- 6.2 The field inspection can be completed within one day.
- 6.3 The desk-based survey will require four days to collect the data.
- 6.4 The draft report will require three days to complete.

APPENDIX 3 GAZETTEER OF SITES

Site number **01**
Site name Macclesfield Deer Park
PRN CSMR 1561/3
NGR SJ 913 726 (centred)
Site type Deer park
Period Medieval
Source CSMR
Description
 Site of deer park in existence by the thirteenth century.
Assessment
 The site lies outside the assessment area and is not shown on the site mapping.

Site number **02**
Site name Pexhill Road
PRN CSMR 1376/1
NGR SJ 8870 7280
Site type Pit arrangement
Period Neolithic?
Source Rowley 1982, Leah *et al* 1997
Description
 A pit arrangement, which has been interpreted as serving ritual/calendrical activities.
Assessment
 An excavated site which lies outside the assessment area and is not shown on the site mapping.

Site number **03**
Site name Danes Moss
PRN CSMR 1536
NGR SJ 90707043
Site type Flint scatter
Period Bronze Age
Source CSMR
Description
 Barbed and tanged flint arrowhead found in peat workings.
Assessment
 The find spot lies outside the assessment area and is not shown on the site mapping.

Site number **04**
Site name Danes Moss
PRN CSMR 1537
NGR SJ 91097089
Site type Findspot
Period Bronze Age
Source CSMR
Description
 A perforated limestone hammer found in the nineteenth century.
Assessment
 The find spot lies outside the assessment area.

Site number 05
Site name Danes Moss
PRN CSMR 1538
NGR SJ 91137094
Site type Find spot
Period Iron Age
Source Sainter 1878, CSMR

Description

One whole disc quern and a fragment of another.

Assessment

The find spot lies outside the assessment area.

Site number 06
Site name Danes Moss
PRN CSMR 2589
NGR SJ 906709 (centre)
Site type Find spots
Period Various
Source Sainter 1878, CSMR

Description

Various finds reported as found during the nineteenth century within Danes Moss. There are no specific locations.

Assessment

No assessment can be made as the locations are unknown.

Site number 07
Site name Danes Moss
PRN CSMR 2707
NGR SJ 90517024
Site type Enhanced natural feature?
Period Natural feature?
Source Leah *et al* 1997; CSMR

Description

A sand hill within Danes Moss which was identified during the North West Wetlands Survey.

Assessment

The site lies outside the assessment area.

Site number 08
Site name Macclesfield Infectious Diseases Hospital
PRN NMR 102004
NGR SJ 907720 (centre)
Site type Hospital
Period Modern
Source Richardson 1998; NMR

Description

An early twentieth century isolation hospital, which later became the Western Park Nursing Home.

Assessment

The site lies outside the assessment area.

Site number 09
Site name Moss Lane Smallpox Hospital
PRN NMR 102005
NGR SJ 90937159 (centre)
Site type Hospital
Period Nineteenth century
Source Richardson 1998; NMR

Description

A portable isolation hospital, which was established in the late nineteenth century.

Assessment

The site is unlikely to have left any visible trace as the buildings were portable. The site is within the study area.

Site number 10
Site name Moss Side moss rooms
NGR SJ 910716 (centre)
Site type Field system
Period Sixteenth-nineteenth centuries
Source OS 1st edition map (1871)

Description

Long thin strip-like land divisions formed as a consequence of the allocation of turbarry rights amongst the burgesses of Macclesfield.

Assessment

Their primary importance is as an historic landscape characteristic, with important associations for the history and development of Macclesfield.

Site number 11
Site name Moss Side
NGR SJ 90617189
Site type Well
Period Post-medieval
Source OS 1st edition map (1871)

Description

A well marked on OS 1st edition map.

Assessment

A site of only local archaeological significance, but within the study area.

Site number 12
Site name Moss Side
NGR SJ 90707178
Site type Well
Period Post-medieval
Source OS 1st edition map (1871)

Description

A well marked on the OS 1st edition map.

Assessment

A site of only local archaeological significance, but within the study area.

Site number 13
Site name Danes Moss
NGR SJ 90587189
Site type Sand Pit
Period Post-medieval
Source OS 1st edition map (1871); Identification survey

Description

A sand pit marked on the OS 1st edition map. It was recorded by the identification survey as a sub-circular cutting into the higher ground, to the south-west of the present main focus of habitation. It was 42m x 19m in size.

Assessment

A site of only local archaeological significance, but within the study area.

Site number 14
Site name Danes Moss
NGR SJ 90127155
Site type Quarry
Period Post-medieval
Source OS 1st edition map (1871)

Description

A marl pit marked on the OS 1st edition map.

Assessment

A site of only local archaeological significance, and just outside the study area.

Site number 15
Site name Danes Moss
NGR SJ 90157166 - SJ 90507158
Site type Tramway
Period Post-medieval
Source OS 1st edition map (1871)

Description

A tramway marked on the OS 1st edition map.

Assessment

There is no visible evidence of the tramway's survival, but it is within the study area.

