



# Archaeological Evaluation of land at Great Swifts Manor, Cranbrook, Kent



Planning Application 14/504547

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## **SWAT. ARCHAEOLOGY**

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## Contents

List of Figures.....	3
List of Plates.....	3
Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Site Description and Topography.....	4
Planning Background.....	5
Archaeological and Historical Background.....	6
Aims and Objectives.....	6
Methodology.....	6
Monitoring.....	7
Recording and Results.....	7
Finds.....	8
Discussion.....	8
Conclusion.....	10
Acknowledgements.....	10
References.....	10
Appendix 1 - KCC HER Summary Form.....	11

List of Figures

Fig. 1-7 Historic mapping

Fig. 8 Site location

Fig. 9 Site plan

Fig. 10 Trench plan

Fig.11 Section of hedgerow

Fig. 12 Section of Trench 2

List of Plates

Plate 1. Aerial view of the site (2013)

Plate 2. Aerial view of the site (1840)

Plate 3. Aerial view of the site (1960)

Plate 4. Trench 1 looking east

Plate 5. Trench 1 looking north-west

Plate 6. Trench 1 representative section

Plate 7. Trench 2 looking south-west

Plate 8. Trench 2 looking north

Plate 9. Trench 2 looking west



Plate 1. Google Earth aerial view of the site in 2013 (eye altitude 91m)

# **Archaeological Evaluation of land at Great Swifts Manor, Cranbrook, Kent**

NGR 578403 136850  
Site Code: GSM-EV-15

## **SUMMARY**

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land immediately east of Great Swifts Manor, Cranbrook in Kent (Fig. 9). A planning application (14/504547) for a new swimming pool, building and associated works was submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2015) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was focused on the impact the development may have on the postulated medieval or post-medieval manorial complex including recording of the historic hedgerows to be removed before building works could commence.*

*The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of two trenches which encountered some archaeological features. In addition the hedgerow roots were recorded with a Historic Landscape specialist in attendance (Dr Nicola Bannister). The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Yiangou Architects Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2015) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site is located just off Waterloo Road leading out of Cranbrook on the north-east side. Great Swifts Manor is approached along a tree lined avenue and the proposed development area (PDA) is situated adjacent to the tennis courts located to the rear of the property (Figure 9).

The ornamental gardens lie on the north-east and south-east sides of the house and comprise formal gardens with box edging, clipped shrubs, statuary and pools set within lawns and in part enclosed by hedges. On the north front, there is a 'Perennial Walk', 'a grass path with flowering shrubs and tall, mature yew hedges either side' (Figure 4, OS 1870) that leads to a former orchard and the 'pretty walled garden with gravel paths and a central brick and stone circle' (KCC 2009).

A tennis court, first laid out in the early C20 (Figure 7, 1938 OS map), remains some 40m north-east of the main house and abuts the north-east end of the new wing.

Little is known about the C17 and C18 ornamental gardens at Swifts and the earliest depiction is Andrews 1760 map which shows a formal garden divided into quarters by paths and lying on the south side of the mansion (Figure 1).

In 1871 the pleasure grounds were 'an area of considerable beauty and intersected by gravelled walks and embellished with a profusion of shrubs' (Sales Particulars Oak Hill Manor: Ref A) and the walks are clearly shown north of the mansion on the 1870 OS map (Figure 4).

Also described are flower beds 'designed in good taste and adorned with parterres of choice flowering plants', a ha-ha, and lawns and croquet grounds, 'ornamental ... with fine specimens of conifers, auracaria, Austrian pines etc', which 'command beautiful views over the Park and picturesque surrounding country'. The view and many of these trees survive (2015), although the C19 ornamental flower gardens and winding walks appear to have been lost.

The walled garden is probably on the site of the former mid-C19 kitchen gardens (Figure 3).

A walled kitchen garden (c.25m x 50m) is first shown on the 1869 OS map (Figure 3) some 5m north of the mansion and was described in the 1871 Sales Particulars as being 'surrounded by lofty walls well clothed with choice fruit trees'; they also contained a range of vineries, as well as 'a mushroom house, potting house, stoke hole etc'. A second kitchen garden with 'pyramid espalier & orchard trees' is also mentioned (KCC 2009). These kitchen gardens are shown on OS maps until 1969.

