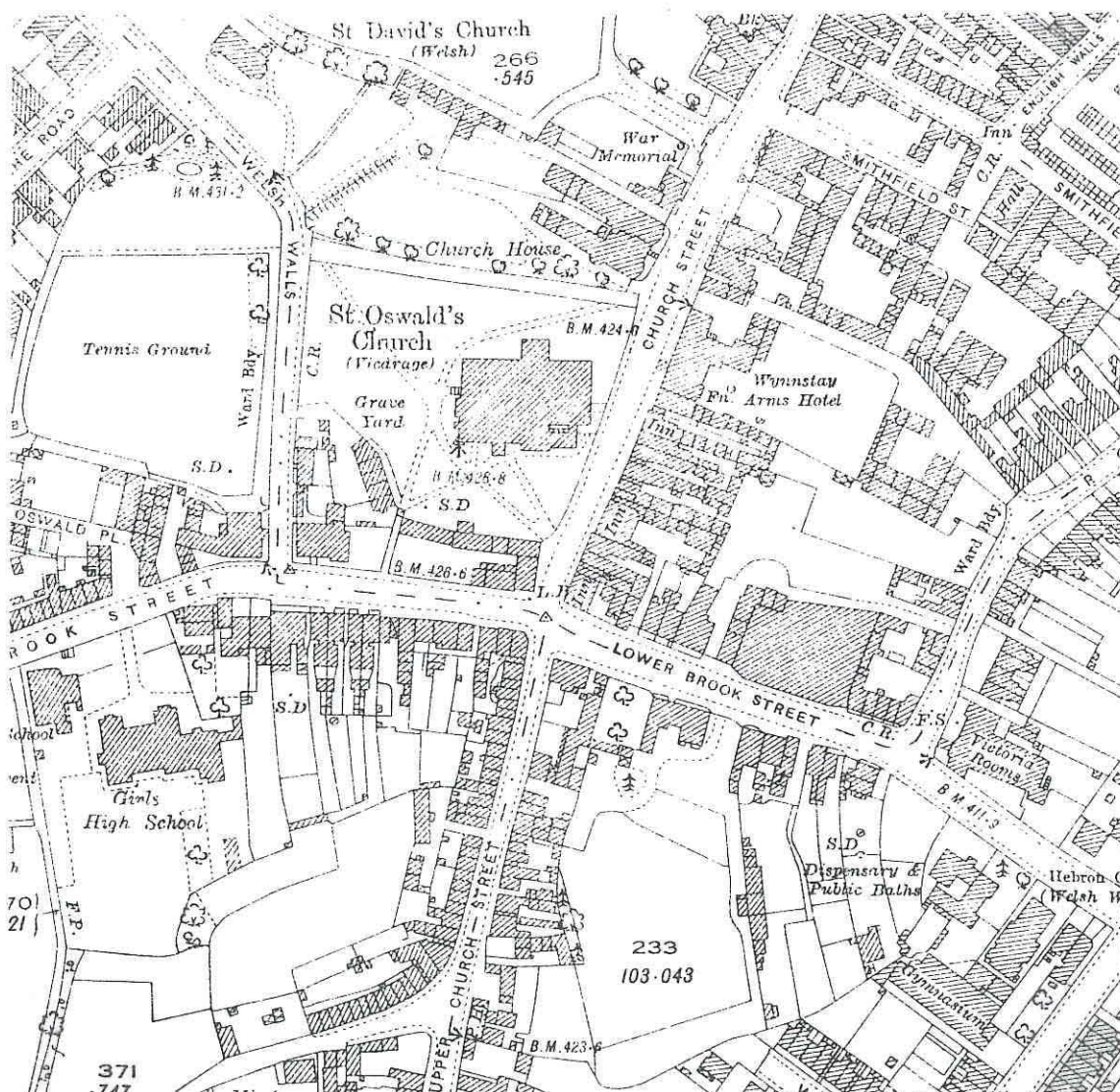


Heatherdene Residential Homes, Upper Brook Street, Oswestry, Shropshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



CPAT Report No 342

**Heatherdene Residential Homes, Upper
Brook Street, Oswestry, Shropshire
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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February 2000

Report for Design and Planning Associates

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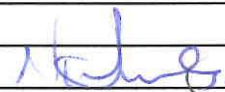

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited in July 1999 to provide a specification and quotation to undertake a watching brief during the construction of an extension on land at Heatherdene, Upper Brook Street, Oswestry, Shropshire. This was accepted and CPAT were invited to undertake the watching brief, which took place during November and December 1999.
- 1.2 The site lies within a Conservation Area and within the curtilage of a Grade II Listed Building dating from the early 19th century. Planning permission (99/10525/FUL) and listed building consent (99/10377/LBC) had been granted for the scheme, and a condition of this permission and consent was that a programme of archaeological work be carried out, consisting of a watching brief during the groundworks phase of the development. Accordingly a brief was prepared by the Conservation Officer, Oswestry Borough Council, detailing the works required.