Site number 16
Site name Danes Moss
NGR SJ 90157154 – SJ 90857144
Site type Tramway
Period Post-medieval
Source OS 1st edition map (1871)

Description

A tramway marked on the OS 1st edition map.

Assessment

There was no visible evidence of the tramway's survival, but it is within the study area.

Site number 17
Site name Danes Moss
NGR SJ 90487148 (northern end)
Site type Tramway
Period Modern
Source OS 3rd edition map (1910)

Description

A tramway marked on the OS 1st edition map serving the British Moss Litter Company.

Assessment

The site lay just outside the assessment area.

Site number 18
Site name Moss Side Patent Fire Light Works
NGR SJ 90957190
Site type Factory
Period Nineteenth Century
Source OS 1st edition map (1871)

Description

A factory marked on the OS 1st edition map. This is the first documented commercial exploitation of the Danes Moss peats.

Assessment

The site is within the site of the council depot. The site is of some archaeological interest, as an industrial enterprise significant to the history of Danes Moss.

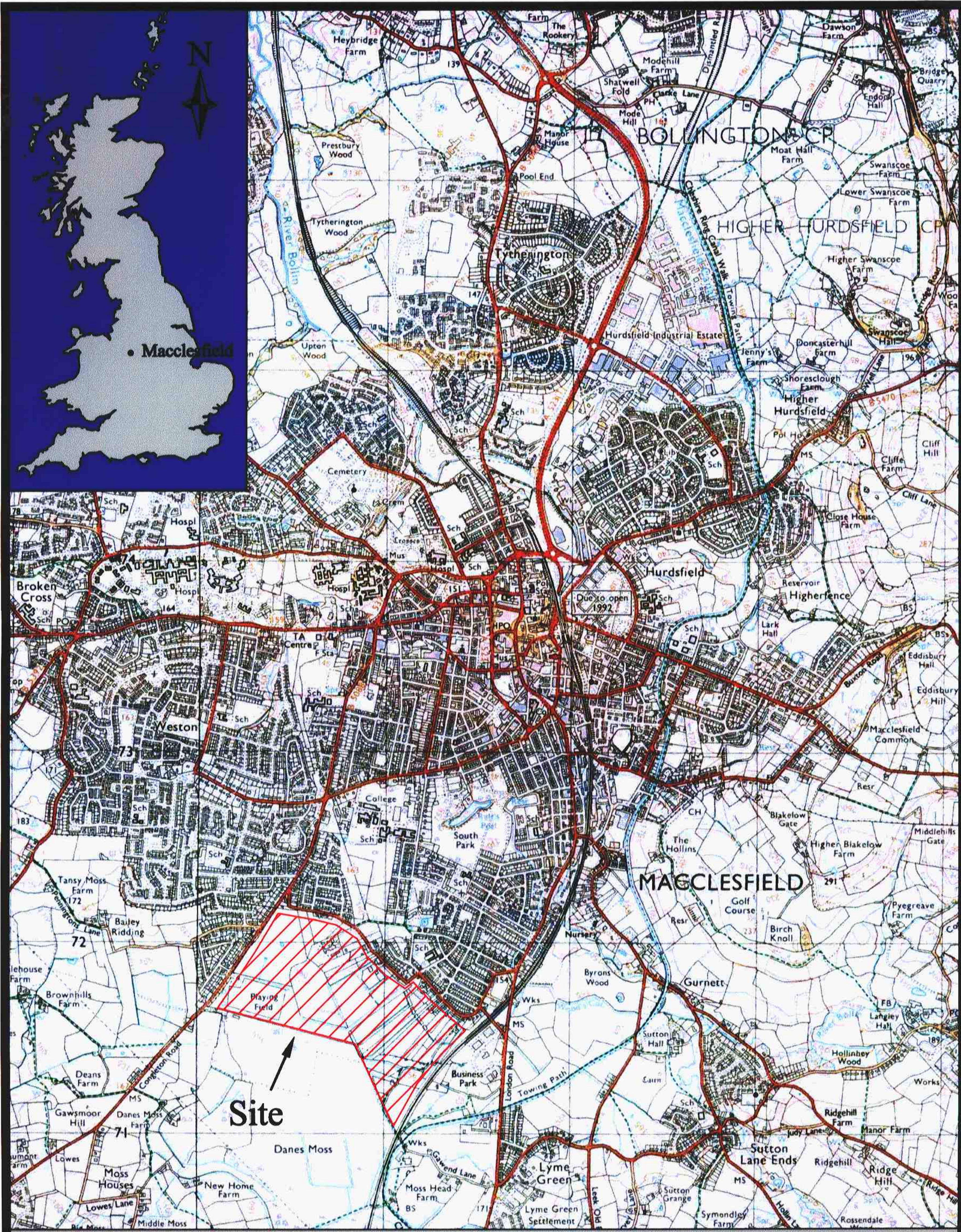
Site number 19
Site name Moss Side
NGR SJ 90917196
Site type Well
Period Post-medieval
Source OS 1st edition map (1871)
Description
 Well marked on OS map.
Assessment
 A site of only local archaeological significance, but within the study area.