According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 1: 50.000) the site lies on a bedrock geology comprising Hasting Beds. No superficial deposits are recorded by BGS but the evaluation investigation revealed a brown grey sticky clay with occasional flint inclusions (Plates 4-10).

## **PLANNING BACKGROUND**

Planning consent (14/504547) for the build of a new swimming pool, building and associated works were approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC). The Council requested that archaeological works be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of development on any archaeological remains. The Local Planning Authority (TWBC) placed the following conditions (5 & 6) on the planning consent:

*(5) No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successor(s) in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded

(6) No development shall take place until details of foundations designs and any other proposals involving below ground excavation have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that due regard is had to the preservation in situ of important archaeological remains

Requirements for the archaeological evaluation from KCC Heritage comprised trial trenching targeting a representative 4% sample of the impact area with two trenches (Fig. 10) designed to establish whether there were any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. The results from this evaluation will be used to inform KCC of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The proposed site lies within an area of archaeological potential and the KCC Archaeological Specification (2015) highlights Neolithic flints located to the south-west (KCCHER TQ 73 NE 316 & TQ 73 NE 317). In addition Roman slag has been found to the south of the PDA (MKE 74584 PAS findspot).

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the evaluation, as set out within the Archaeological Specification (2015) was:

- Assessing the extent of any archaeology associated with the post medieval or earlier manorial complex which may include outbuildings or garden features
- Recording of the hedgerow to be removed to include full section drawing, photographs, and interpretation of date, species and function
- Establishing the depth, character, significance and condition of any archaeological deposits

### **METHODOLOGY**

Trial trenching was carried out on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 with the excavation of two trenches. Trench location for two trenches was agreed prior to the excavation between KCC and SWAT. Excavation was carried out using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, or natural (001), under the constant supervision of Paul Wilkinson and Peter Cichy, both experienced archaeologists. All trenches measured 15m in length and 1.8m wide. The trenches were subsequently hand-cleaned, and a number of features were exposed. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification issued by KCC. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in bold. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and IFA standards and guidance.

## MONITORING

A curatorial visit was made by Wendy Rogers during the course of the evaluation.

## RECORDING AND RESULTS

All discrete discolorations and features exposed within evaluation trenches were hand-cleaned examined and half-sectioned to ensure that they are not concealing any feature of an earlier date.

All in-fills of large modern intrusions were machined out in scoops under constant archaeological supervision and subsequently recorded in section and photographed employing professional digital SLR camera equipped with good quality lenses.

The extend of the evaluation trenches, exposed disturbances, cuts and adjacent flower beds were subsequently surveyed in plan and referenced accurately to the National Grid using real-time-kinematic GPS survey kit (Novatel OEM<sup>TM</sup>/ 1cm+1ppm).

All co-ordinates and Ordnance Datum heights in metres measured by GPS were stored and drawn in-field using comprehensive CAD/GIS survey program developed by Carlson Software Inc.

Subsequently the hand-drawn plans and sections were digitised and combined with survey data in AutoCAD (or ArcGIS). The cross-section drawings were then traced and re-drawn as vectors using variously Corel Draw and/or Adobe Illustrator.

The photographs were captured in raw format at maximum resolution and selected plates for this publication were exported in JPEG file format. Approximately 450MB of raw data remain stored in secured digital archive linked with this project.

### **Trench 1** (Plan Fig.10 sections Fig.11 Plates 4-7)

(13.60 x 1.6m x <0.35m)

Trench 1 was roughly east-west aligned slightly curving to the north and measured 1.6m x 13.60m and 0.35m in depth. Superficial geology (**CRN 103**) was exposed along the whole length of this trench and consisted of yellow-grey silt-clay with infrequent sandstone, glass, modern potsherds and was disturbed by bioturbations and modern intrusions including a water pipe and electric cable.

