

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Land Adjacent to Worthenbury Church,
Worthenbury, Wrexham
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT



St. Deiniol's Church, Worthenbury, Clwyd.

**Land Adjacent to Worthenbury Church,
Worthenbury, Wrexham**
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

N.W.Jones and W.G.Owen
September 1999

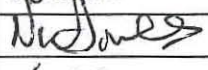
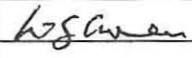
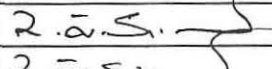
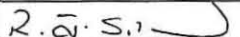
Report for Mr B Huxley on behalf of Worthenbury Parochial Church Council

CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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prepared by	N.W. Jones		14/09/99
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The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL

tel (01938) 553670, fax 552179

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The proposed development (Planning application CB2830) that forms the background to the evaluation reported on here involves an extension to the existing graveyard of Worthenbury Church in Wrexham County Borough. The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust determined that a field evaluation was necessary to assess the implications of the proposed development on the archaeological resource, and accordingly a brief was prepared by Wrexham Archaeology Service which described the scheme of archaeological works required.
- 1.2 The area lies within the historic core of Worthenbury as defined in the Wrexham Maelor Historic Settlements Survey (Silvester *et al.*, 1992). Worthenbury is certainly of Anglo Saxon origin and it is possible that the settlement may have been protected within a defended enclosure at that time.
- 1.3 The Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited to submit a quotation and specification to undertake the assessment, and this was accepted by the parochial church council in August 1999.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 Worthenbury lies 10km to the south-east of Wrexham, and only one kilometre from the English border. The development area (fig. 1) is located immediately to the south of Worthenbury Church (SJ 41854620) and is bounded to the north by the existing churchyard, to the south and west by pasture fields and to the east by housing development. The area is currently under permanent pasture.
- 2.2 Topographically, the area of the extension is gently undulating, lying on a slight terrace above the Emral Brook. The underlying geology consists of river alluvium overlain by soils of the Compton soil association, which are typically stoneless mostly reddish clayey soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983, No 813e). The soils encountered on this terrace, however, were sandy loams derived from the underlying gravels and sands.

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The following information on Worthenbury in general and the environs of the church in particular is derived from a desk-based study which included a range of primary and secondary documentary, cartographic and aerial photographic sources held at the following repositories: the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust at Welshpool; the National Library of Wales (NLW), Aberystwyth; the National Monuments Record (NMR), Aberystwyth; and the Flintshire Record Office in Hawarden. Archaeological sites, already known and recorded in the regional SMR are referred to by their primary record number (PRN).
- 3.2 The village of Worthenbury is of Anglo Saxon origin and is recorded in Domesday as *Hurdinburie*. In 1314 the name is recorded as *Worthynbury*. There is at least a possibility of a Saxon *burh* at Worthenbury, perhaps to be identified with a defensive fortification referred to in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in the early 10th century, but the evidence is tenuous; there is a substantial boundary bank (PRN 105351) on the north side of the settlement which may have formed part of a defensive circuit and this could also be represented on the east side of the village by a ditch within OS field no. 1414 (Silvester *et al.* 1992). Little is known about the development of Worthenbury during the medieval period, yet it may have been one of the few nucleated settlements in the area.
- 3.3 The church of St Deniol (PRN 105348) was rebuilt in 1736-9 and is a fine example of Georgian ecclesiastical architecture, reputedly one of the best in Wales. It was designed by Richard Trubshaw and constructed in brick and stone (Hubbard 1986, 456-7). There is little evidence relating to its predecessor, although the earliest reference to a building here is in 1338. It appears that the church was originally a chapel attached to Bangor-is-y-coed, and it is conceivable that this link goes back to a very early time when there was a British monastery at Bangor. Certainly the dedication refers to the son of the first Abbot of Bangor, although the historical significance of the dedication remains to be established. The church was separated from the mother church of Bangor in 1658 (CROH D/BC/3376), although the rector of Bangor, Henry Bridgeman, refused to acknowledge an Act passed

during the Commonwealth. As a result the separation did not finally take place until 1683 (NLW Elwes No. 1317), with an Act of Parliament confirming the separation in 1689. An architect's report in 1951 stated that the church was in a dangerous condition and should be closed. However, following an appeal, funds were raised to undertake the necessary repairs.

- 3.4. The rectilinear churchyard (PRN 16424) has a modern extension dating to 1900 on its west side.
- 3.5. The earliest cartographic evidence available to us is a map of 1764 depicting estates in Worthenbury and Bangor belonging to Thomas Puleston (NLW SAAN 37887 map 11262). This lists the field in question as Dial Field, and under that name it is mentioned in a survey of lands in Worthenbury dated to 1739, where it was in the tenancy of Thomas Jones: a field in two parts worth £1 1s 11d. During the same year it seems that the churchyard was extended into Dial Field. A document dated 15 April 1739 (CROH D/BC/3385), relating to the consecration of the new church and the extension of the churchyard, states 'by reason of the old churchyard being too small a burial place for the Parish, John Pulston of Pickhill and John Pulston of Emral have given and granted a piece of land next adjoining to the old churchyard on the south, heretofore part and parcell of a Field or Close commonly called Dial Field and containing in length one hundred and thirty three feet and in breadth at the east end thirty three feet and at the west end forty three feet, to be added to the said churchyard to make it larger.... and [it] will be enclosed with the rest with a brick wall'. That brick wall still survives, forming part of the southern boundary of the churchyard.
- 3.6. In the early 19th century the field was still a part of the Puleston estate. A map of 1833 of the Broughton Hall estate (NLW 37640 RMA160) shows it in the possession of the Puleston family. The Tithe Survey of 1838 (fig. 2) lists the field as no. 183, pasture known as Dial Field, part of the Puleston estate and a second plan of the Broughton Hall Estate in 1847 (fig. 3) shows the field as belonging to Richard Puleston.
- 3.7. The Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2500 map surveyed in 1871-2 (fig. 4), shows the field as being little changed from the Tithe Survey, although by the time of the 3rd edition of 1912 (fig. 5), which had been revised in 1909, the graveyard had been extended to the west and appears as it does today. When visited, it was evident that the western half of the southern churchyard wall was constructed of a later type of brick than that constituting the eastern half of this wall. The later brick also formed the western and northern boundary wall of the churchyard thus enclosing the latest extension of the churchyard.