Site number 20
Site name Moss Side
NGR SJ 91087183
Site type Well
Period Post-medieval
Source OS 1st edition map (1871)
Description
 A well marked on the OS 1st edition map.
Assessment
 A site of only local archaeological significance, but within the study area.

Site number 21
Site name Danes Moss
NGR SJ 90607184 (centre)
Site type Enhanced natural feature?
Period Natural feature?
Source Identification Survey
Description
 Seven areas of raised ground were noted within the study area. At least one of these appears to be a sand ridge (21.7).
 Site 21.1 Small mound at south-eastern part of the study area
 Site 21.2 Linear bank probably survival of a moss room
 Site 21.3 Irregular mound within area of former moss rooms
 Site 21.4 Irregular mound within area of former moss rooms
 Site 21.5 Linear bank probably survival of a moss room
 Site 21.6 Irregular mound adjacent to area of mire - probably sand mound
 Site 21.7 Irregular mound adjacent to area of mire. It has a sand quarry set into top and is a sand mound.
Assessment
 Natural features which may have been a focus for prehistoric activity; the mounds are within the study area.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig 1 Location Map
- Fig 2 The study area depicted on Burdett's map of the county of Chester (1777)
- Fig 3 Plan of the Borough of Macclesfield - J Cowley (1838)
- Fig 4 Macclesfield Tithe Map (1848; CRO EDT 254)
- Fig 5 OS 1st edition 6" to 1 mile map (1871)
- Fig 6 OS 1st edition 1:2,500 map (1877)
- Fig 7 OS 3rd edition 1:2,500 map (1910)
- Fig 8 OS 3rd edition 6" to 1 mile map (1910)
- Fig 9 Topography of the Survey Area and Site Map



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:25000
 with the permission of the controller of HMSO
 © Crown Copyright

