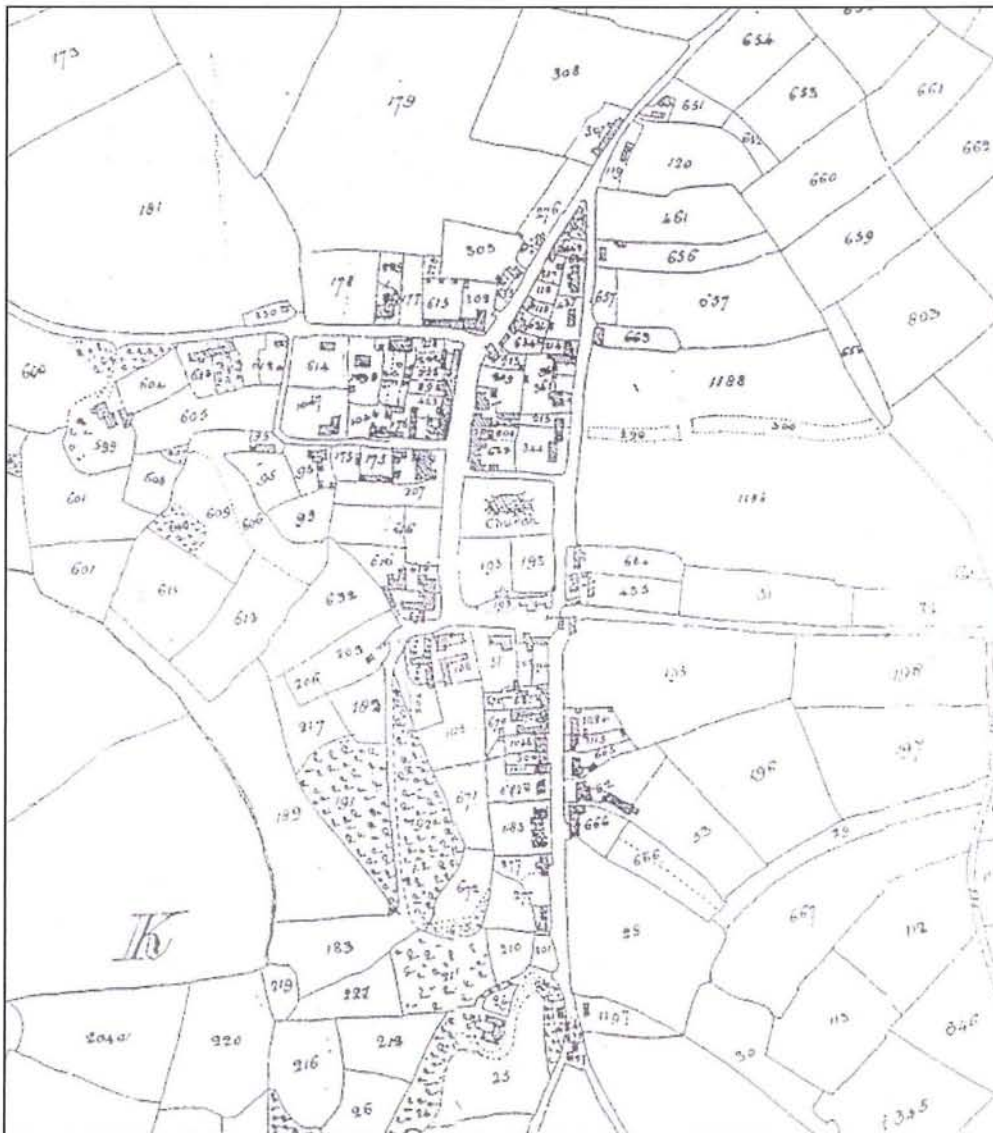


# Willow Street, Overton

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



# Willow Street, Overton

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

**F Grant**  
September 2006

Report for Mr G. Elliot Williams


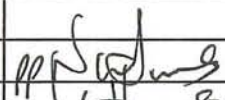
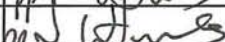
**The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust**  
7a Church Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DL  
tel (01938) 553670, fax (01938) 552179  
© CPAT 2006

## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

CPAT Report Title	Willow Street, Overton: Archaeological Evaluation		
CPAT Project Name	Willow Street, Overton		
CPAT Project No	1398	CPAT Report No	814
Confidential (yes/no)	Yes	draft/final	Final

### Internal control

	Name	signature	date
prepared by	F. Grant		01/09/06
checked by	R. J. Silvester		
approved by	R. J. Silvester		

### Revisions

no	date	made by	checked by	approved by

### Internal memo


## The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL

tel (01938) 553670, fax 552179

© CPAT

## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	LOCATION AND GEOLOGY	2
3	DESK-BASED STUDY	2
4	EVALUATION	5
5	FINDS	8
6	CONCLUSIONS	9
7	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
8	REFERENCES	9

### APPENDIX 1 SITE ARCHIVE

### FIGURES

Fig. 1	Location of site
Fig. 2	Tithe survey 1838
Fig. 3	Ordnance Survey 1 <sup>st</sup> edition 1:2,500 sheet 22.13
Fig. 4	Trench location plan
Fig. 5	Trench 1 plan and section
Fig. 6	Trench 2 plan and section
Fig. 7	Trench 3 plan and section

### PLATES

Plate 1	Trench 1 before excavation, from the south-west
Plate 2	Trench 2 before excavation, from the north-east
Plate 3	Trench 3 before excavation, from the east
Plate 4	Trench 1 east facing section of ditch/gully 42
Plate 5	Trench 1 west facing section of pit 45 and posthole 39
Plate 6	Trench 1 post-excavation from the south-west
Plate 7	Trench 2 south-west facing section of pit 59
Plate 8	Trench 3 south-west facing section ditch 29
Plate 9	Brick-lined well (structure 76)
Plate 10	The coach-house from the south
Plate 11	Gates to site from north



## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April 2006 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Mr G Elliot Williams to prepare a specification and quotation for undertaking an archaeological evaluation on a site at Willow Street, Overton, in connection with proposals to redevelop the site for residential use. The evaluation was the subject of a brief drawn up by Ms K Kucharski of Wrexham Archaeology Service, acting in her capacity as archaeological curator for Wrexham and archaeological advisor to the local authority.
- 1.2 The first phase of the evaluation consisted of a desk-based study which was completed in August 2006 and this was immediately followed by a programme of strategic trial excavations. The results of both phases of the evaluation form the subject of this report.

## 2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The town of Overton is sited six miles to the south-east of Wrexham, on an escarpment overlooking a loop in the valley of the Dee to the west. The area of the assessment lies towards the north-western side of the town, on the north side of Willow Street (Fig. 00).
- 2.2 Geologically, Overton lies on the boundary of Undivided Triassic conglomerates to the east and sandstones belonging to the Permian period to the west. Westphalian 'Coal Measures' Red Beds become dominant slightly further to the west (1994 British Geological Survey map). The drift geology consists of fluvio-glacial sands and gravels, whilst the soils of the area generally consist of brown earth soils belonging to the Wick 1 Association, and brown alluvial soils of the Teme Association (1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map).

## 3 DESK-BASED STUDY

- 3.1 The desk-based study involved the examination of all the readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, pictorial, and photographic sources for the immediate area. Repositories consulted included the following: the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER), held by CPAT at Welshpool; the National Monuments Record, maintained by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) in Aberystwyth; and the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

### **The Prehistoric and Roman period**

- 3.2 Very little prehistoric or Roman material has been identified in the vicinity of Overton. Approximately 1.5km to the north of the village are the earthworks of a small promontory hillfort of late prehistoric date in Gwernheylod Wood on the south bank of the river.

### **Early medieval period**

- 3.3 Although no structural or archaeological evidence has been identified from this period, the place-name, which means "a farmstead on a river bank", suggests a settlement that acquired this name from Mercian colonisation during or after the 8<sup>th</sup> century, in common with many other *tun* place-names in Maelor Saesneg (Pratt 1977; Britnell 2003, 33). Subsequently, Overton was included in the Domesday survey as a manor, formerly in the holdings of a Saxon lord but granted by William the Conqueror to Robert Fitz-Hugh (A Topographical Dictionary of Wales 1849), but it was not mentioned by name until 1201 when *Overtone* appears in the records (Mills 2003, 358).