4 EXCAVATION

- 4.1. The excavation was undertaken during the week beginning 23 August 1999, and consisted of three trenches, each 10 long by 1.5m wide, sited according to the specification laid out in the brief (fig. 6). The topsoil and modern ploughsoil in each trench was removed by machine to the surface of the natural subsoil at a depth varying from approximately 0.8m in Trenches B and C to 0.9m in Trench A. The trenches were then cleaned by hand and inspected for any features or deposits of archaeological significance. A full written, drawn and photographic record was maintained throughout. Numbers in brackets in the following text refer to individual context numbers.
- 4.2. Trench A (fig. 7)
 - 4.2.1. The soil immediately below the topsoil/ploughsoil layer (1) consisted of a fine brown sandy loam (2) which, with depth, became lighter in colour, which overlay soils that varied from coarse grey horizontally banded gravels (11, 14) to silty sands and sands (3-10) extending below the base of the trench. The only feature of archaeological significance were four shallow striations (13) of maximum length 0.32m which cut the silty sand (9) at the base of the trench to a depth of 0.03m. These were interpreted as possible plough-marks. The finds recovered came solely from layers 1 and 2 and included a sherd of trailed slipware, a sherd of mottled ware, two sherds of Buckley coarseware and four clay pipe stems, all of likely 18th-century date, together with sherds of developed white wares and brick of probable 19th-century date.
- 4.3. Trench B (fig. 8)
 - 4.3.1. The topsoil/ploughsoil layer (18) overlay a brown sandy loam, with a maximum depth of 0.66m, and this became lighter in colour with depth. In the northern half of the trench, it reached the base of the

trench in places, but generally it could be seen to overlie a loose grey gravel (21) or a reddish-brown sandy silt. At the bottom of the trench a rectangular shaped pit, 1.70m long and 0.87m wide, was exposed (22) and half of this was excavated to its full depth of 0.50m below the base of the trench. The fill (23) was a brown, fairly compact sandy loam which yielded coal, cinder, brick fragments, animal bone and other finds including a fragment of stone roofing tile, sherds of mottled ware and developed white wares, bottle glass and a fragment of a lead came, indicating an 18th or 19th-century date. A quantity of partly articulated animal bone was exposed at the base of the pit. Other finds recovered from this trench were also of modern or late post-medieval date.

4.4 Trench C (fig. 9).

- 4.4.1 The topsoil/ploughsoil layer (15) was, as in Trenches A and B, a dark brown sandy loam and similarly overlay a friable, brown sandy loam (16) which became lighter in colour with depth and extended for a further 0.25m below the base of the trench at its extreme eastern end. Elsewhere, however, it overlay a loose, buff-yellow coloured sand. No archaeological features were recorded in the trench and the few finds which were recovered were confined to the interface of Contexts 15 and 16 and were of post-medieval date, including a clay pipe bowl stamped with initials which may be HI.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The three evaluation trenches excavated revealed two areas of activity. In Trench A, possible plough marks (13) were seen engraved in loose silty sand (9) at the base of the trench which, at this point, was at a depth of 1.16m below the ground surface. This was well below the limits of modern ploughing as confirmed by Mr Done of Dawson Farm, Worthenbury, the owner of the field. Consequently, they must have been made at a time when the soil surface was significantly lower, though there is no means of gauging how early in time this agricultural activity occurred.
- 5.2 In Trench B, an animal burial, possibly a calf or a similar sized animal, was found. Finds recovered from the fill above this were relatively recent in date. Mr Done was able to confirm, however, that he had no recollection of the event taking place during the last 50 years.
- 5.3 At the extreme eastern end of Trench C, soil layer 16 dipped below the base of the trench but this could not be investigated further because of the limits of the excavation. It is possible, therefore, that an archaeological feature may exist to the east of the trench.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The authors would like to thank the following for their assistance during the assessment: Richard Hankinson, CPAT, for assistance with the desk-based study; Les Bognar, for assistance with the excavation; Jenny Mitcham, Sites and Monuments Records Officer, CPAT; Mr Done of Dawson Farm, Worthenbury; Mr B. Huxley, Worthenbury PCC; Mr P. Latham for providing the machine; and the staff of the National Library of Wales, the National Monuments Record and Flintshire Record Office.

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Silvester, R J, Walters, M, & Wayne, D 1992. *Wrexham Maelor historic settlements*. CPAT Report 42.

Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983, Sheet 2. Harpenden.

7.2 Documentary Sources

Repositories indicated as follows: Flintshire Records Office, Hawarden (CROH); National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth (NLW); National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth (NMR).

Order for the severance and division of the chapelry of Worthenbury from the parish of Bangor and its constitution as a separate parish, 25 January 1658. CROH D/BC/3376.

Printed account of separation of the Chapel of Worthenbury from the Rectory and mother church of Bangor, n.d. post 1683. NLW Elwes No. 1317.

Survey of lands in Worthenbury, Halghton, Pickhill and Bangor by Mr Taylor, 1739. CROH D/CL/49

Sentence of consecration of the new church and extension of the church yard at Worthenbury, co. Flint, 15 April 1739. CROH D/BC/3385.

19th century book of reference to maps (not present) of estates in Worthenbury, Halghton and Bangor. CROH D/CL/49.

1915 book of reference to Bryn-y-Pys estate with reference to 1912 OS 25"

7.3 Cartographic Sources

1764 map of estates in Worthenbury and Bangor belonging to Thomas Pulestone. NLW SAAN 37887.

1811 plan of the estate of William Poyser in the parish of Worthenbury. CROH D/BC/2176.

1820 plan of Wern tenement in Worthenbury, the property of Mr TW Puleston. CROH D/BC/2177.

1833 map of Broughton Hall estate. NLW SAAN 37640.

1837/8 Tithe Survey of Worthenbury Parish

1847 plan of Broughton Hall estate in Worthenbury, Bangor and Shocklach belonging to John Whitehall Dod esq. CROH D/BC/2178.

19th-century map of Clai farm in the several parishes of Overton, Bangor and Worthenbury belonging to Sir Edward Pryce Lloyd Bart. CROH NT/M/25.

APPENDIX 1

LAND ADJACENT TO WORTHENBURY CHURCH, WORTHENBURY, WREXHAM SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed development (Planning application CB2830) involves an extension to the existing graveyard on land immediately to the south of Worthenbury Church (SJ 41854620).
- 1.2 This area is bounded to the north by the existing graveyard, to the south and west by pasture fields and to the east by housing development. The area is currently under permanent pasture. The area lies within the historic core of Worthenbury as defined by the Wrexham Historic Settlements Survey. Worthenbury is of Anglo Saxon origin and it is possible that the settlement may have been a defended enclosure at that time.
- 1.3 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust have determined that a field evaluation is necessary to assess the implications of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. Accordingly a brief has been prepared by Wrexham Archaeology Service which describes the scheme of archaeological works required.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of a combination of desk-based assessment and evaluation trenches, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to record any archaeology revealed in the evaluation trenches;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the field evaluation and incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for a reasonable planning decision to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the area affected by the proposed development;
 - 2.1.4 to identify and recommendations options for the management of the archaeological resource, including any further provision for that resource where it is considered necessary.