0 250 500
 metres

Fig 1: Site Location Map

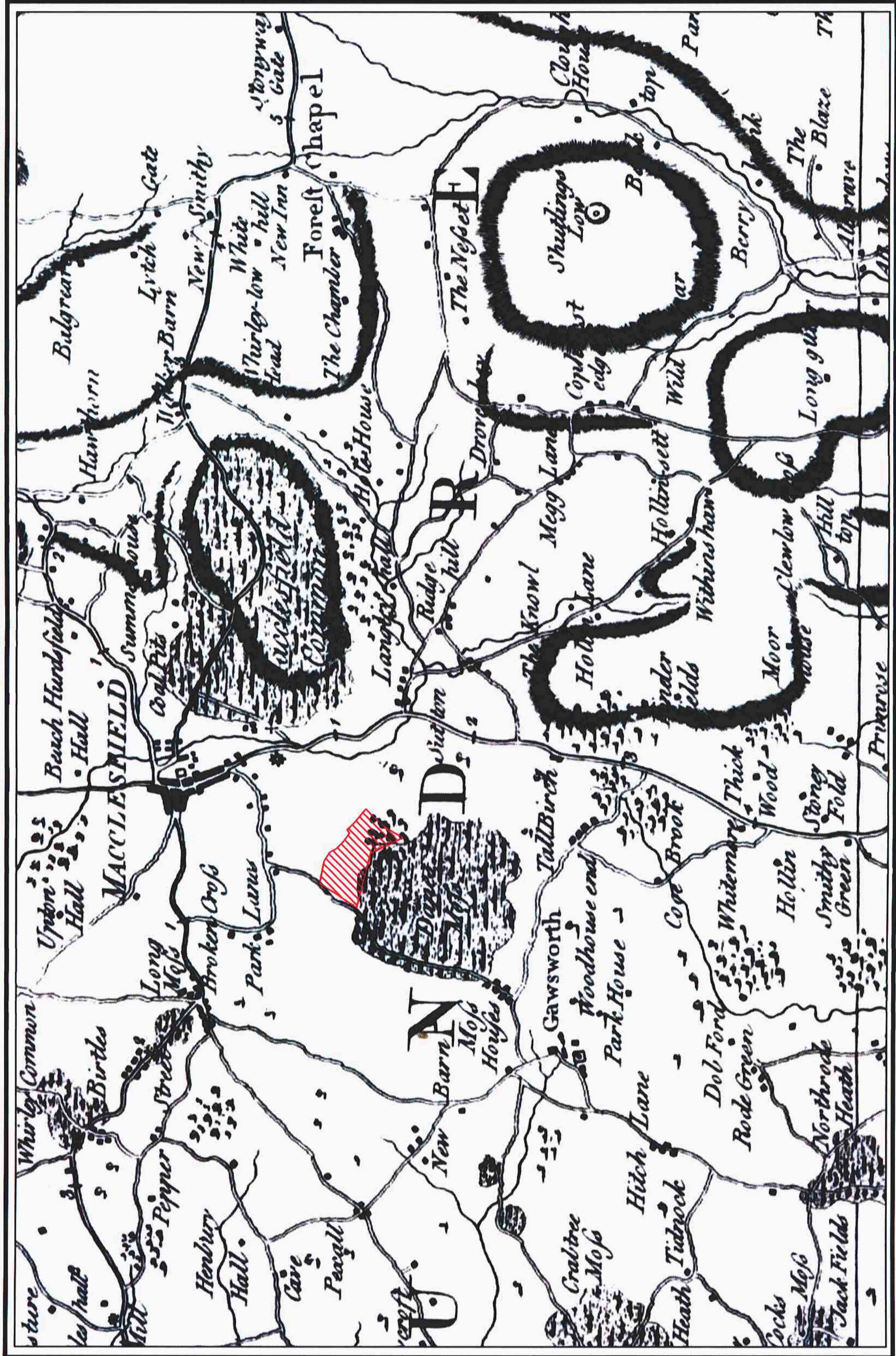


FIG. 1. THE MACCLESFIELD AREA.

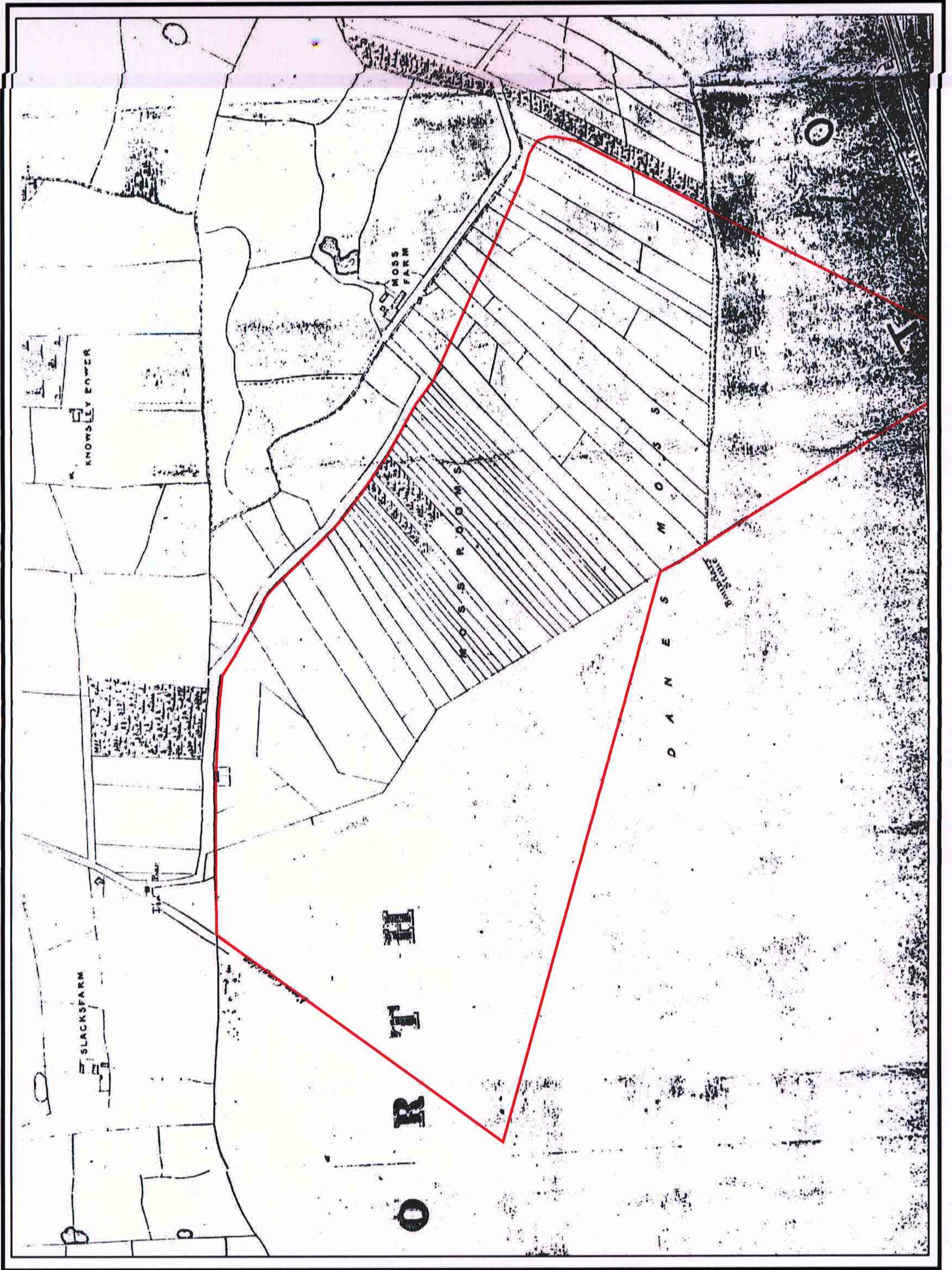


Fig 3 Plan of the Borough of Macclesfield - J Cowley (1838)