2 LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is located on the corner of Upper Brook Street and Welsh Walls, Oswestry, Shropshire (SJ 35450 22742). Although lying outside the medieval town walls, the site is within 50m of the parish church.

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF (figs 2-4)

- 3.1 The watching brief was carried out between 29 December 1999 and 14 January 2000. The mechanical excavation of foundation trenches for two new buildings were monitored, during the course of which excavated material was examined for finds of archaeological significance and exposed surfaces investigated for the presence of archaeological features. A full drawn, written and photographic record was maintained throughout, details of which are given in Appendix 1. Numbers in brackets in the following text refer to individual contexts within the site archive.
- 3.2 Prior to the commencement of the watching brief the site had been cleared, involving the demolition of the existing laundry building (fig. 2) and the removal of an unknown depth of overburden.
- 3.3 The foundation trenches for the new laundry formed a rectangle 3.3 x 2.8m externally, with the trenches generally 0.6m wide and up to 0.65m deep (fig. 2). Cleaning of the sections revealed previously undisturbed subsoils, through which two pits had been cut.
- 3.4 Along the eastern side (fig. 3, section A-B) a layer of topsoil and household rubbish (1), up to 0.25m thick and containing 18th or 19th-century pottery and clay pipe, overlay a buff to mid-brown compact clay (2) which was interpreted as undisturbed subsoil. Along the western side (fig. 3, section C-D) a similar clay layer (5) may represent a continuation of the subsoil (2), with a further clay layer (3) revealed at the base of the trenches which was also assumed to be undisturbed subsoil. In the south-west corner (fig. 3, sections B-C and C-D) the subsoil had been cut by a large rubbish pit (7) at least 2.15m long and 1.7m wide, and over 0.65m deep. The fill of the pit (4) consisted of household rubbish, predominantly ash, coal and cinders with some brick fragments. In the north-west corner (fig. 3, sections C-D and D-A) a second rubbish pit (8) was identified, cutting through the undisturbed subsoil. This was at least 2.4m long by 0.8m wide and up to 0.62m deep. The fill (6) was very similar to that of pit 7, containing a mixture of ash, coal and cinders, together with two sherds of 18th or 19th-century pottery.
- 3.5 The foundations for the new extension lay immediately against the interior of the western boundary wall, extending eastwards for c. 5.5m, and abutting the existing building to the south. At the northern end, the foundations extended beyond the end of the boundary wall into the area of the existing gateway, giving an overall length from north to south of 11.6m. The trenches were generally 0.6m wide and up to 0.76m in depth.
- 3.6 Cleaning of the exposed sections (fig. 4) revealed the undisturbed subsoil, consisting of buff to mid-brown clay loam (14) and stiff yellow clay (15), which in most areas extended from the existing ground surface to the base of the sections. A number of features could be seen to cut the subsoil, which was also overlain in some sections by limited stratigraphy.