3 Methods

- 3.1 Stage one of the evaluation will involve the examination of all the readily available primary and secondary records relating to this part of the town, including documentary, cartographic and photographic sources. Archives and repositories will include: County Sites and Monuments Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, Welshpool; National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth; County Record Office, Hawarden.
- 3.2 Stage two will take the form of three trenches, each 10m long by 1.5m wide. Where required these will be taken to a maximum depth of 1.2m below the existing ground surface. Consultation with the client and the curator will be necessary before this depth is exceeded.
- 3.3 The evaluation will be undertaken using standard evaluation procedures:
 - 3.3.1 removal of modern overburden by machine;

- 3.3.2 evaluation of the archaeological deposits by hand trowelling to establish their importance and integrity, but avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of the deposits. All features encountered will be examined as fully as appropriate to fulfil the requirements of the evaluation and within the constraints imposed by time and safety considerations.
- 3.3.3 all archaeological contexts recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT. All significant contexts to be planned and/or drawn in section at appropriate scales (as defined in the Curatorial Brief), and photographed in monochrome and colour 35mm format. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps.
- 3.3.4 all archaeological artefacts and environmental samples will be related to their contexts and processed in a manner appropriate to the material involved. Those requiring conservation or other specialist treatment will be stored in a stable environment until such times as they can be examined by a specialist. Should deposits be encountered which may contain significant environmental or technological evidence, appropriate sampling will be undertaken following advice from a recognised specialist if required. The processing of and reporting on such samples cannot be estimated in advance and will be a matter for discussion between CPAT, the client and the curator should the matter arise. All finds, except those deemed to be Treasure Trove, are the property of the landowner. It is anticipated that they will be donated to the appropriate local or regional museum, subject to agreement being reached with the landowner and the museum curator.
- 3.4 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles laid out in the Curatorial Brief. This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location; Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Excavation; Conclusions and Recommendations; References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of two skilled archaeologists. Overall supervision will be by Mr R.J.Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the desk-based assessment will be completed within 3 days and evaluation will take no more than 5 days in all. The subsequent report would be prepared immediately thereafter, dependent on the client's instructions and the arrangement of a suitable timetable. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client, and will be dependent on the state of the site and negotiated access. CPAT would require at least one week's written notice, although commencement of the excavation may depend prior location of services. The archaeological curator will be informed of the detailed timetable and staffing levels when agreement has been reached with the client.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