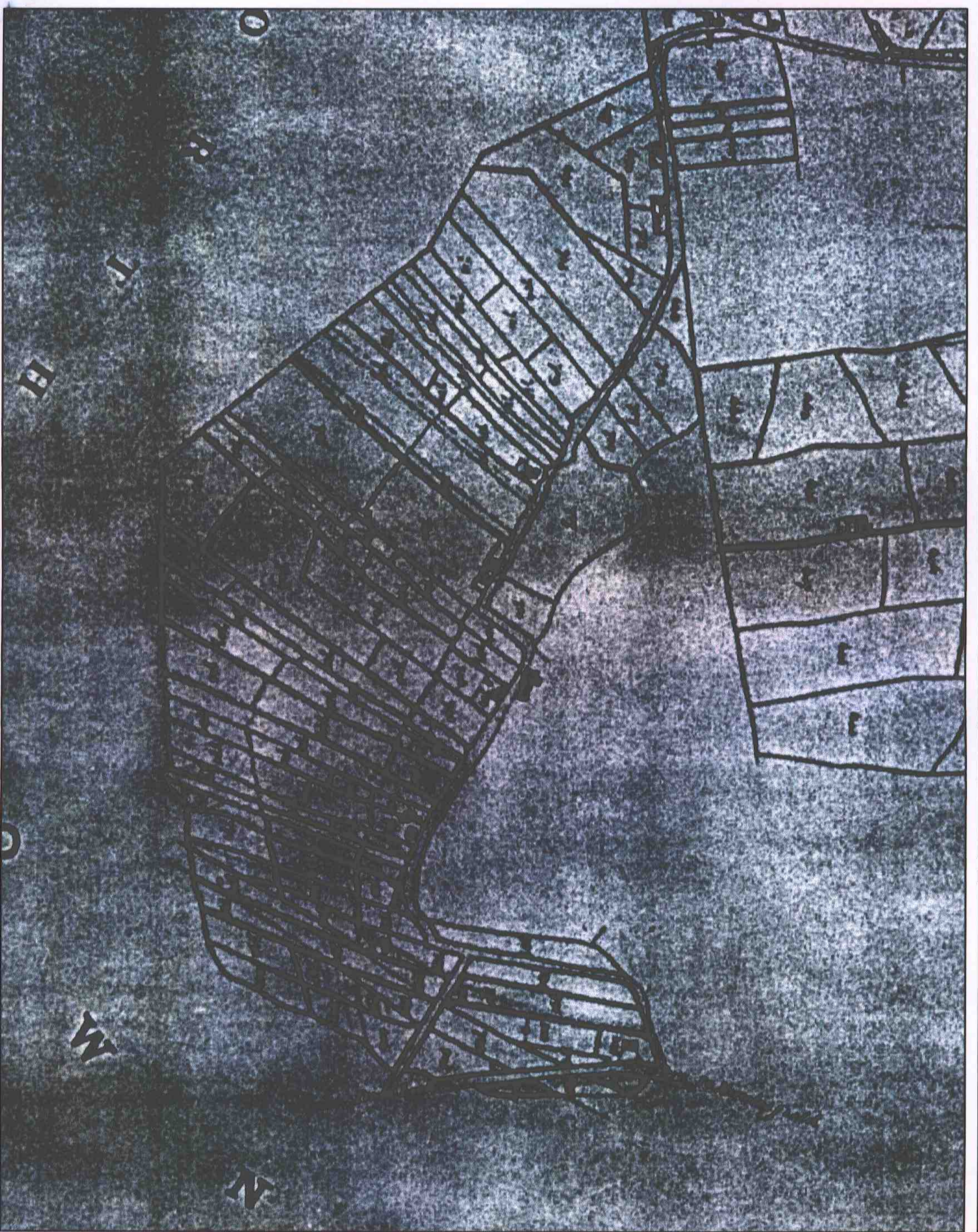


Fig 4 Macclesfield Tithe Map (1848: CRO EDT 254)



Fig 5 OS 1st edition 6" to 1 mile map (1871)