- 3.7 The eastern side of the foundations (fig. 4, section E-F) revealed evidence for a possible former structure towards the southern end. This consisted of a trench (21) cut into the top of the subsoil, within which two service pipes had been laid (12 and 16), together with the basal courses of a brick wall (11) and an area of possible brick footings (10). The function of the wall is uncertain, although its position does appear to correspond to a possible boundary feature depicted on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map, surveyed in 1873-4 (fig. 6).
- 3.8 The western side of the foundations (fig. 4, section G-H) lay immediately against the inside of the boundary wall. The natural subsoil (15) was again identified at the base of the section, although here it was overlain by a layer of buff to brown clay loam (28) at least 0.65m thick, which contained fragments of brick and 18th or 19th-century pottery and clay pipe. This layer had been cut by a foundation trench (22) for the boundary wall and the former laundry, which were contemporary. Beneath the boundary wall, the foundation trench extended to a depth of 0.22m, while the foundation trench for the north wall of the former laundry was 0.9m wide and up to 0.54m deep. The foundations themselves (23) were solidly constructed of mortared stone. The basal courses of an internal dividing wall within the former laundry consisted of a double course of brick (25) set on a stone footing (24). There was no clear indication of the foundations at the southern end of the building as the area had been heavily disturbed by the excavation of a substantial service trench (26).
- 3.9 The examination of foundation trench sections at the northern end of the new extensions (fig. 4, sections H-I, I-J, L-K and E-M) revealed three features cut into the subsoil (14 and 15). A small pit (19) 0.5m wide and 0.26m deep was filled with a layer of buff-grey clay (20) containing no finds. To the west a second, larger pit (17) was identified, measuring 1.64m across and at least 0.6m deep. The fill (18) consisted of clay, within which was a mixture of brick and stone. The third pit (30) lay close to the north-east corner of the new extension foundations, and was 1.0m across and 0.28m deep, filled with a grey clay loam (31) containing fragments of charcoal. Two soil layers (29 and 32) were identified lying immediately above the subsoil. Both consisted of grey clay containing charcoal fragments, and as they appeared in opposing sections, they may actually have been the same layer, although this could not be clearly demonstrated.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The watching brief identified a limited number of archaeological features consisting of a series of rubbish pits of likely 18th or 19th-century date, together with the foundation trenches for the boundary wall and former laundry, as well as associated service trenches.
- 4.2 The existing building is thought to date from the early 19th century, although no precise date is known. An examination of the readily available cartographic sources for the area suggests that the plot may have been occupied by an earlier building which is shown on the Tithe survey of 1836 (fig. 5; no. 286). This building appears to be quite different from the present structure, with a narrower frontage onto Upper Brook Street, but extending further to the rear. The present building is shown on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition published in 1873, and the 2nd edition published in 1901 (figs 6-7).
- 4.3 It was not possible to determine whether the features and layers identified were associated with the existing building or its predecessor, as the dating evidence suggested only that the occupation debris was of 18th or 19th century date. There was no evidence to suggest any occupation prior to the 18th century.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 5.1 Thanks are due to the following for their assistance and co-operation: Nigel Jones, CPAT; Mrs Edward, Heatherdene; the staff of Oswestry Library.

6 REFERENCES

Department of the Environment 1971. *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest: Borough of Oswestry, Shropshire.*

Tithe Survey of Oswestry Parish 1836

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25" surveyed 1872-3, published 1873

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 25" revised 1900, published 1901

Ordnance Survey 3rd edition 25" revised 1924, published 1926

Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 1977, SJ2829-2929

APPENDIX 1

EXTENSION TO HEATHERDENE RESIDENTIAL HOME, UPPER BROOK STREET, OSWESTRY SPECIFICATION FOR A CONTRACTED ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed development involves the construction of an extension on land at Heatherdene, Upper Brook Street, Oswestry, Shropshire (SJ 35450 22742). The site lies within a Conservation Area and within the curtilage of a Grade II Listed Building.
- 1.2 Planning permission (99/10525/FUL) and listed building consent (99/10377/LBC) have been granted for the proposed scheme, a condition of which is that a programme of archaeological work be carried out. This shall comprise a watching brief during the groundworks phase of the development.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works are:
 - 2.1.1 to record the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of any archaeological deposits and/or features revealed within the area of the proposed development during the development works in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief.

3 Methods

- 3.1 The watching brief will be undertaken to include all ground disturbance works associated with the proposed development within the study area.
- 3.2 Limited excavation of all significant contexts will be undertaken where possible following negotiations with the developer. All significant archaeological deposits and/or features noted during the watching brief will be recorded by drawn plan/section and photography. Individual context will be recorded on separate context sheets, with plans drawn at 1:20 or 1:50 and section at 1:20 or 1:10 as appropriate. Photography will be in 35mm format black and white negative and colour slide. All features will be tied in locationally to the Ordnance Survey as accurately as possible. All artefacts/samples will be related to the contexts from which they derived wherever possible and will be treated in a manner appropriate to their material nature. Environmental samples will be taken only from contexts considered to be of high potential.
- 3.3 Where appropriate, documentary research may be undertaken to aid in the interpretation of features recorded during the watching brief.
- 3.4 Following the on-site work a fully illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles detailed in Section 4.6 of the Brief. This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historical Background; Watching Brief; Conclusions and Recommendations; References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds. Further publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal will be undertaken at a later date and as considered appropriate depending on the nature of the findings.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991). Following agreement with the landowner, arrangements will be made for the long term conservation and storage of all artefacts in an appropriate repository.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled and experienced archaeologist. 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 watching brief.
- 4.3 The duration of the watching brief will depend entirely on the developers programme of work. The subsequent report will be prepared immediately following completion of on-site recording, 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. 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
Projects Officer
19th July 1999