### Medieval period

- 3.4 A castle at Overton, founded it is claimed about c.1138, was held by the prince of Powys, Madoc ap Maredudd, but the probable site of this on the banks of the River Dee in the Asney area, some two kilometres from the town, has since been eroded away, though Leland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century saw a small portion of the castle defences surviving (Smith 1964, iii, 67; Soulsby 1983, 211). It is in the later 13<sup>th</sup> century that the origins of the layout of the current town may be found, although Pratt (1978) suggested that an earlier *maerdref* might exist beneath the current settlement, an important manorial centre forming part of the estate of Gruffudd Maelor, the Welsh ruler of northern Powys in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. By 1279, when a market charter was awarded by Edward I, the manor was held by Robert de Crevequer. Towards the close of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Overton became a royal estate held by Edward's wife, Queen Eleanor, who commissioned the construction of windows for the church of St Mary. In 1292 the town was awarded a borough charter by Edward and the distribution of burgages took place the following year, supervised by Reginald de Grey who had previously been responsible for over-seeing the founding of Ruthin. During a Welsh revolt in 1294 substantial damage to Overton was inflicted, resulting in repair and rebuilding. In 1403 the town was largely destroyed during the Glyndwr rebellion, and this led to a dramatic reduction in population from the town seems to have been abandoned by its English inhabitants; by the second quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century is said to have held only twenty houses (Smith 1964, iii, 67). The present church of St Mary is a rebuild of the earlier structure, and dates predominantly to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.5 References to grants awarded during the early 14<sup>th</sup> century in Overton refer to Walle Street/Welle Strete (1316) and Le Wallistrete (1326) (Elwes Coll 2 & 8). A grant of land on Wall Street is also noted in 1553 (Done & Williams 1992, 3). It is possible that these names are early forms of Willow Street, although Done & Williams (1992, 29) suggest Willow Street may have formerly been known as Plough Lane. It is curious, however, that despite the street name evidence no town wall has been evidenced at Overton even though a murage grant was awarded in 1300 (Soulsby 1983), and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary it must be assumed that the construction of town defences never occurred here. These references also appear to indicate that Overton was thriving in the earlier part of the 14<sup>th</sup> century with one grant referring to half a burgage plot, implying that land available within the town was much sought after.

### Post-medieval and modern

- 3.7 Several large halls were until recently situated within the town of Overton and its environs, and the houses and their estates provided employment for the residents of the town. Bryn y Pys Hall, the home of the Price and Peel families, originally dated from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although the drive, lodge and ornamental gates onto Wrexham Road were added in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. Overton Hall on the south side of Willow Street was demolished to provide a development site for housing in the 1970s, and Malim (2003, 13) suggests that this site may represent a continuation of a long-standing manorial holding, directly opposite the church. Despite the reduction in population in the early post-medieval period Overton retained a market, held in the wide High Street, right through until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the buildings in Overton today date from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and later. These include the cottages to the north of the Post Office which display a moulded, dated keystone of 1741 (Clwyd County Council Planning Department 1975), and Ivanhoe cottage on Willow Street.

### Cartographic Evidence

- 3.9 The Tithe survey of 1838 (Fig. 2) shows properties clustering around High Street and the area to the north of the church, and along Salop Road to the south. The eastern extent of Willow Street is shown with properties on the north and south of the road, with the proposed development site shown as a barn yard and stack yard in the occupancy of a Jones Thomas. The form of the medieval burgage plots in the town, including those extending westwards from the High Street and south from Wrexham Road, is clear.

- 3.10 The Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition map of 1873 (Fig. 3) shows several buildings and property divisions on the site, including a range of buildings extending northwards from Willow Street and a block fronting the street to the west. The brick-built coach house building currently standing in the north-west of the site is shown. The entrance to Overton Hall on the south side of Willow Street is shown directly opposing that to the proposed development site. By the time of the 1899 2<sup>nd</sup> edition survey the building ranges have been reduced in size and the boundaries within the yard removed. Outhouses or privies are shown to the north and east of the coach house.
- 3.11 By 1912 the current coach house and the building to the south-east are shown as open-fronted. Further small square blocks shown to the east of the current coach house presumably represent privies. By 1963 the open-fronted building to the east of the site has been demolished, although that to the west is still shown, and now also appears open-fronted (facing east).

#### **Previous Excavations**

- 3.12 Relatively little archaeological work has been undertaken in Overton in the recent past. A watching brief on Dark Lane in the early 1990s revealed three pits containing late medieval and early post-medieval pottery, as well as fragments of roughly dressed, red sandstone blocks (Walters 1993). Further excavations in an area immediately south of the church failed to identify any early features, aside from three sherds of Medieval and one sherd of early post-Medieval pottery from unstratified contexts (Malim 2003).



## 4 EVALUATION

4.1 The evaluation in August 2006 consisted of three trenches (Fig. 4) of approximately 10m in length, the locations of which were determined following discussions with the Curator. Although it was desirable to evaluate each of the proposed building plots, the discovery of a well in the south-eastern area of the site prevented this area from being assessed by trench excavation. Accordingly, the third trench was placed within the central area of the site in order to assess the nature of the stratigraphy in this area and the potential preservation of medieval features relating to the rear of the burgage plots that ran off from the High Street. The locations of the trenches were precisely recorded by means of total station surveying. Numbers in brackets in the following text refer to individual context records in the site archive.

4.2 In each of the trenches the modern overburden was removed by machine under close archaeological supervision down to the surface of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. Thereafter all excavation was undertaken by hand. The evaluation was essentially non-destructive and designed to determine the depth at which archaeologically sensitive deposits survived, together with as much as possible about their nature, condition and significance. Contexts were recorded on individual record forms and drawn and photographed as appropriate. All photography undertaken on site was in digital format. A summary of the site archive is provided in Appendix 1.

### **Trench 1 (Fig. 4)**

4.3 Trench 1 measured 10.40m by 1.60m, was aligned north to south, and was located at right-angles to Willow Street, close to the street frontage. Removal of the modern tarmac surface (32) and associated aggregate revealed a sequence of deposits disturbed by later post-medieval activity.

4.4 The underlying natural grey sands and gravels (75) were exposed along the base of the trench. These were overlain by a compressed light brown sand (74) which may represent a former ground surface. Towards the southern end of the trench an oval pit or possibly linear feature (45) was identified aligned east to west across the trench, and continuing beyond the limits of the excavation to the east (Plate 5). The feature appeared to butt-end to the west, measuring 1.60m in width at its eastern extent and 0.50m in depth. The primary fill of this feature (44) comprised a soft, light brown sand. This was overlain by a firm orange brown sand (43) which contained a single small, double walled body sherd of very friable, coarse, orange ceramic with frequent large quartz inclusions. This has tentatively been identified, based on its fabric, inclusions and relative fineness, as prehistoric, perhaps Bronze Age Beaker pottery, but its condition makes any definitive identification difficult.

4.5 Truncating the southern extent of (45) was a circular posthole (39) measuring 0.22m in diameter and 0.21m in depth (Plate 5). The posthole contained a single fill (38), a moderately compact grey, silty sand containing charcoal flecks and a single, cooking-pot rim sherd of medieval unglazed, red/grey-ware of probable 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup>-century date.

4.6 Also truncating the earlier feature (45) was a linear ditch (42) aligned north-east to south-west across the trench, to the north of the posthole (39) (Plate 4). This feature measured 1.10m in width and 0.50m in depth. The sides were generally straight at a 45° or steeper angle, to a relatively level base, which had been cut into the natural coal-rich orange clay. The primary fill (41) comprised a soft, orange-brown sand which was overlain by a yellowish-brown silty sand (40). This upper fill contained several body sherds of unglazed, sandy buff pottery, probably originating from a cooking pot of 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup>-century date.