That was capped by 0.1-0.2m-thick band (**CRN 102**) of loam comprising a mixture of modern soil, clayey sub-soil and loam with infrequent modern inclusions and was capped by lawn (**CRN 101**)

The trench cut through a hedgerow (**CRN 106**) (**Fig.11 section 1.1/Plate 6**) in its western part and exposed a hollow (**CRN 104**) beneath it. The revealed cut was tightly packed with angular sandstone aggregate (**CRN 105**) comprising small and medium sized fragments with infrequent clay and grit. This was machine excavated to the depth of 1.1m and revealed one only small (19<sup>th</sup> century) frogged brick fragment as dating evidence for this feature.

In the middle part of Trench 1 a modern cut was exposed (**CRN 107**) (**section s.1.2**) complete with in-situ modern electric cable. The back-fill of the feature (**CRN 108**) was dark-grey clayey-silt with building debris noted as infrequent inclusions.

A small and shallow sub-circular spot (**CRN 109**) (**s.1.3**) (**plate 6**) was exposed in an eastern part of Trench 1. A 0.03m-deep hollow was back-filled with loamy clayey silt (**CRN 110**). The infill of this feature produced infrequent modern inclusions of modern house ware and glass.

#### **Trench 2** (Plan Fig.10 sections Fig.12 Plates 5-7)

(22.60 x 1.6m x <0.35m)

Trench 2 was roughly east-west aligned and slightly tilted to the south and measured respectively 1.6m x 22.60m 0.35m in depth and 0.5m in maximum depth and was scooped out directly under the hedgerow.

Superficial geology (**CRN 203**) was exposed along the whole length of this trench and consisted of yellow-grey silt-clay with infrequent sandstone and was disturbed by bioturbations and modern intrusions. That was capped by 0.1-0.2m-thick band of loam (**CRN 202**) comprising mixture of modern soil, clayey sub-soil and sand with infrequent modern inclusions.

The overlying lawn (**CRN 201**) was the most recent deposit here.

A machined-out deeper hollow at the western end of the trench beneath the Hedge row (**CRN 206**) (**s.2.1**) exposed a narrow and shallow linear scar (**CRN 209**) (**s.2.4**) measuring 1.2m-long and 0.03m in depth. Its back-fill (**CRN 210**) consisted of dark-grey clayey-silt with infrequent angular stones.

A large sub-oval or sub-circular irregular hollow (**CRN 204**) (**s.2.2**) was investigated in the south-eastern portion of Trench 2 and was interpreted as a tree throw hole indicating clearance of a former park located in this area.

Due to early modern inclusions in the back-fill (**CRN 205**) was machine scooped out to ensure that it is not concealing any earlier feature. A machined slot exposed irregular hollow and bioturbated natural clay below. The dark-grey clayey-silt with loam contained moderate modern inclusions and late 19<sup>th</sup> century kitchen ware and shoes fragments.

The adjacent to the east slightly disturbed natural clay (**CRN 211**) had moderately scattered discolorations of a red-hue indicating indirect burning presumably by a garden bonfire.

An adjacent sub-circular planting pit (**CRN 207**) (**s.2.3**) was half-sectioned and its loamy infill (**CRN 208**) contained moderate small modern glass fragments and infrequent Victorian potsherds.

#### **FINDS**

Finds retrieved from (210) included four sherds of pottery dated to c.1575-1625/1650 and two sherds of post-medieval Kentish earthenware c.1700-1750AD. Two sherds from (208) of LPM English vitreous glazed stoneware dating to c.1800/1850-1840 AD and four sherds from (205) of LPM white earthenware c.1850-1900AD or later.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The evaluation of land at Great Swifts Manor has revealed no important archaeology and it is essential to understand why.



The KCC Specification says: *“The site lies within the formal gardens of Swifts. One of the hedgerows to be removed is evident on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition [1869] OS map and is a historic landscape feature of interest”*.