APPENDIX 2

SITE ARCHIVE

Site records

32 context record sheets
 Context register
 1 A4 site drawing, Plan 1
 1 A1 site drawing, Plan 2
 Black and white print film
 Colour slides
 Photographic catalogue

Finds

Context 1 1 fragment of clay pipe stem; 1 sherd of 18th/19th century transfer printed ware

Context 6 1 sherd of 18th/19th century transfer printed ware; 1 sherd of local red earthenware

Context 28 1 sherd of 18th/19th century transfer printed ware; 1 clay pipe stem fragment; 1 sherd of local red earthenware

Context Register

cont	type	fill of	filled by	above	below	cuts	cut by
1	layer of soil			2			
2	layer of soil			3	1		7, 8
3	layer of soil				2, 5		
4	layer of fill	7					
5	layer of soil			3			7, 8
6	layer of fill	8					
7	pit		4			2	
8	pit		6			2, 5	
9	layer of fill	21			10, 11		
10	wall	21		9			
11	wall	21		9			
12	pipe	21					
13	layer of soil	21					
14	layer of soil			15	28, 32		17, 19, 21, 30
15	layer of soil				14, 28		17, 22
16	conduit	21					
17	pit		18			14, 15	
18	layer of fill	17					
19	pit		20			14	
20	layer of fill	19					
21	trench		9, 10, 11, 12, 16			13, 14	
22	trench		23			15, 28	
23	foundation	22					26
24	stone				25		
25	wall			24			
26	trench	27				23, 28	
27	layer of fill	26					
28	layer of soil			14, 15, 29, 31, 32			22, 26
29	layer of soil			14, 15	28		
30	pit		31			14	
31	layer of fill	30			28		
32	layer of soil			14	28		