4.7 The medieval features were sealed by a deposit of mottled orange-brown, silty-sand (73) up to a thickness of 0.30m. No dating evidence was retrieved from this layer but it probably represents a period of early post-medieval accumulation once the earlier features had been abandoned. Layer (73) was in turn sealed by a thinner (up to 0.10m) deposit of firm, mid-grey silty clay (72) dating from the later post-medieval period.



- 4.8 Towards the northern end of the trench a band of firm brown clay (71) was interpreted as a possible clay floor of late post-medieval (19<sup>th</sup>-century) date, and probably related to the remains of a red sandstone wall (37) present in the central area. The stratigraphically equivalent material to the south consisted of a 0.30m thick build-up of gravel and sand (70). The possible clay floor had been truncated by two pits, the upper fills of both of which were sealed by (32). The most northerly (34) consisted of a rectangular pit continuing east and north beyond the limits of the excavation, but which measured at least 2.20m x 1.00m, with near vertical sides. The single fill (33) consisted of a loose, black garden soil with a high proportion of red brick and other building material, glass bottles, animal bone and 19<sup>th</sup>-century ceramic sherds. The second pit (36) may have been dug in order to remove stone from wall (37), and contained two fills. The lower fill (68), was sealed by a later fill (35) of dark garden soil with building materials, glass and 19<sup>th</sup>-century ceramics, similar in composition to fill (33).

### **Trench 2 (Fig. 6)**

- 4.9 Trench 2 measured 10.80m by 1.65m, was aligned north-east to south-west and was located towards the central area of the site. Machine removal of a very dark greyish-black silty-sand topsoil revealed a shallow sequence of deposits and post-medieval disturbance overlying the natural grey sands and gravels (67) at a depth of generally 0.50m below the present ground surface.
- 4.10 Persisting along the length of the trench, except where truncated by later disturbance in the north-east, was a c.50mm-thick layer of mottled pale yellow and pinkish-orange very firm, almost concreted, sand (66), similar to (74) in Trench 1. This in turn was overlain by a 0.15-0.20m thick deposit of orange-brown silty sand (65), which deepened towards the north-east, possibly indicating the presence of a cut feature in this area. Later disturbance however, made interpretation of this relationship unclear. The remnants of an overlying deposit (64), consisting of a dark grey-brown, firm almost plastic, silty clay was identified. This contained frequent flecks of charcoal, and a single sherd of later post-medieval ceramic.
- 4.11 Several late post-medieval events were identified in this trench. At the south-western end of the trench, the remains of two associated red-brick walls (53) lay immediately below the current ground surface. These appeared to have formed a shallow-founded square or rectilinear structure, aligned north to south. A further wall, aligned east to west (55) had been robbed out completely just to the north. A sub-rectangular pit (59) measuring 0.92m x 0.50m with a depth of 0.40m was revealed in the base of the trench (Plate 59). Its single fill (58) comprised a mottled orange-brown silty sand with frequent root disturbance, and sherds of 19<sup>th</sup>-century ceramic. It is probable that this feature represented an animal burial or possibly a garden planting pit. Two rubbish pits (61) and (57) were located towards the centre of the trench. At the north-eastern end of the trench, a large (at least 2.55m x 1.65m) square or rectangular pit (63) was partially revealed, continuing beyond the limits of the excavation to the west. The loose, dark brown silty sand fill (62) containing 19<sup>th</sup>-century ceramic was not completely excavated, but appeared to represent the back-filling of a cellar or similar void. Further rubbish pits (50) and (52) were identified at the north-eastern end of the trench.

### **Trench 3 (Fig. 7)**

- 4.12 Trench 3 measured 11.20m by 1.60m, and was aligned east to west in the northern area of the site. The late post-medieval overburden was removed by machine to reveal a sequence of deposits above the underlying natural sands, gravels and orange silty-clay (21). The earliest of these deposits was a undulating layer of mottled greyish-yellow and orange-pink concreted sand (20), similar to (74) in Trench 1 and (66) in Trench 2. Overlying this was a deposit of bright brownish-orange silt (19) with occasional rounded pebbles and some sand. This material appeared thicker (up to 0.25m) where it had accumulated within hollows in the underlying deposit (20).
- 4.13 At the western end of the trench a linear ditch (29) was revealed, aligned north to south and continuing beyond the limits of excavation (Plate 8). The ditch measured 1.50m wide x 0.70m deep, with generally straight sides angled at 45° to a relatively level base, and contained two fills. The primary



fill (28) comprised a mid orange-grey soft sand, with some areas of concreted pebbles, and three sherds of medieval (13<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> century) pottery. The secondary fill (27) consisted of a mid brownish-grey sandy silt with occasional rounded pebbles and two sherds of similarly dated medieval pottery, including a strap handle from a large jug. The location and alignment of the ditch suggests it probably represents a boundary division to the rear of the medieval burgage plots running off from High Street.

- 4.14 In the central area of the trench a thin layer of brownish, relatively sticky sandy clay (30) appeared to represent the spread from a probable circular pit (31), the majority of which lay outside the trench to the south. Further sherds of medieval pottery were retrieved from this material, but later disturbance had truncated the upper extent and possibly introduced a single sherd of transitional medieval to early post-medieval ceramic (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century).
- 4.15 Sealing the ditch (29) at the western end of the trench was a deposit of firm, mid to dark, greyish-brown silty sand with charcoal inclusions (26), visible in the south-facing section only. A fragment of shaped red sandstone, resembling a tile, with burnt concretions adhering, was impressed into the upper fill of the ditch, and probably derived from this material (26). Stratigraphically equivalent to (26), but extending to the east and sealing pit (31), was a layer of mid orange-brown mottled silty sand (18). This material appeared to thin somewhat towards the east from 0.40m to 0.20m, and although undated presumably represents early post-medieval accumulation once the medieval features had gone out of use, and may therefore be a continuation of deposit (73) in Trench 1.
- 4.16 The foundation trench for the construction of a brick wall (05) cut through deposit (18), and therefore presumably also through deposit (26). This wall ran along the same alignment as ditch (29), and probably reflects a later continuation of the same boundary line. The build-up of two differing deposits prior to construction of the present wall, but post-dating the medieval ditch suggests that an earlier, as yet unidentified, boundary structure predated the brick wall.
- 4.17 A spread of 0.20m-thick, dark greyish-brown, firm sandy silt (17) with frequent coal flecks was identified, extending from the brick wall (05) eastwards. This was overlain at its western extent by an irregular brick surface or floor (02), which may relate to a rectangular, vertically sided pit (08), back-filled with brick rubble and 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>-century ceramic (09), and identified from map and oral record as a 19<sup>th</sup>-century earth-closet pit. The brick floor utilised a range of brick forms, many of which were handmade, suggesting the reuse of earlier material. Of similar date were a dog burial (15), and a 0.20m-diameter iron pipe (13) with associated cut (14), located further to the east.
- 4.18 At the eastern end of the trench, deposit (17) had been truncated by a large, vertically sided pit (12), tentatively identified as a possible cellar. In plan the pit appeared L-shaped, but as it continued beyond the limit of the excavation to the east, north and south its full extent and form could not be determined. The material back-filling the pit (11) was excavated to a depth of 1.06m and consisted of dumps of loose brick rubble, soft pinkish-grey mortar, gravels, ash and soot, and contained sherds of 19<sup>th</sup>-century ceramics. The full depth of the pit was not ascertained. Post-dating the back-filling of this large pit and directly sealed by garden topsoil (01) were two rubbish pits (10) and (04). Two further rubbish pits (23) and (25) located at the western end of the trench contained bottle and ceramic waste dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **Miscellaneous Findings (Plates 9-11)**

- 4.19 A brick-lined, circular well was recognised, sealed by an iron cover, in the south-west corner of the site. The upper diameter was 0.45m but the well widened somewhat from a depth of 1.62m to the base. Access was not possible, but a weighted line provided a depth to the water-line of 4m from the current ground surface, with a further 0.20m of water to a soft, muddy base. The remains of an iron pipe was identified within the well structure. This probably represented the feed to a former pump.
- 4.20 A two storey brick and timber-built coach-house stands in the central eastern area of the site. The south-facing elevation is open on the lower floor with the upper floor supported by iron pillars. It should also be noted that the present entranceway to the site consists of two double gates flanked by



brick-built pillars with ornamental capstones. These gateposts are matched by the curving wall fronting onto Willow Street. It is suggested that this entranceway mirrors that which was formerly sited opposite and which led into Overton Hall. This implies the site was linked to the now demolished hall and may have formed part of its estate, presumably serving as the coach-housing and stables. The remaining coach-house, gateway and wall thus appear to be all that remain to link the site with the former hall opposite.