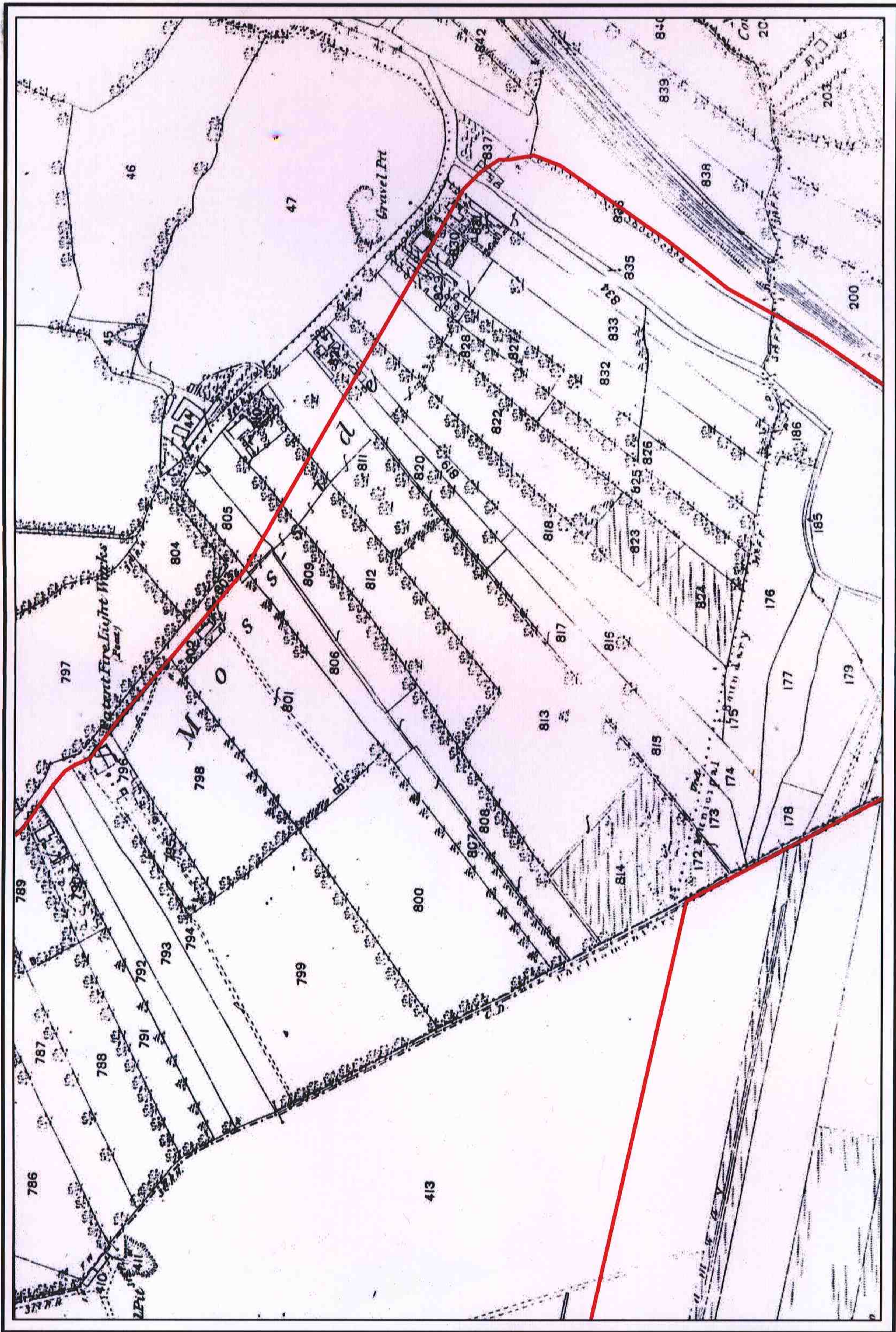


Fig 6 OS 1:2,500 1st edition map (1877)