The site does not lie within the formal gardens which were located to the south-west of the present area under investigation, it lies within the informal area of the garden which comprises the known ‘Perennial Walk’, ‘a grass path with flowering shrubs (Figure 4) that leads to a former orchard and the ‘pretty walled garden with gravel paths and a central brick and stone circle’ (Figure 3).

There is no hedgerow ‘evident on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition [1869] OS map’. What the OS map (Figure 3) shows is a path and on the following OS map of 1870 this path fringed by individual trees (Figure 4). The OS historic mapping shows quite clearly that up to 1898 (Figure 5) there was a path but by 1908 the path had been removed to be replaced by a hedge, presumably of yew. The ‘historic’ hedgerow can be no earlier than c.1908 and the feature revealed under the relict hedgerow remains of the path.

For garden archaeology it is always worthwhile to undertake a regressive map exercise to understand the development of the garden of a particular site from the beginning of modern cartographic activity, and our beginning for this site is the Andrews Dury map of 1769. The Andrews map (Figure 1 green arrow) shows the formal garden south-west of the PDA and the area of land to the north-east open field where the development (swimming pool) is proposed to take place.

The formal garden called by the French the ‘jardin a la francaise’ is a style based on symmetry and the principles of imposing order on nature and looks back to the formal gardens of the Italian Renaissance, themselves recalling the virtues of order found in Roman gardens. By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the influence of the new English Garden of nature and rustic delights brought to a close the reign of the formal garden.

At Great Swifts we can see in the 1769 plan the formal garden of symmetry and in the OS map of 1870 the establishment of the ‘jardin a l’anglaise’ called at Great Swifts the ‘Perennial Walk’.

The Hasted map of 1779 is of little importance but the 1869 OS map (Figure 3) shows the later walled garden (orange line) with a dotted line where it is likely the earlier formal garden was (green arrow) and the path of the ‘Perennial Walk’ (red arrow).

By 1870 (Figure 4) major alterations had taken place to the house and outbuildings with glasshouses added and planting of individual trees along the ‘Perennial Walk’ (highlighted in orange). The walled garden can clearly be seen edged by a path and is outside the area of proposed development. To the north-east of the walled garden is a path and individual trees in the area of the proposed swimming pool. It is likely the feature (209) revealed in Trench 2 is the foundation remains of this c.1870 path.

By 1898 (Figure 5) the OS map shows only the paths of the ‘Perennial Walk’ with no hedging, but by 1908 (Figure 6) the path has gone to be replaced by a hedge.

The OS map of 1938 (Figure 7) shows the new tennis court (orange line) bounded by a hedge and joining on to the earlier hedge with its entrance marked with a red arrow.

The aerial photograph of 1940 (Plate 2) shows with some clarity this hedge as does the aerial photograph of 1960 (Plate 3).

To sum up the earliest map (1769) we have of the site at Great Swifts shows the formal garden to be located south-west of the PDA and later mapping in the area of the evaluation trenches on the PDA show a path to about 1898 and a hedge from about 1908 and this is what was found in the evaluation trenches.

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site of the local geology of clay (202) covered by a layer of sandy silty clay (203) which in turn is sealed by a thin layer of turf (201).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Yiangou Architects Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Senior Heritage Officer, Kent County Council for her advice and assistance.

Paul Wilkinson supervised the fieldwork, assisted in the field by Peter Cichy. Illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. The project was managed by Paul Wilkinson.

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA

19/05/2015

## **REFERENCES**

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2008) *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*.

Kent County Council (KCC), (2015) *Specification for an archaeological evaluation of land at Great Swifts Manor, Cranbrook, Kent*

The Kent Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens for Tunbridge Wells Borough: *Oak Hill Manor* (KCC 2009)

### Websites

Exploring Kent's Past <http://www.extranet7.krnt.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/>