## 5 FINDS

- 5.1 The earliest ceramic retrieved from the site has been tentatively identified as a fragment of Bronze Age Beaker. The small fragment consisted of a double-walled body sherd of very friable brick-red fabric containing relatively large inclusions of quartz. The condition of the fragment makes identification difficult, and further investigation would be required to confirm the dating of the feature from which the material was retrieved.
- 5.2 The evaluation produced a small collection of medieval pottery, comprising 18 sherds. A variety of forms and fabrics was represented, predominantly red/grey sandy wares of probable Cheshire origin, from both jugs and cooking pots. These types of vessels have been securely dated to the mid to late 13<sup>th</sup> century, but were probably produced from the earlier part of that century and continued in use until the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Body, base and rim sherds were all represented, as well as a single strap handle. Remnant yellowish glaze was visible on a sherd (context 28) and the handle. Whilst included in this total the seven sherds of material from a single vessel retrieved from context (40) were rather fine for a cooking pot, although they appeared soot stained on their outer surface. A base sherd of pink/white ware formed from Coal Measures clay possibly from the Buckley/Ewloe area was retrieved from context (28), and may date from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. A single sherd of highly fired, dark red fabric with a partial glaze of dark brown probably dates to the 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5.3 A quantity of post-medieval material was retrieved from the excavation, predominantly dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This included Buckley-type coarsewares, later slipwares and stonewares, and a variety of whitewares. A representative sample only from each context was retained. Surprisingly little earlier post-medieval material was identified, although some of the slipware may date to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A single 17<sup>th</sup>-century clay tobacco pipe bowl came from Trench 3, although its original context could not be confirmed as it was located within a root channel.
- 5.4 Much 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century glass was found in all the trenches, predominantly from drink, condiment and medical bottles, although a fragment of greenish window glass was discovered in context (49) in Trench 2 and a glass marble from (09) in Trench 3.
- 5.5 Metal items were generally limited to scraps of iron, wire (including barbed), and occasional nails. Two metallic buttons were retrieved from rubbish pits (context 09) in Trench 3 and (context 49) in Trench 2. A small silvered, embossed crotal bell in Trench 3 (context 09) may have been a dress ornament.
- 5.6 Animal bone was not as common as may have been expected, although a small quantity probably representing food waste was retrieved from all trenches. A single large mammal jawbone, probably horse, was found in context (09) in Trench 3. The dog burial in Trench 3 (context 15) was not fully excavated and was left in situ but appeared to comprise an intact, articulated skeleton of a medium-sized, gracile dog with a distinctively long (0.28m) skull, possibly of greyhound or lurcher type.
- 5.7 A quantity of structural and building material included hand-made red bricks of probable 18<sup>th</sup>-century date, later Ruabon-type bricks, occasional roofing slate, red flooring tiles, and 19<sup>th</sup>-century twist-top garden edging tiles. A fragment of marble tile from Trench 3 (context 11) may derive from a fireplace surround.



## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The earliest activity identified on site was that represented by the butt-ended feature (45) in Trench 1, which, based on the tentative identification of prehistoric Beaker pottery from fill (43), may be Bronze Age in origin. The nature and function of this feature could not be fully ascertained within the limits of the evaluation, but it was clear that the medieval features of probable 13<sup>th</sup>-century date within this trench were inserted after feature (45) had gone out of use and had silted up. The feature must therefore relate to activity pre-dating the Edwardian foundation of the town.
- 6.2 Whilst small in quantity the medieval pottery from this excavation was all retrieved from secure contexts from separate trenches, providing significant evidence of medieval occupation and activity in this area. Within Trench 1 structural evidence was provided by a posthole containing a sherd of 13<sup>th</sup>-century pottery within its fill, whilst a ditch aligned on a south-west to north-east axis may represent a drainage feature. It is possible that the ditch is slightly earlier in origin as the only dating evidence it provided was from the uppermost surface of its latest fill, and its alignment is somewhat peculiar in terms of the regular medieval layout of the properties. A probable boundary ditch located to the rear of the burgage plots relating to High Street was identified in Trench 3. This boundary continued in use until the present day, as reflected in the map evidence. Documentary sources identify the distribution of the plots in AD1293, and this is consistent with the ceramic evidence retrieved from the ditch fills. A spread of material located to the east of this boundary probably represents material from a rubbish pit serving the properties on the street frontage.
- 6.3 The archaeological evidence for the majority of post-medieval activity on the site is limited to the recent past, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Very little evidence related to the earlier post-medieval period, but this could reflect the reduction in population and activity noted from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in the historical records. The small extent of cinder-rich deposit at the western end of Trench 3 which appears to seal the medieval ditch may relate to the smithy as noted on later maps, or to a burning event limited to this area, but it is impossible to draw firm conclusions from such slight evidence. No evidence of large-scale burning in the early 15<sup>th</sup>-century, as detailed in the historical sources, was identified elsewhere across the site. Whilst many of the later post-medieval pits can be interpreted as rubbish pits, the larger, vertical-sided and square-edged pits in Trenches 2 and 3 are somewhat enigmatic. It is possible they represent cellars related to the block of buildings shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map which have been demolished by the time of the 1899 survey. A historical source mentions the presence of sawpits at an unknown location on Willow Street, and it is perhaps possible that these pits represent such features (Done & Williams 1992, 37). Alternatively, they may have been dug specifically to dispose of the quantities of building waste as identified in their fills which presumably resulted from the demolition of a property in the area.

## 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 The writers would like to thank the following people for their assistance during the project: Mr E. Williams; Ian Grant, Gary Coupe, Sonja Galloway, Bob Silvester, Nigel Jones and Wendy Owen of CPAT; the staff of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; and the staff of the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

## 8 REFERENCES

### Published sources

Britnell, W J, 2003, *Maelor Saesneg. Historic landscape characterization*. Welshpool: CPAT

Done, B & Williams B, 1992. *Overton in Times Past. A Brief History*. Mold: Clwyd County Council

Mills, A D, 2003, *A Dictionary of British Place Names*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Pratt, D, 1977. *The Rise and Fall of Overton, part 1: Wrexham Advertiser*, December 1977 (NC/348)

Pratt, D, 1978. *The Rise and Fall of Overton, part 2: Wrexham Advertiser*, January 1978 (NC/349)

Smith, L T (ed.) 1964 *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535-1543* 5 vols. London: Centaur Press

Soulsby, I, 1983. *The Towns of Medieval Wales*, Chichester: Phillimore and Co.

Walters, M, 1993. Overton, Dark Lane, *Archaeology in Wales* 37, 75.

URL:<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=47874>, 1849. 'Overton-Oystermouth: A Topographical Dictionary of Wales', pp 271-74.

Clwyd County Council Planning Dept., 1975. *Overton Village Trail*.

### **Unpublished sources**

Malim, T, 2003. *Overton on Dee Medical Centre, Archaeological Evaluation*. Report No. 10834.RO1. Chester: Giffords

### **Cartographic sources**

1838 Tithe Survey and Apportionment

1873 Ordnance Survey 1:500 first edition map, Flintshire sheet XXII.13.

1899 Ordnance Survey 25" 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

1909 Ordnance Survey 25" 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map (Sheet 2 - Wales) and Legend (1:250,000 scale).