N.W.Jones
28th July 1999

APPENDIX 2**SITE ARCHIVE****Site records**

22 Context record forms

1 A1 site plans

1 Black and white negative films

1 Colour slide films

1 Colour print films

Photographic catalogue

Finds**Trench A****context 1**

4 clay pipe stem fragments

1 sherd of bottle glass

4 transfer printed developed whiteware sherds

1 sherd of mottled ware

1 sherd of Buckley coarseware

1 brick fragment

context 2

2 fragments of brick

1 fragment of glazed tile

1 sherd of trailed slipware

1 sherd of Buckley coarseware

Trench B**context 23**

1 fragment of stone roofing tile

2 sherds of bottle glass

1 sherd of developed white ware

1 sherd of mottled ware

1 fragment of brick

5 animal teeth

1 lead came fragment

Trench C**context 16**

1 clay pipe bowl, stamped ? HI

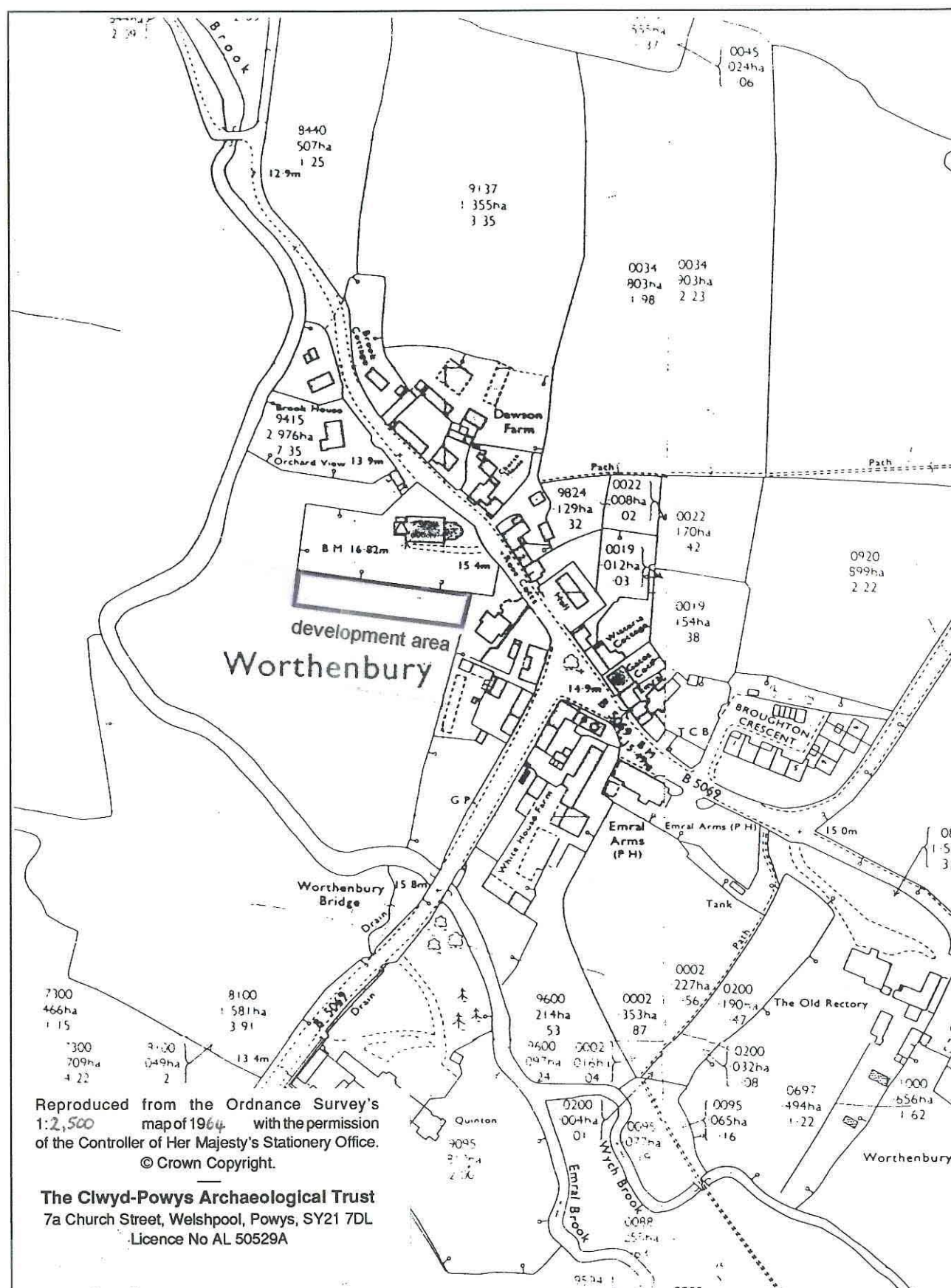


Fig. 1 Site location. Scale 1:2,500

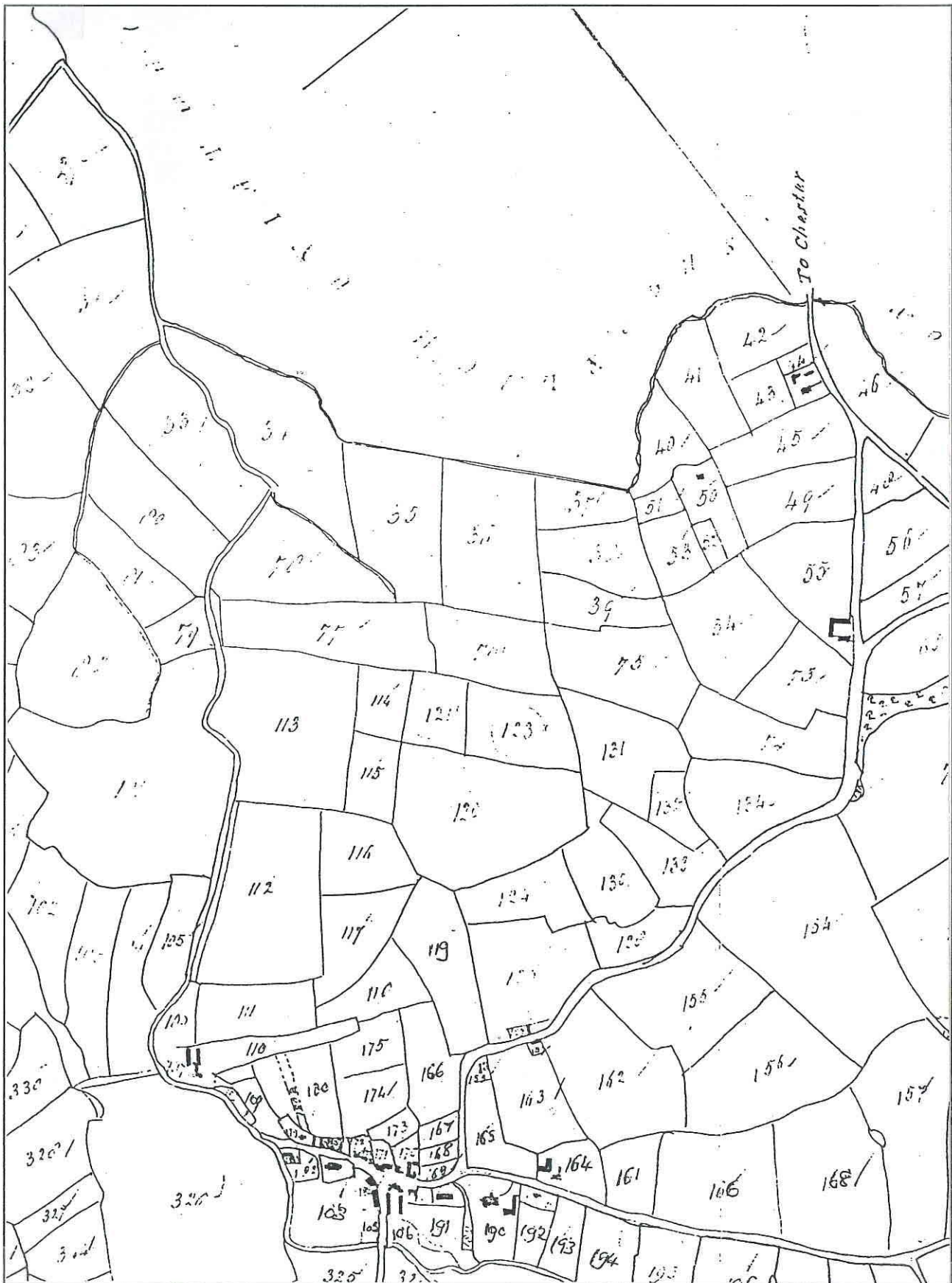


Fig. 2 Tithe Survey of 1838

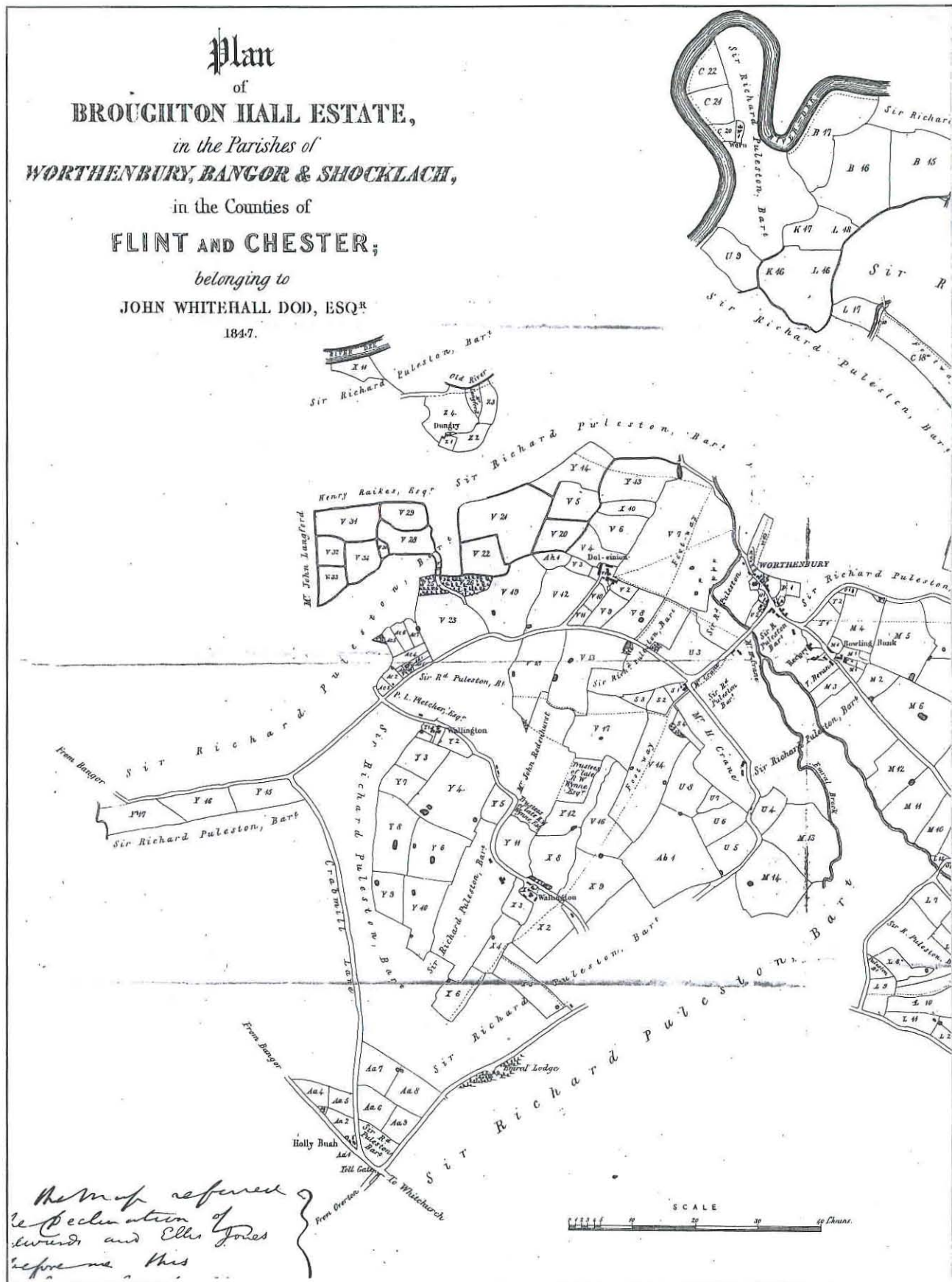


Fig. 3 Plan of Broughton Hall Estate, 1847. CROH D/BC/2178.

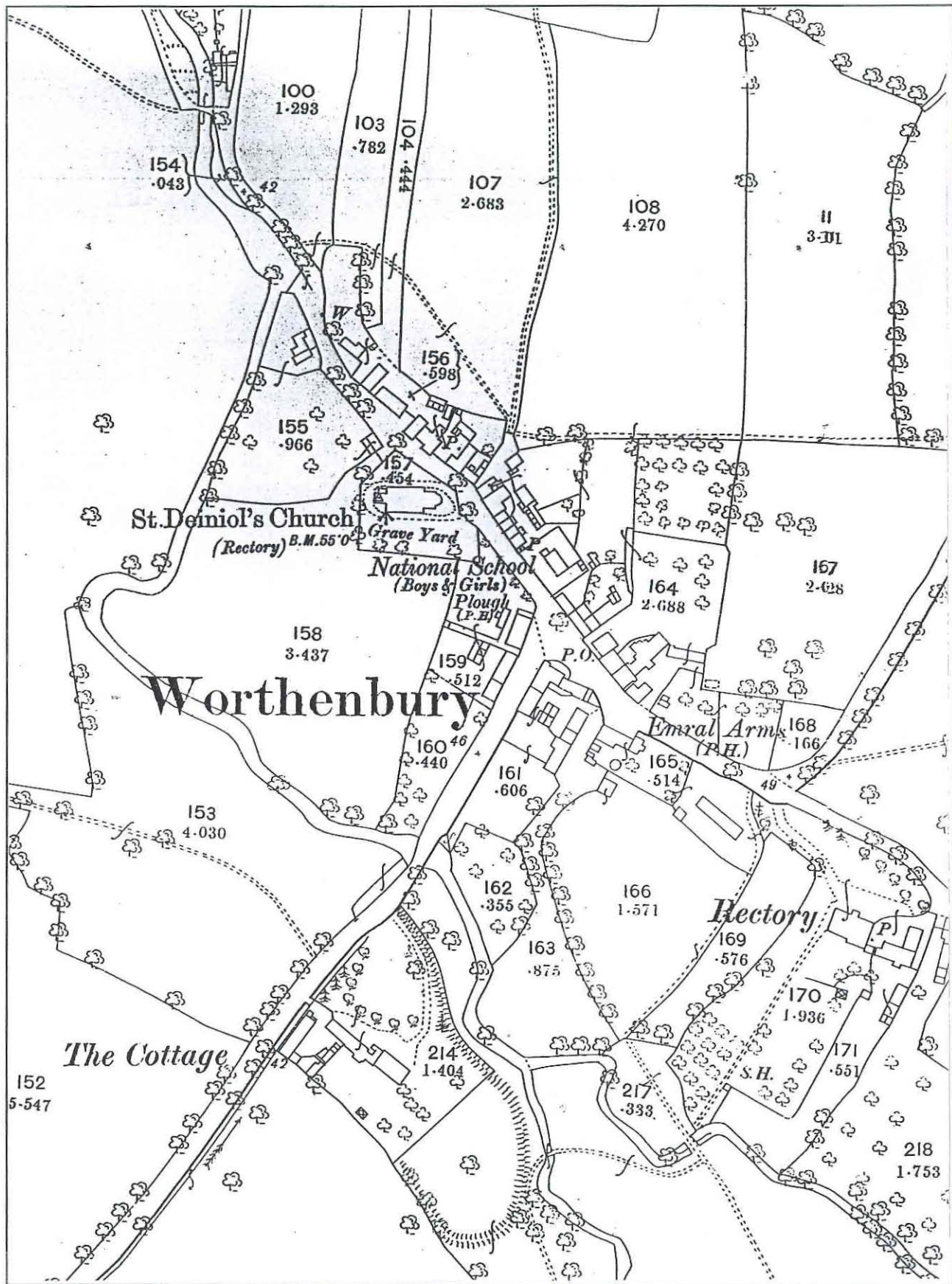


Fig. 4 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" Flintshire 22.3 1874