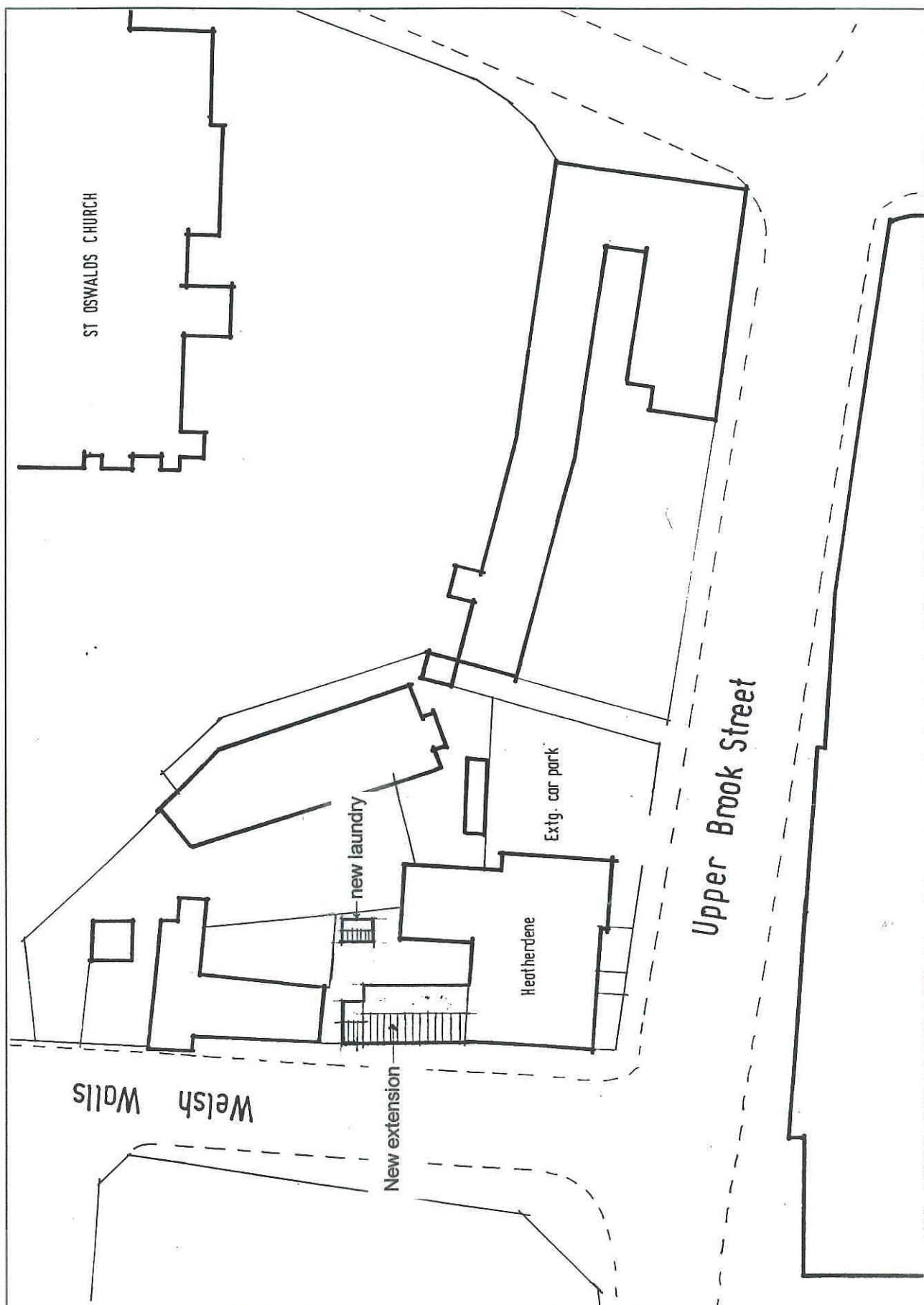


Fig. 1 Site location. Scale 1:500

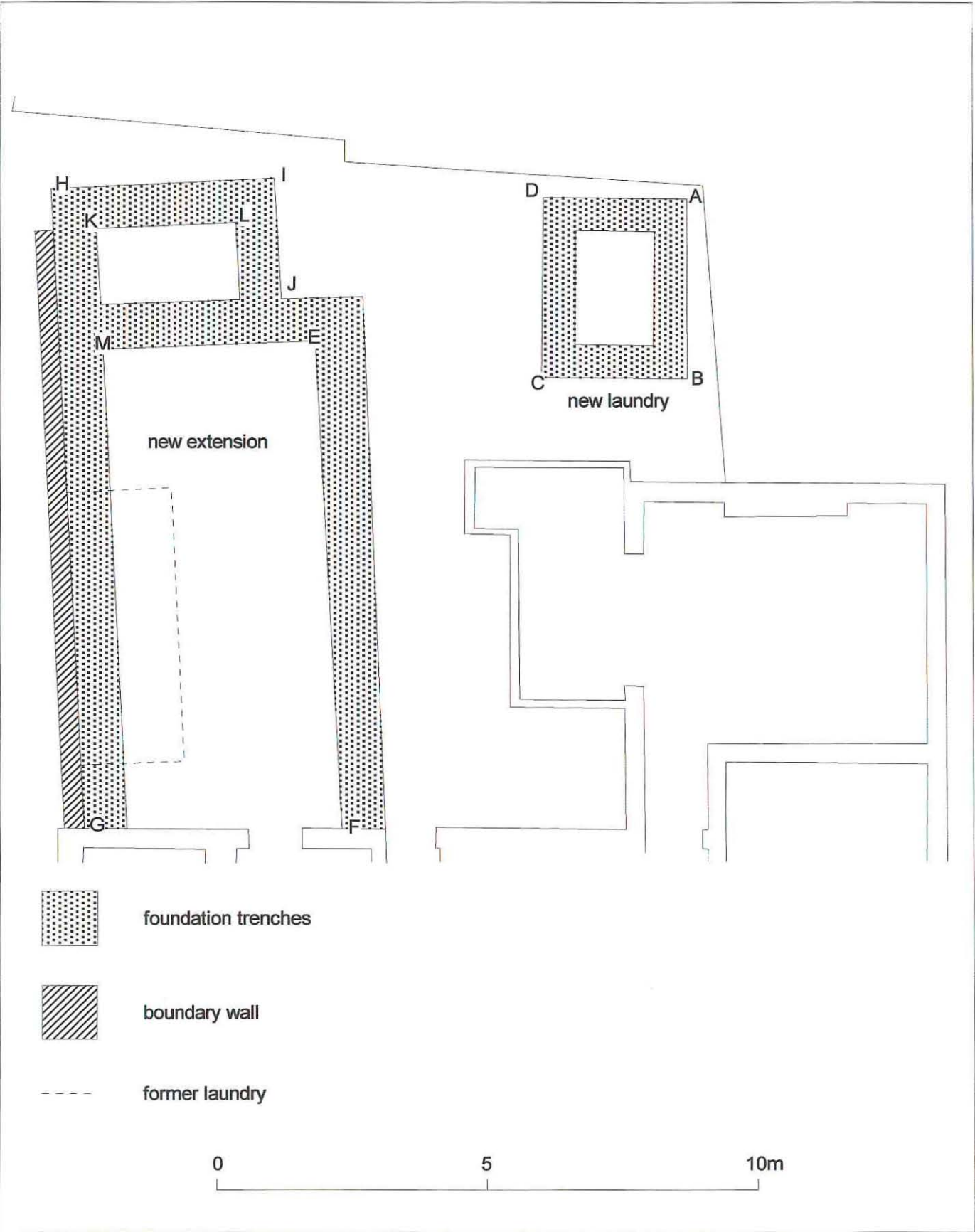


Fig. 2 Location of foundation trenches