1994 British Geological Survey map of Wales (Solid edition at 1:250,000 scale).



## APPENDIX 1

## PROJECT ARCHIVE

## Site archive

76 context record forms

4 A1 site plans

62 Digital images

Photographic catalogue

Context Register

Drawings Register

Levels Register

## FINDS CATALOGUES

## Prehistoric pottery catalogue

Trench	Context	Sherds	Weight (g)	Comment
1	43	1	?	?Bronze Age Beaker body

## Medieval pottery catalogue

Trench	Context	Sherds	Date	Comment
1	39	1	13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup>	Cooking pot rim
1	40	7	13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup>	Cooking pot body sherds
3	18	3	13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup>	2 x body: 1 x base
3	27	2	13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup>	1 x handle: 1x body
3	28	3	13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup>	1 x base: 2 x body

## Post-medieval pottery catalogue

Trench	Context	Sherds	Date	Comment
1	32	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Whiteware urinal, red embossed legend "Jennings Patentee" (1850-1860 patent taken)
1	32	1	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>	Terracotta plant pot inscribed "S Ltd"
1	32	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	?Whiteware, greenglazed, relief moulded
2	49	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Whiteware
2	49	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Industrial slipware
2	49	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Bone china, blue embossed decoration
2	49	1	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	Slipware
2	49	1	1785-19 <sup>th</sup>	Pearlware
2	49	1	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>	Buckley-type brown glaze
2	49	1	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>	Buckley-type coarseware
2	49	1	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	Clay Tobacco Pipe stem
2	58	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Bone china
2	58	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Whiteware
2	58	1	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	Clay Tobacco Pipe stem
2	62	1	1785-19 <sup>th</sup>	Pearlware, blue hand decoration



2	62	1	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	Slipware
2	62	2	19 <sup>th</sup>	Whiteware
2	62	4	19 <sup>th</sup>	Buckley-type, brown glaze coarseware
2	62	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Yellowware
2	62	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Stoneware, relief design
2	62	1	17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup>	Mottled-ware
2	62	3	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	Clay Tobacco Pipe stem (include 1 x mouthpiece)
2	64	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Buckley-type, brown glaze
3	07	7	19 <sup>th</sup>	buff fabric, brown glaze, moulded relief hunting scene, ?Continental origin
3	07	3	19 <sup>th</sup>	Late stoneware
3	07	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Bone china
3	07	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Developed whiteware, brown & yellow glaze
3	07	1		Yellowware
3	09	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Whiteware, blue transfer printed
3	22	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Stoneware inkpot
3	22	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Late Yellowware
3	22	1	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>	Coal Measures Red, black glaze
3	22	1	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup>	Slipware
3	22	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Ironstone, green glaze
3	22	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Whiteware cup, blue mottled decoration
3	22	2	19 <sup>th</sup>	Late stoneware, incl bottle top
3	24	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Buckley-type coarseware
3	24	1		Blackware
3	24	1	19 <sup>th</sup>	Bone china
3	24	1	1740- early 19 <sup>th</sup>	Creamware
3	32	2	17	Slipware
	91	19	83	19 <sup>th</sup> -century
		<b>61</b>	<b>459</b>	

### Miscellaneous finds catalogue

Trench	Context	Quantity	Material	Comment	Date
2	49	1	Glass	Green window glass	Post-Med
2	62	2	Glass	Green, bottle fragment	19 <sup>th</sup>
2	62	2	Glass	Small, clear bottles, 1 embossed "H. SH**RP & SON. LEEDS"	19 <sup>th</sup>
3	09	1	Glass	Marble	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>
3	09	4	Glass	1: brown Bovril jar, 4oz 1: Milk of Magnesia bottle, blue glass 1: Clear dimple-necked bottle, "The Dee Mineral Water Co. Ltd. Chester" 1: clear glass inkwell	pre-1970 1880+ 19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> 19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>
3	24	1	Glass	Stopper, embossed "DADDIES"	1904+
3	24	2	Glass	1: clear bottle "Eiffel Tower Lemonade Foster Clark Ltd Maidstone" 1: clear bottle "Woodward Chemist London"	1891- 1965 19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>
3	22	1	Glass	Clear jar, pineapple-form body	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>
2	49	1	Metal	Silvered, flat, circular button, circular	

				design	
3	09	1	Metal	?Silver, embossed, small croatal bell	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup>
3	09	1	Metal	Copper alloy, plain, flat, circular button	
3	09	1	Bone	Large herbivore jaw ?horse	
3	07	2	Brick	2 handmade bricks	?18 <sup>th</sup>

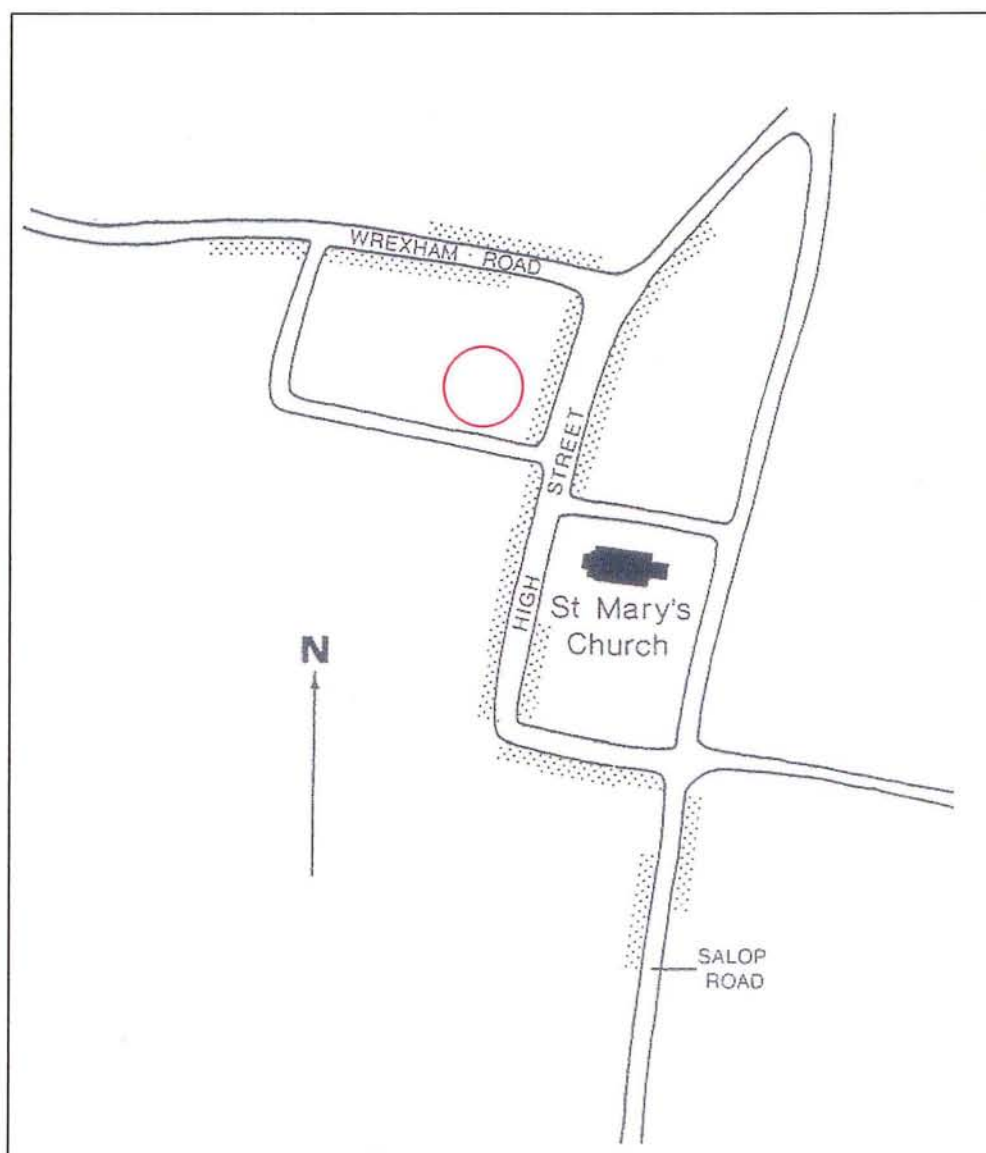


Fig. 1 Location of site  
(from Soulsby 1983, 212)