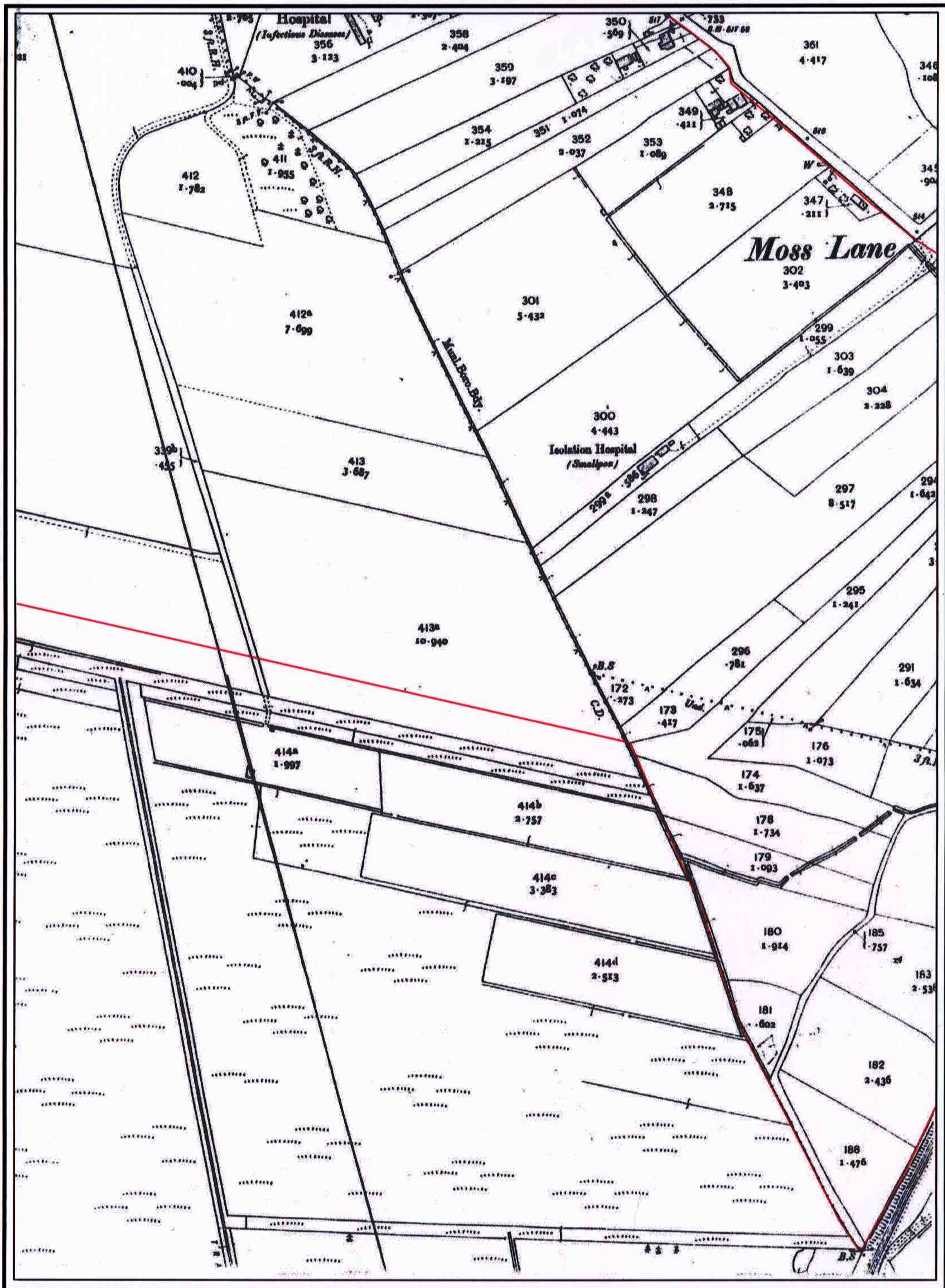


Fig 7 OS 3rd edition 1:2500 map (1910)

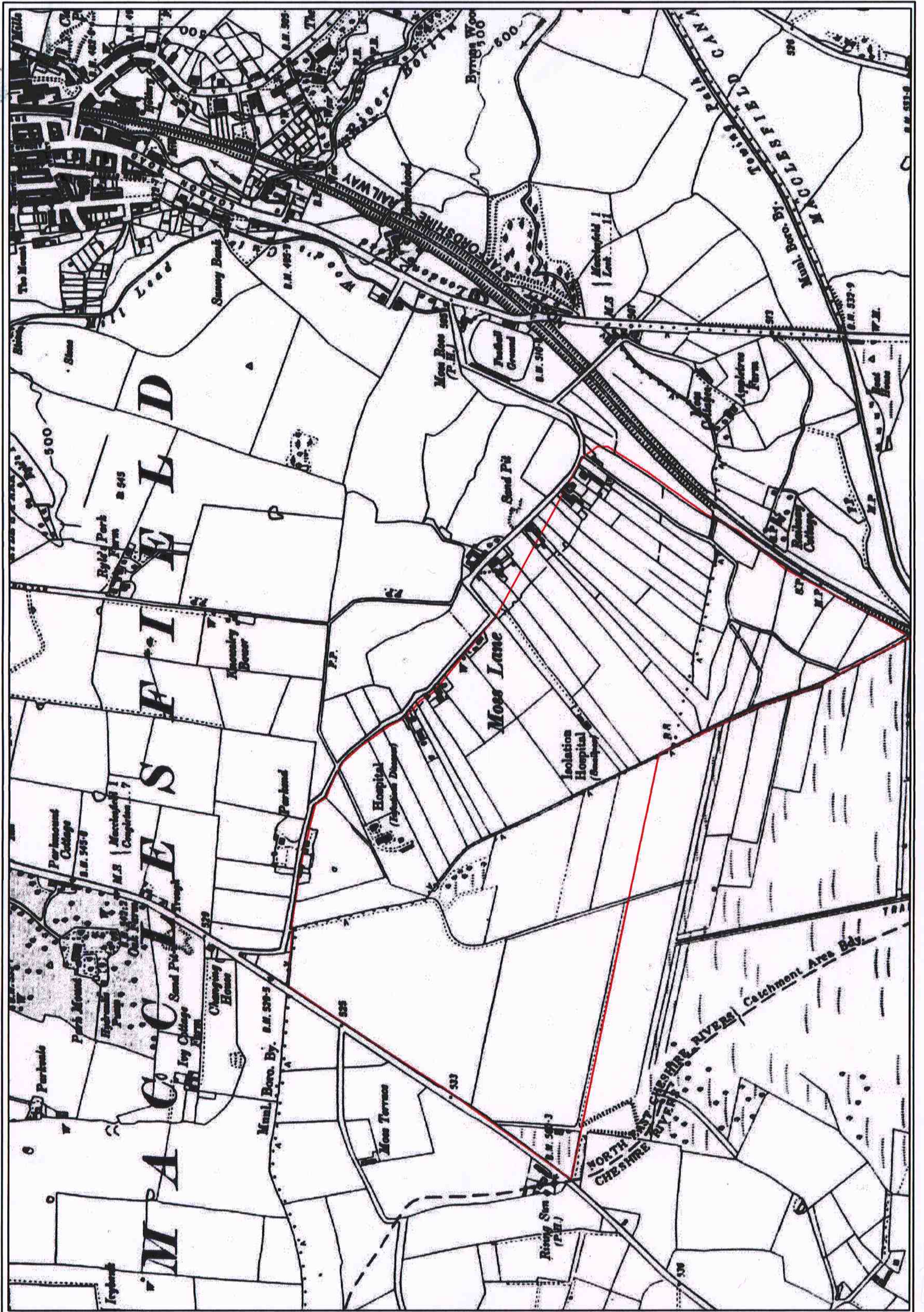


Fig 8 OS 3rd edition 6" to 1mile map (1910)