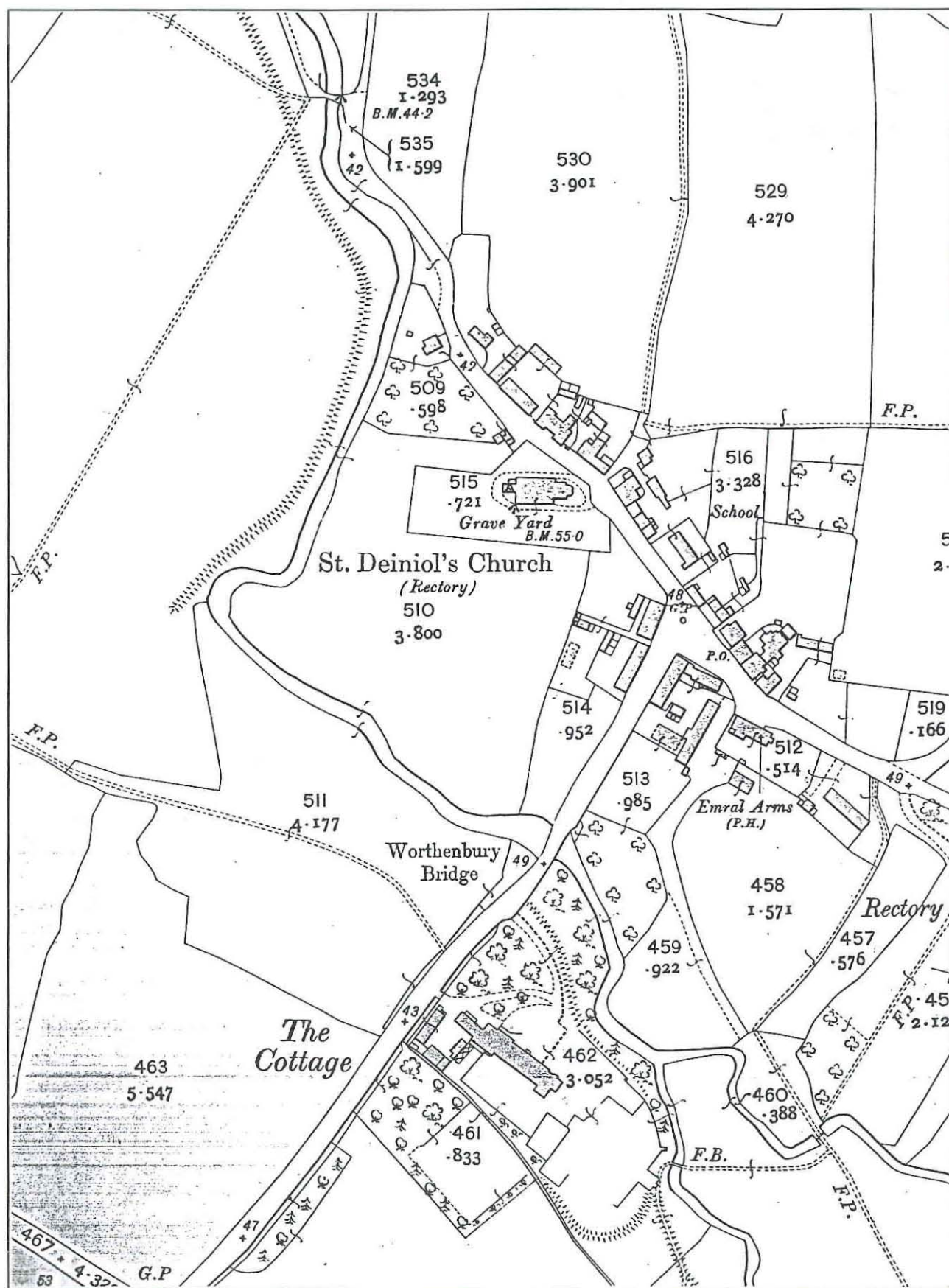


Fig. 5 Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25" Flintshire 22.3 1912