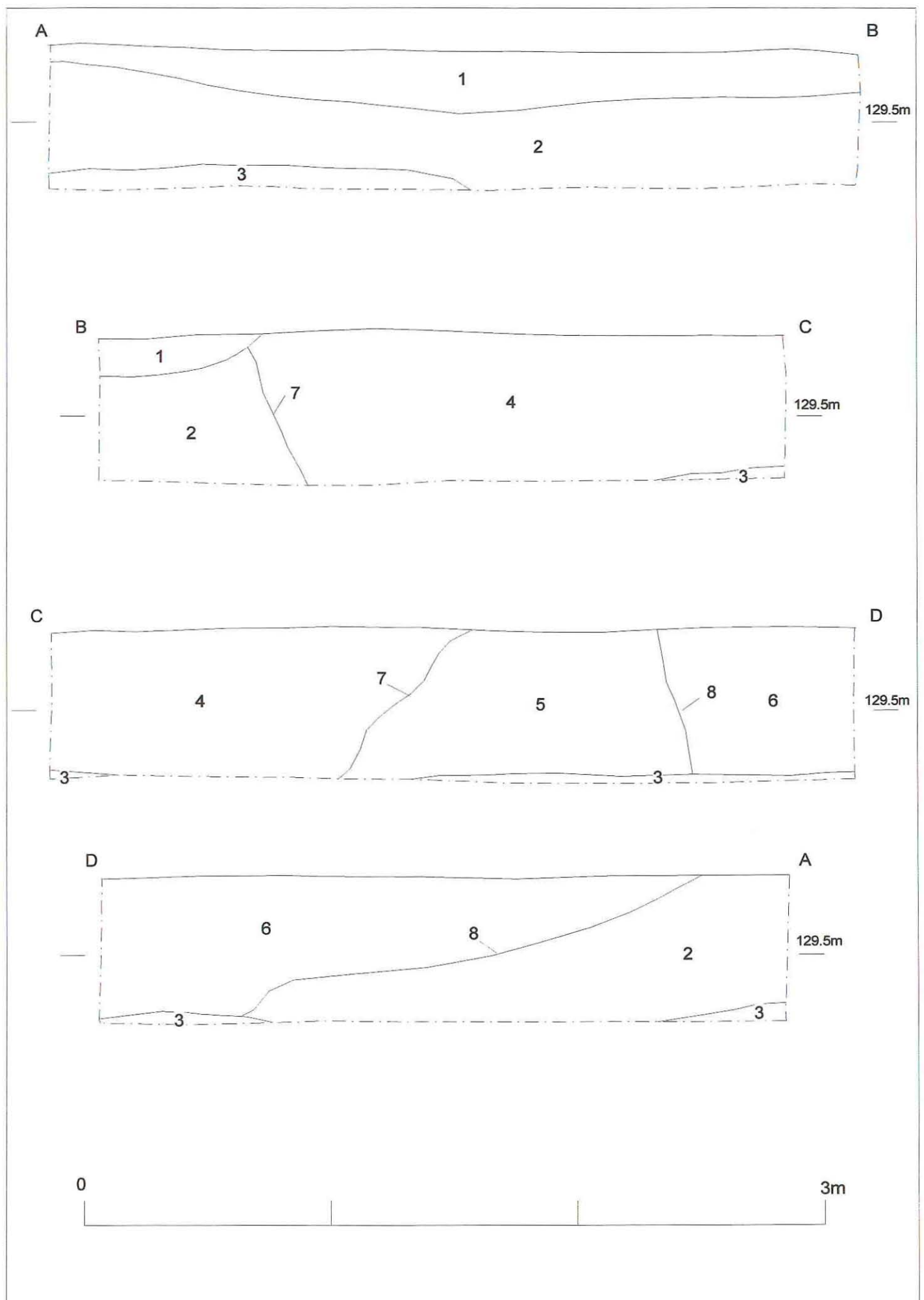


Fig. 3 Sections of foundation trenches for new laundry

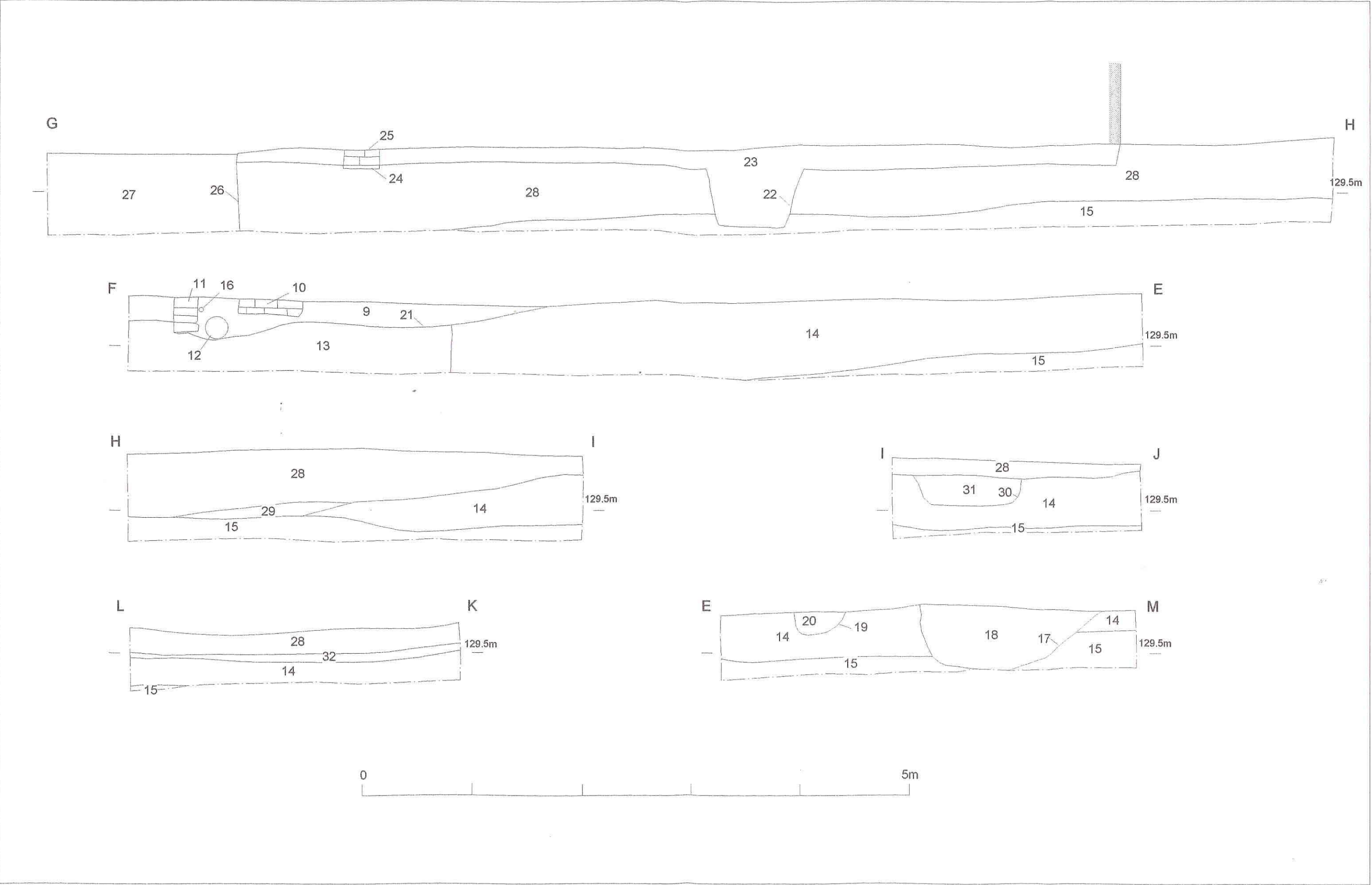


Fig. 4 Sections of foundation trenches for new extension



Fig. 5 Tithe Survey of 1836

Fig. 6 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 25", surveyed 1872-3, published 1873