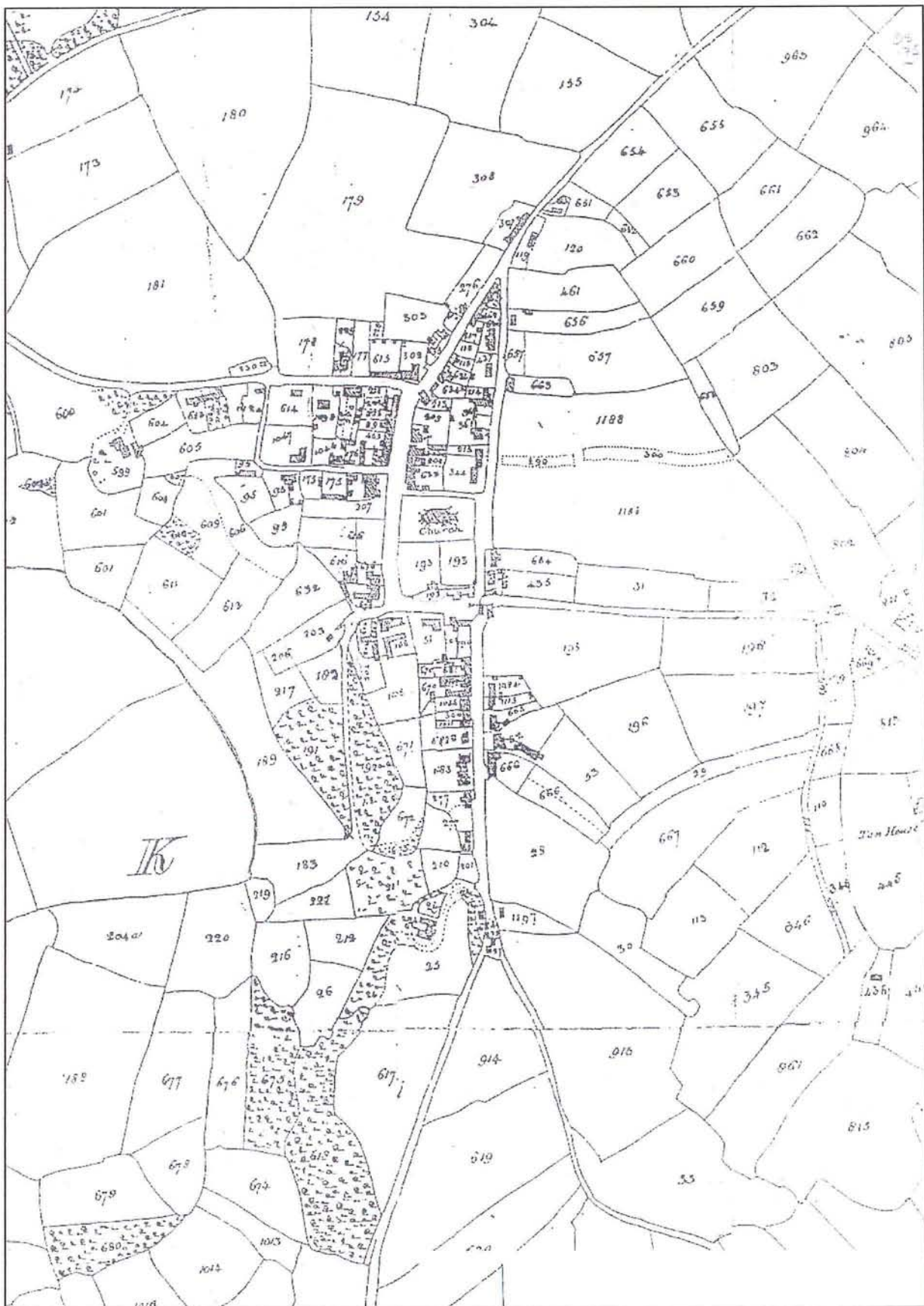


Fig 2 Tithe survey 1838



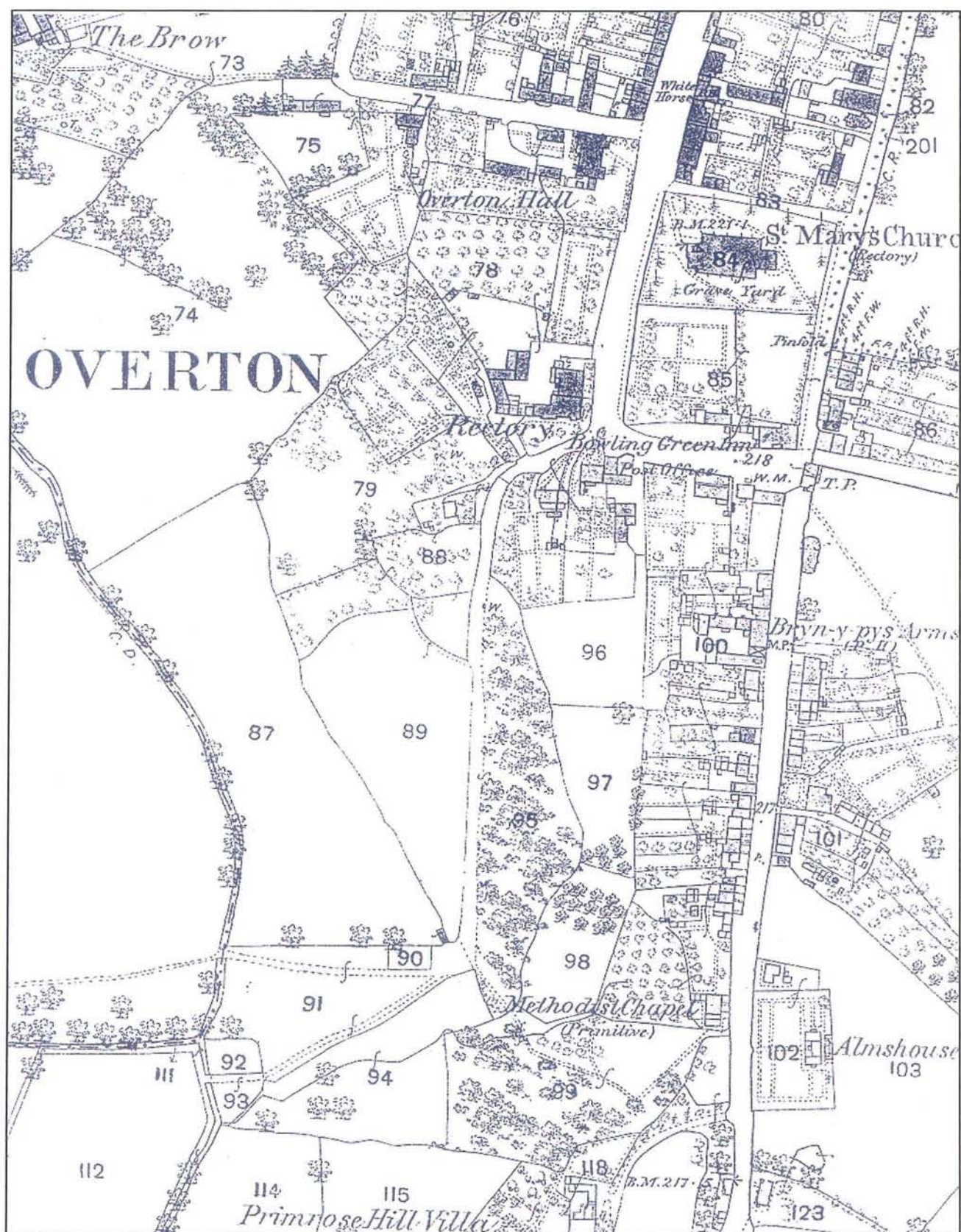


Fig. 3 Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:2,500 sheet 22.13

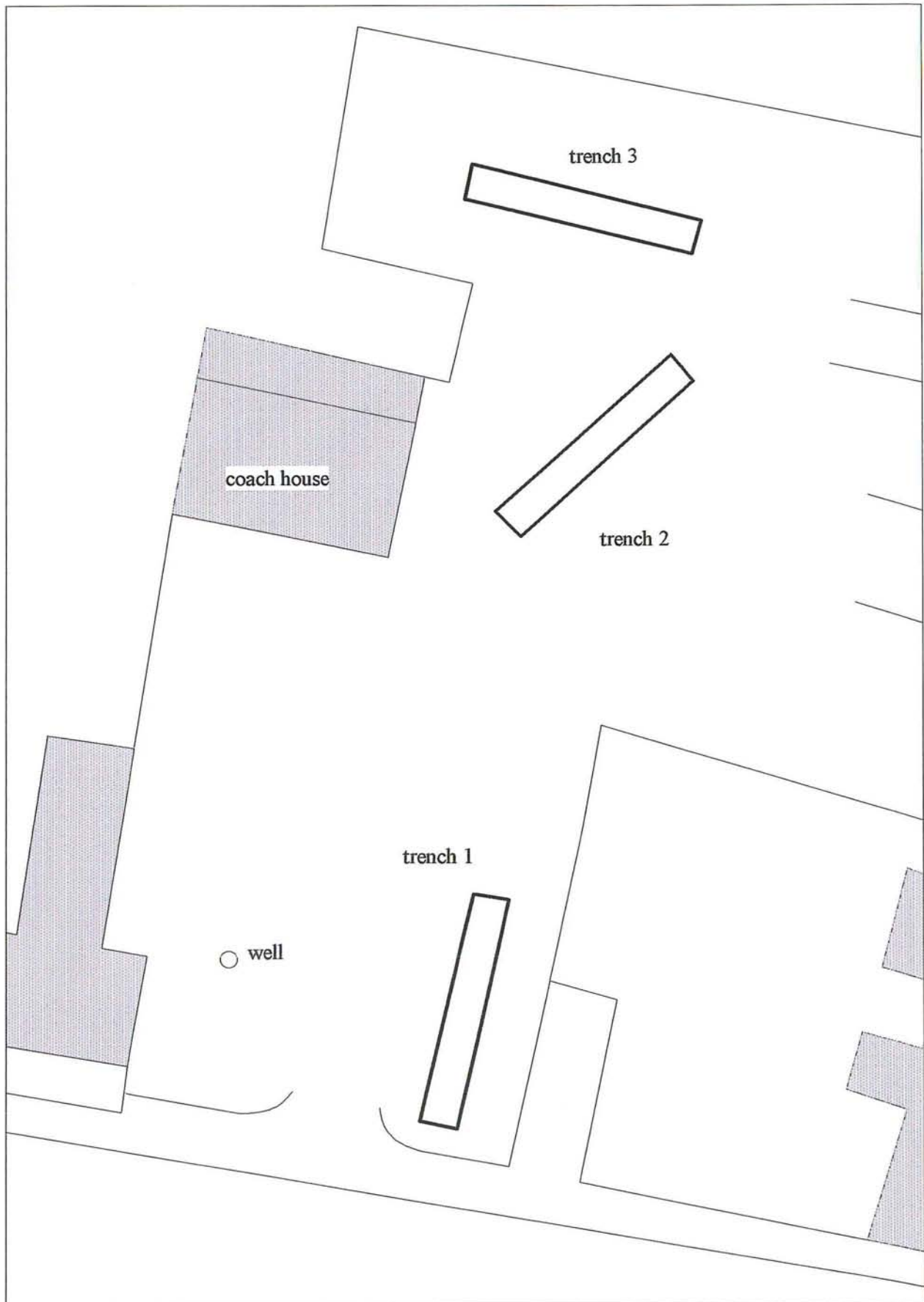


Fig. 4 Trench location, scale 1:250



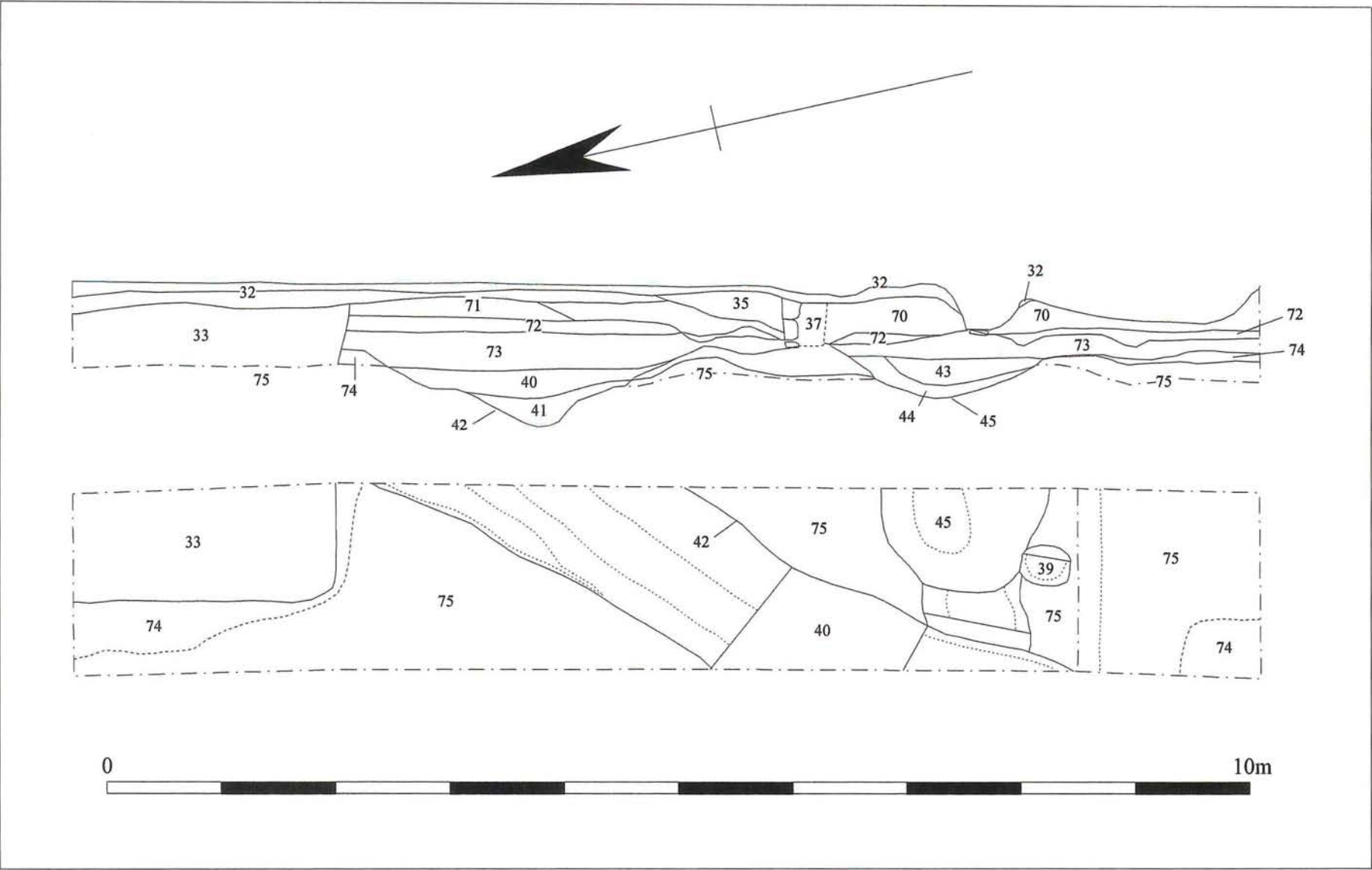


Fig. 5 Trench 1 plan and section, scale 1:50