PROJECT:

DANEGATE

South Macclesfield
Development Area

DRAWING No:

Fig. 9



DRAWN BY: M. Town

DATE: December 2000

Sites 01, 02, 03 and 07 are
outside the limits of this
map

KEY



Drained Land



Raised Ground



Mire



Developed/In Use



Archaeological Sites

Study Area Boundary

TITLE: Topography of
Survey Area

COMMISSIONED BY:
Plant Environmental
Development Consultants

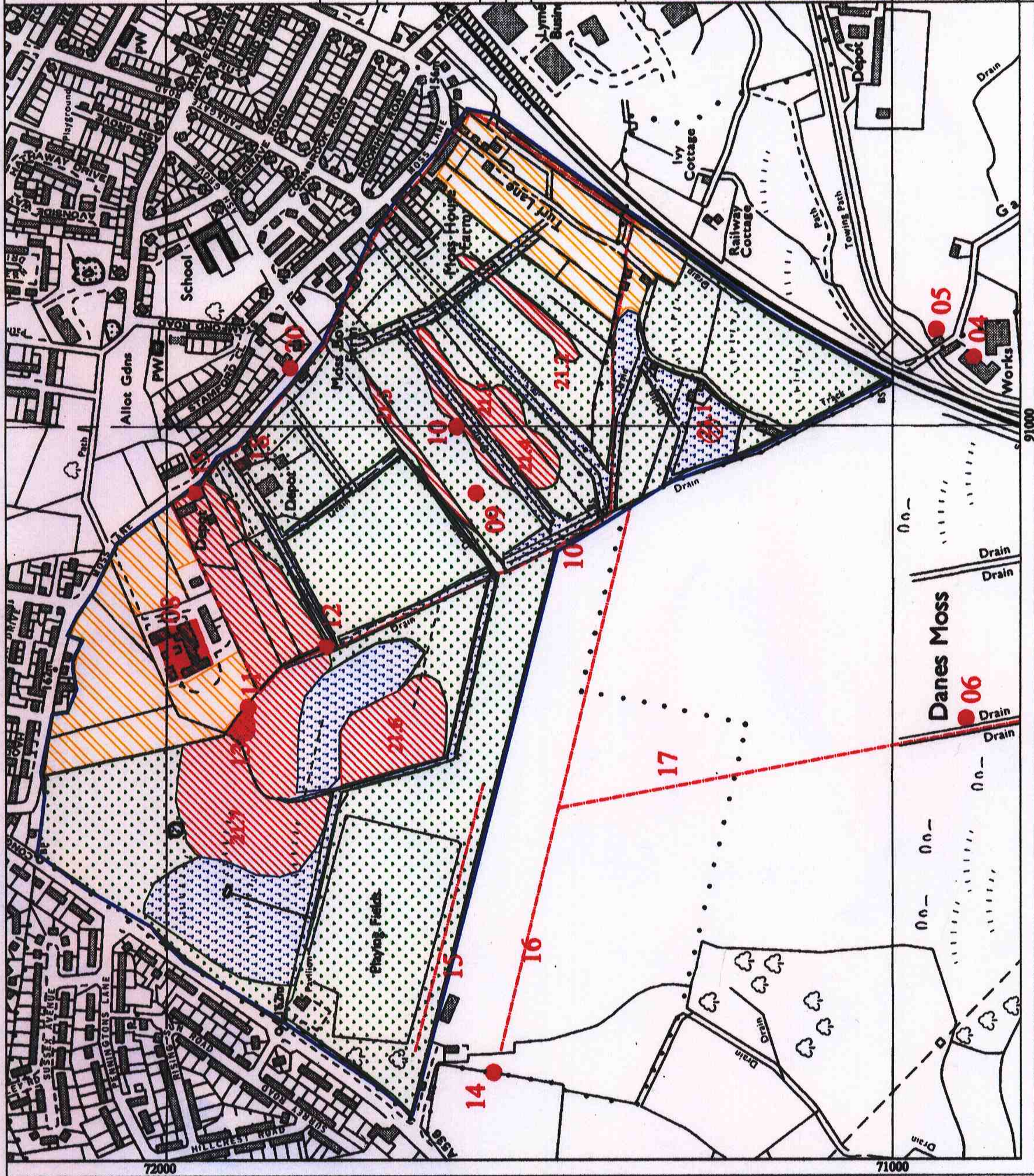


Fig 9: Topography of Survey Area and Site Map