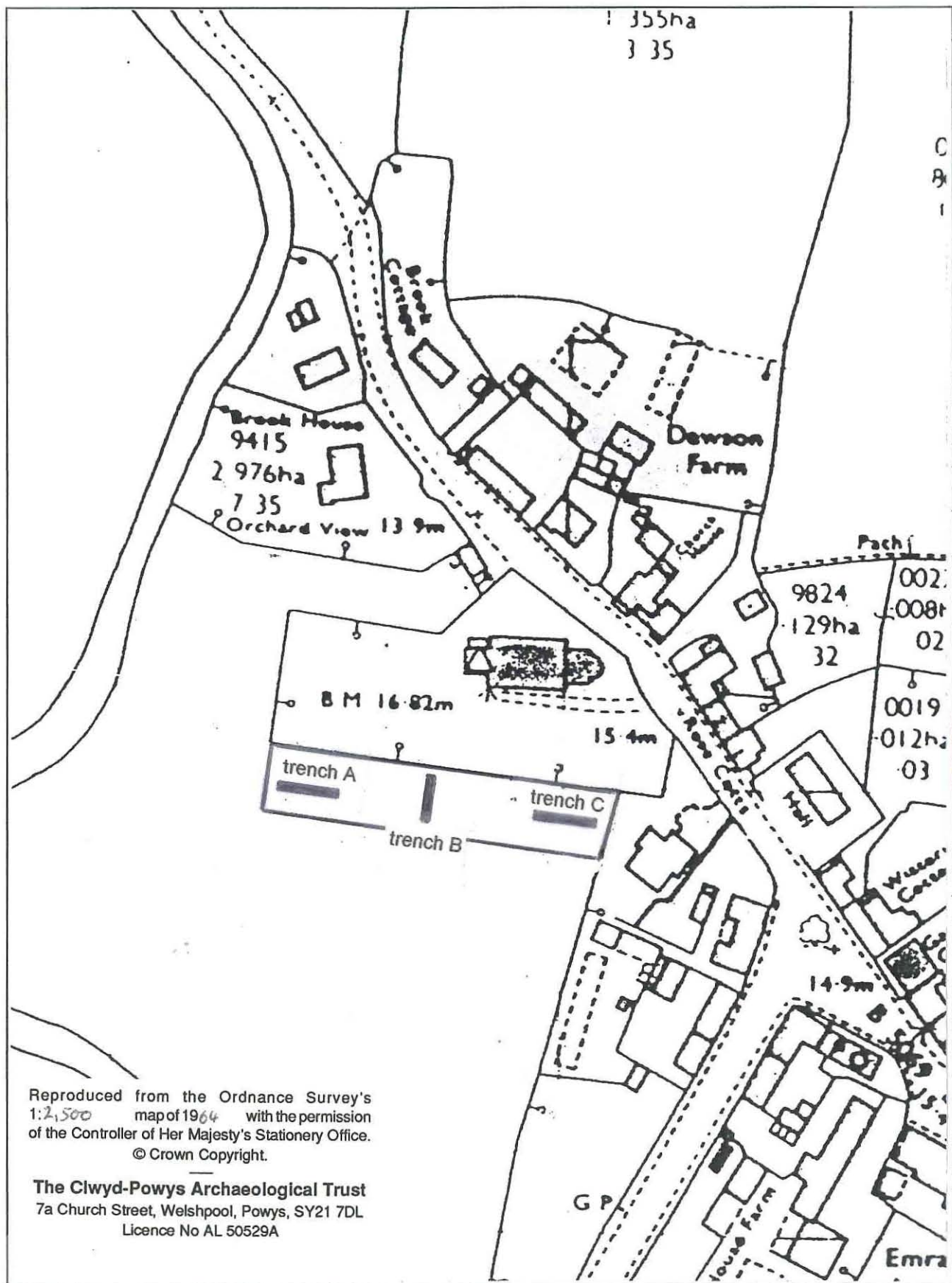


Fig. 6 Location of trenches, scale 1:1,250

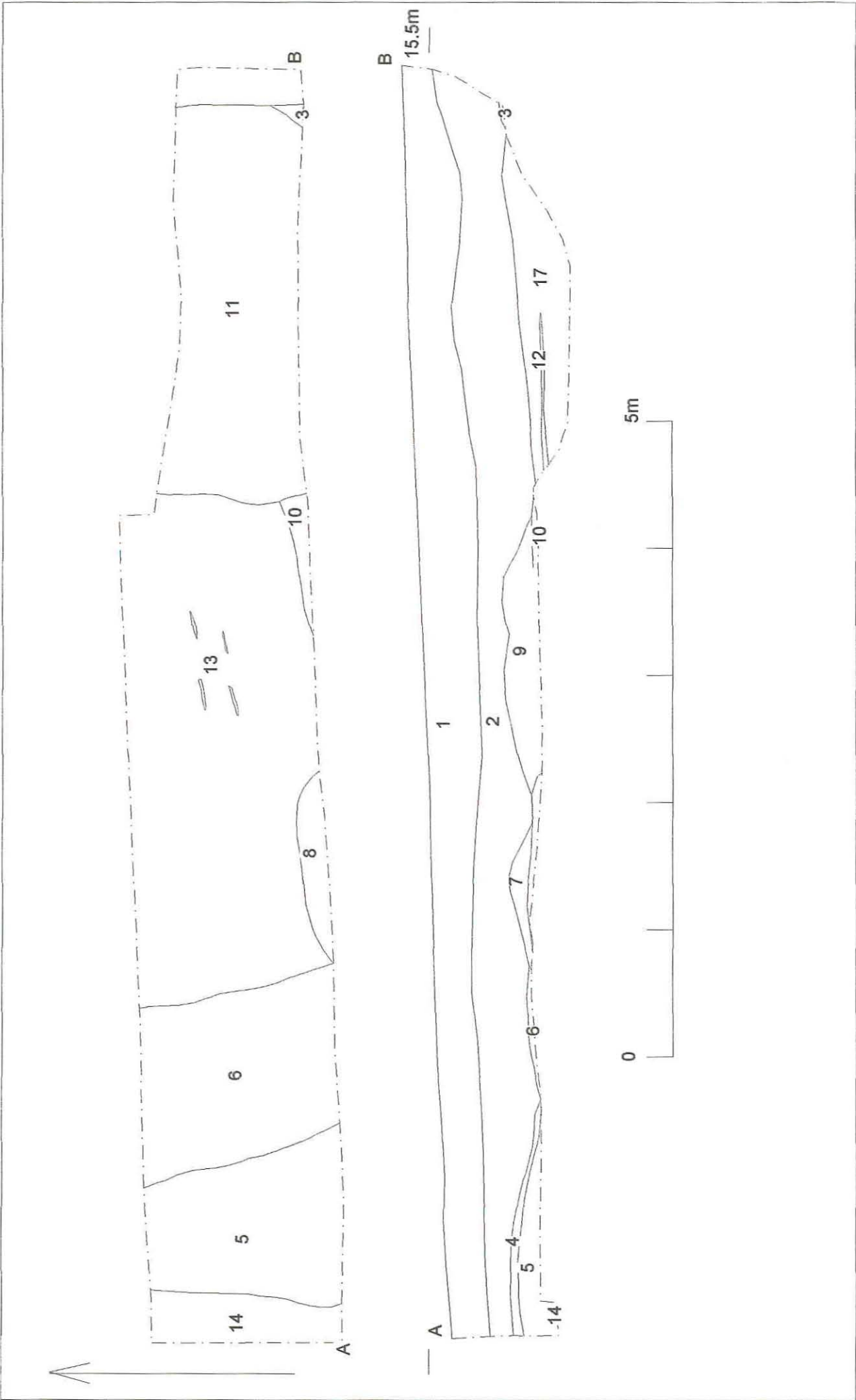


Fig. 7 Plan and Section of Trench A