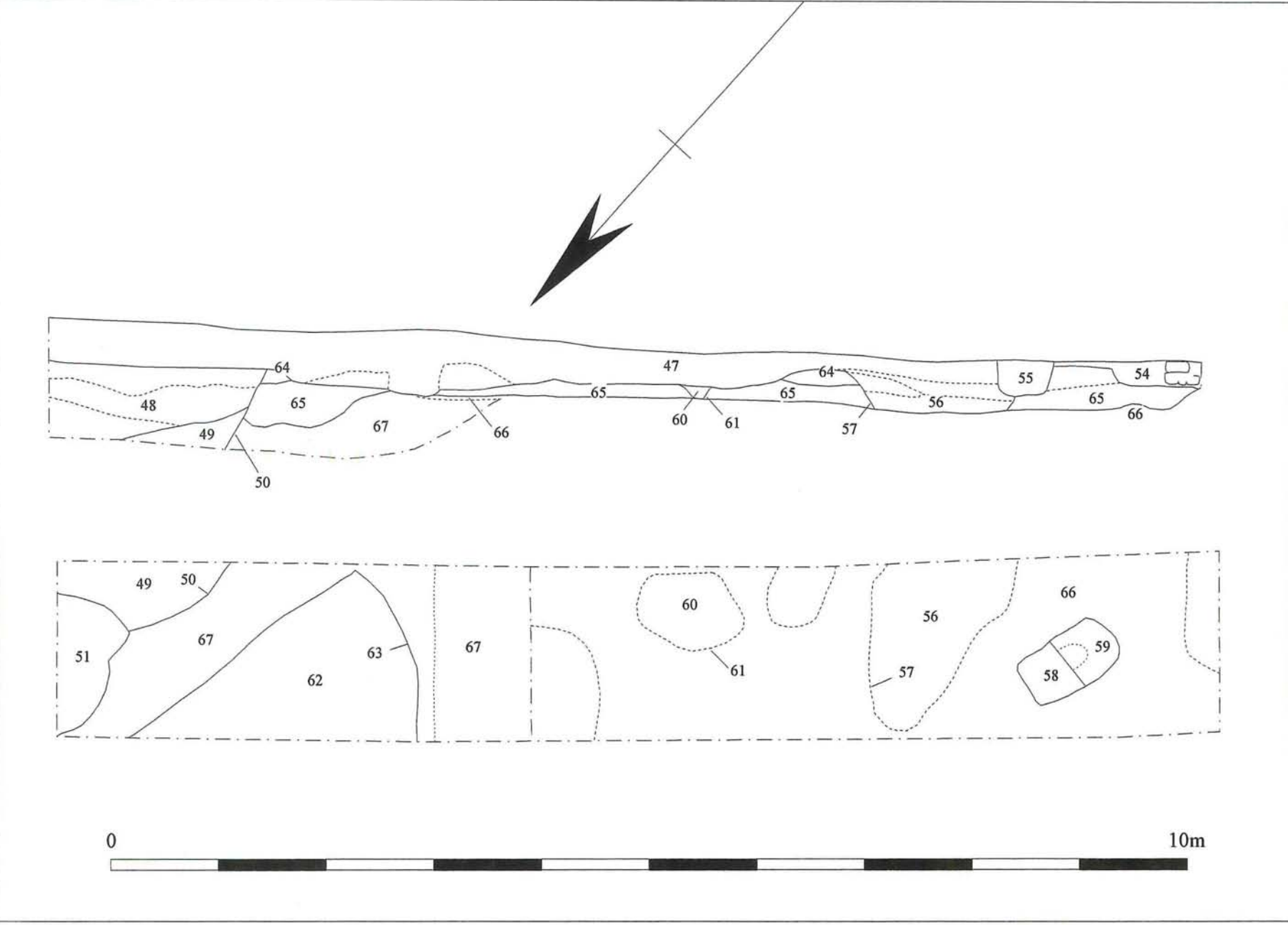


Fig. 6 Trench 2 plan and section, scale 1:50

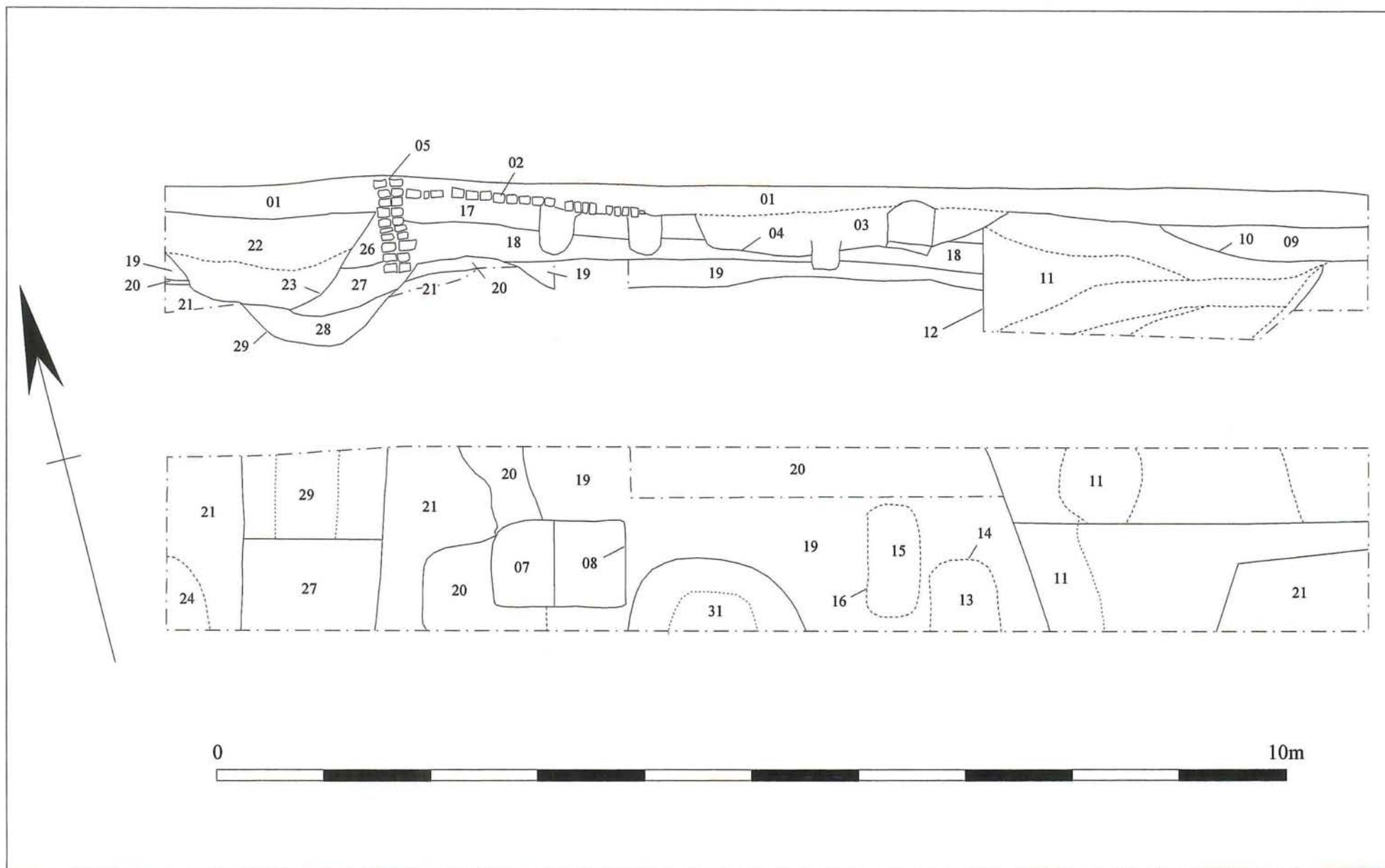


Fig. 7 Trench 3 plan and section, scale 1:50





Plate 1 Trench 1 before excavation, from south-west



Plate 2 Trench 2 before excavation, from north-east





Plate 3 Trench 3 before excavation, from east



Plate 4 Trench 1, east facing section ditch/gully 42





Plate 5 Trench 1, west facing section pit 45 and posthole 39



Plate 6 Trench 1 post-excavation, from south-east





Plate 7 Trench 2, south-west facing section pit 59



Plate 8 Trench 3, south-west facing section ditch 29





Plate 9 Brick-lined well (structure 76)



Plate 10 Coach-house, from south





Plate 11 Gates to site, from north