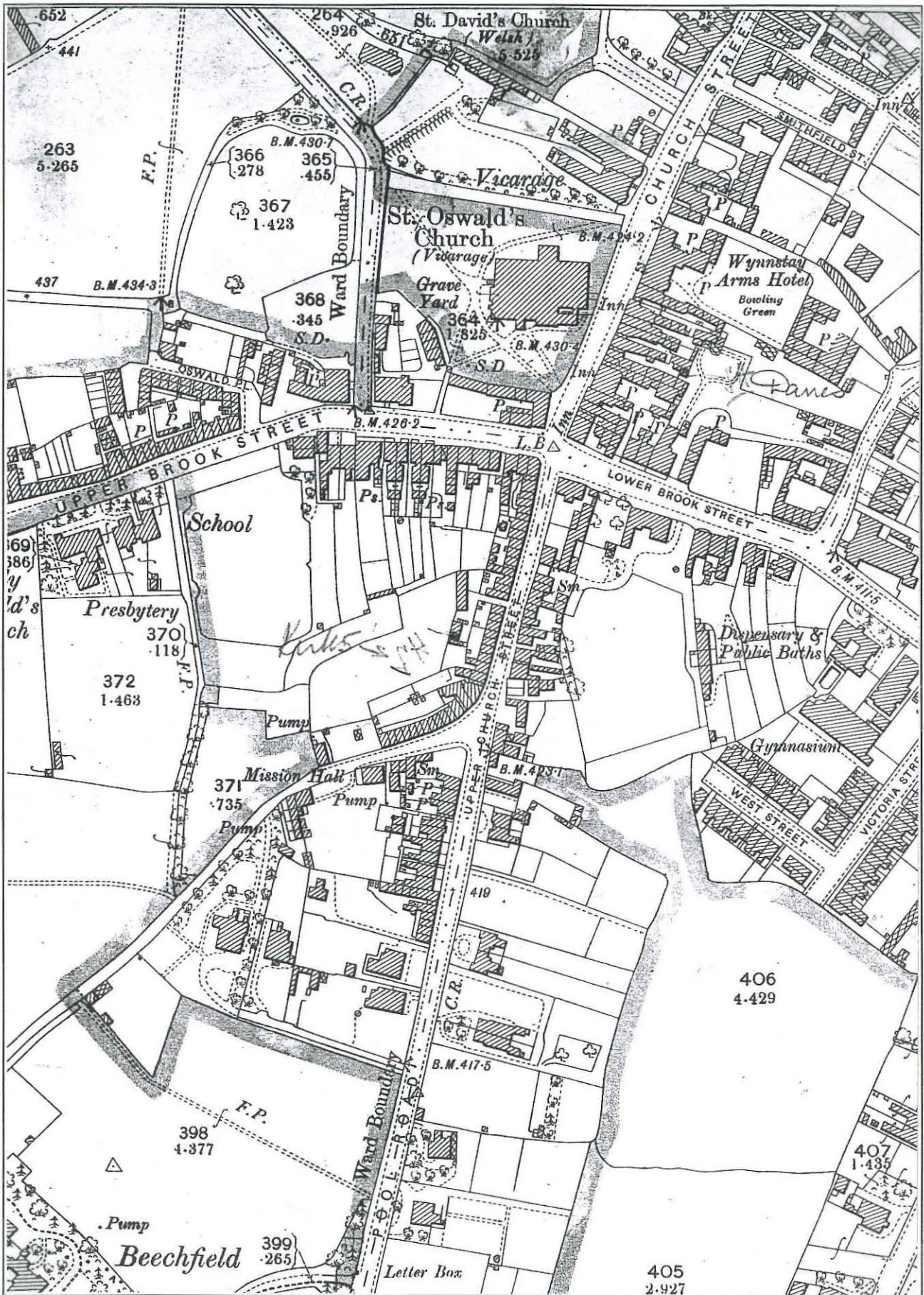


Fig. 7 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 252, revised 1900, published 1901