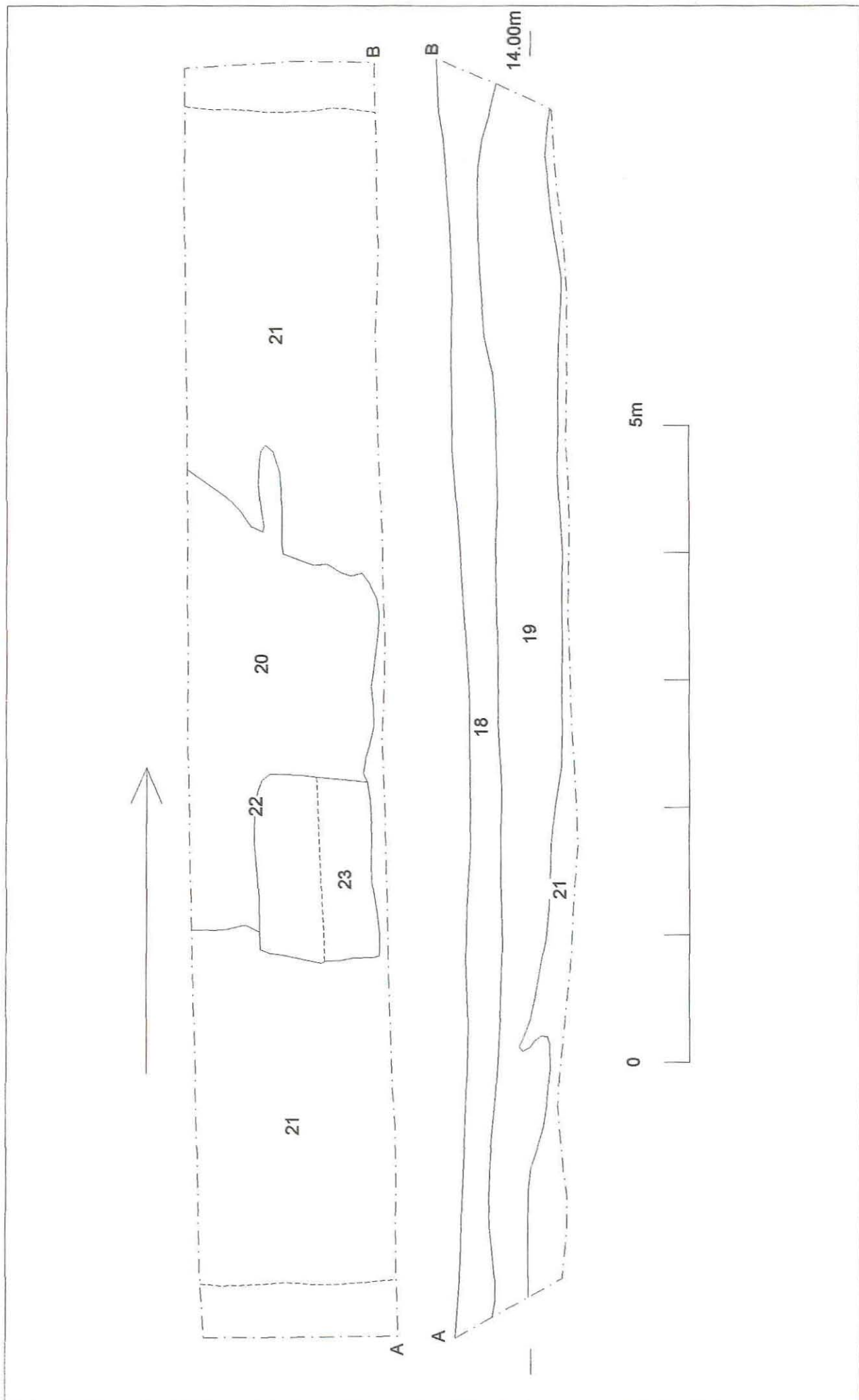


Fig. 8 Plan and Section of Trench B

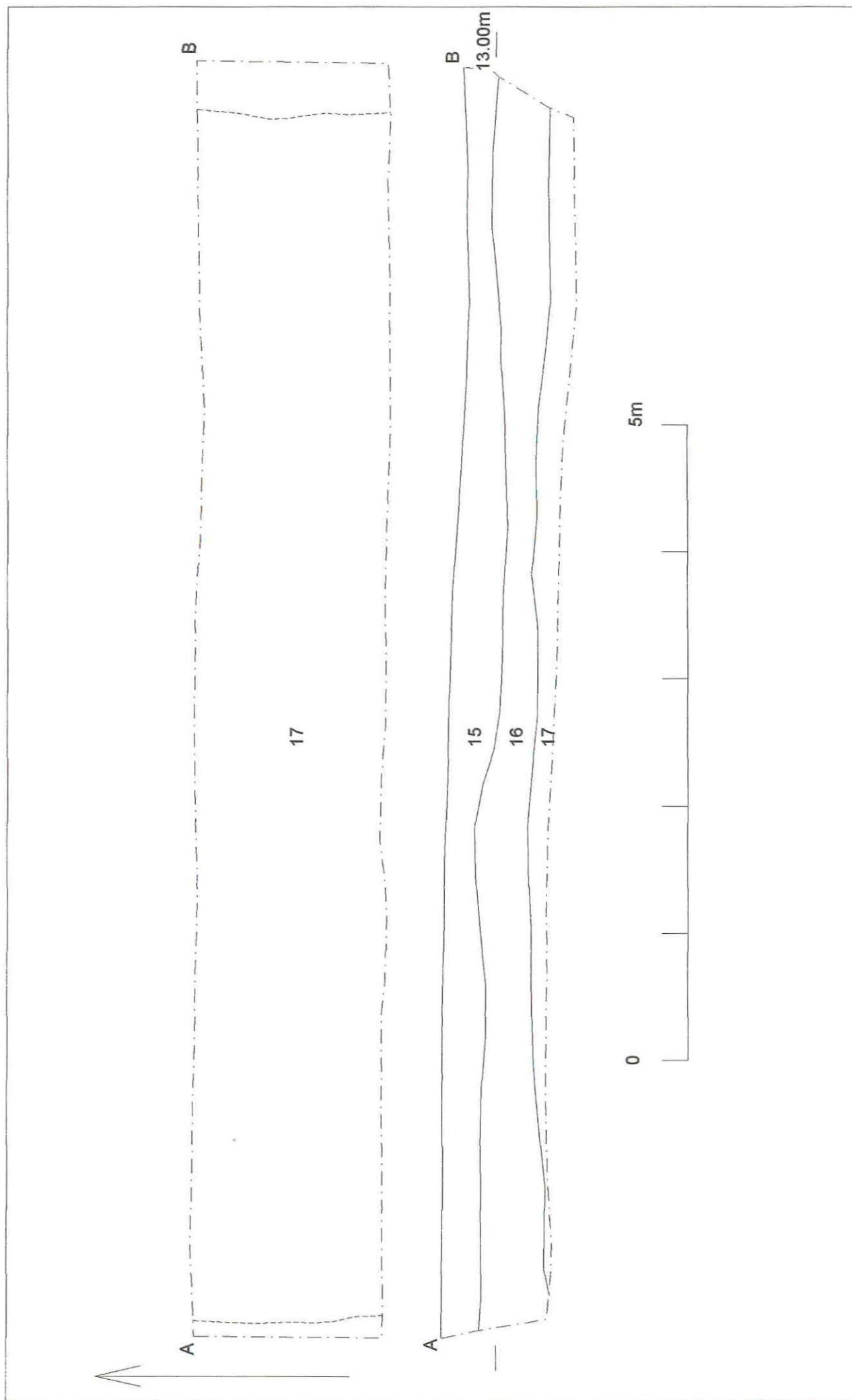


Fig. 9 Plan and Section of Trench C