Kent Landscape Information System <http://extranet7.kent.gov.uk/klis/home.htm>

Old Maps Online <http://www.oldmapsonline.org/>

**APPENDIX 1 – Kent County Council HER Summary Form**

<b>Site Name:</b> <i>Archaeological Evaluation of land at Great Swifts Manor, Cranbrook, Kent</i>	
<b>SWAT Site Code:</b> <i>GSM-EV-15</i>	
<b>Site Address:</b> <i>Waterloo Road, Cranbrook, Kent</i>	
<b>Summary:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Great Swifts Manor. A planning application (14/504547) for the construction of swimming pool with associated works was lodged with Tunbridge Wells District Council whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation, on behalf of the LPA requested that an Archaeological Evaluation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2015) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i>  <i>The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of two trenches which encountered few archaeological features.</i>	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> <i>Cranbrook</i>	<b>Parish:</b>
<b>Period(s):</b> <b>Tentative:</b>	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs):</b> <i>NGR 578403 136850</i>	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> <i>Evaluation</i>	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> <i>May 2015</i>	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
<b>Geology:</b> <i>Sandy silty clay with occasional flint inclusions</i>	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> <i>Wilkinson P. An Archaeological Evaluation at Great Swifts Manor, Cranbrook, Kent</i>	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b>  <i>As above</i>  <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet)</b></p>	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> <i>SWAT</i>	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	<b>Date:</b> <i>May 2015</i>

FIGURES



Figure 1. . Andrews Dury map of 1769

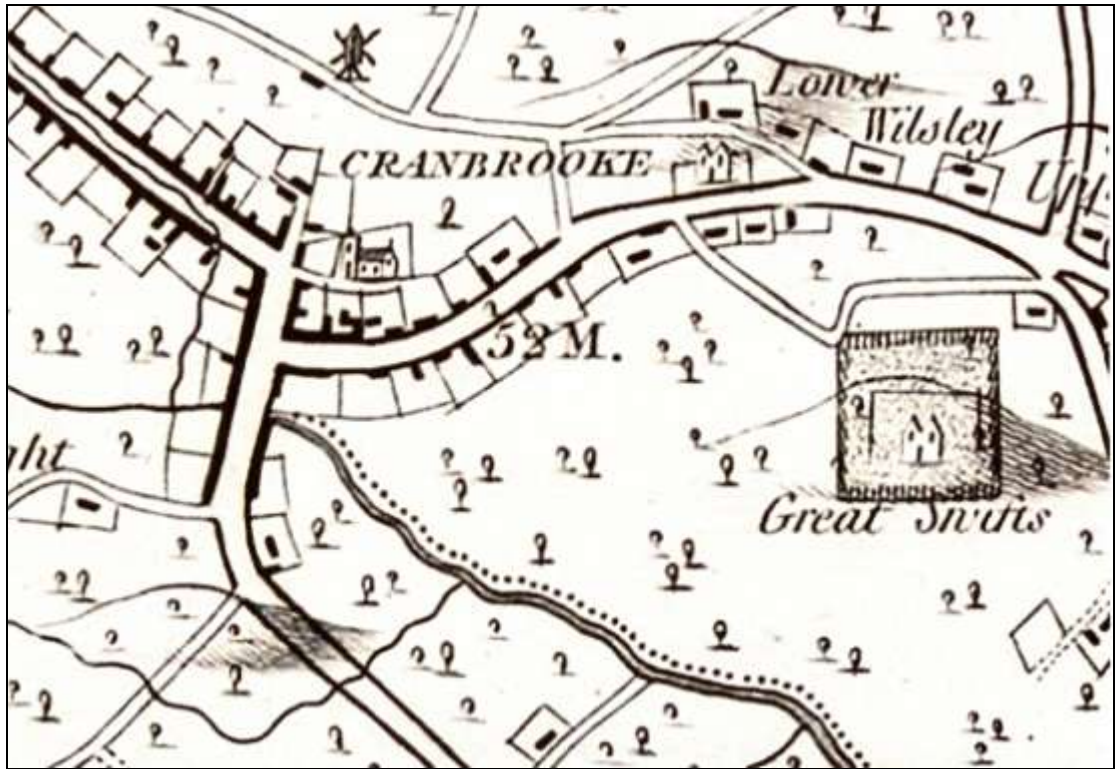


Figure 2. Hasted map of 1779

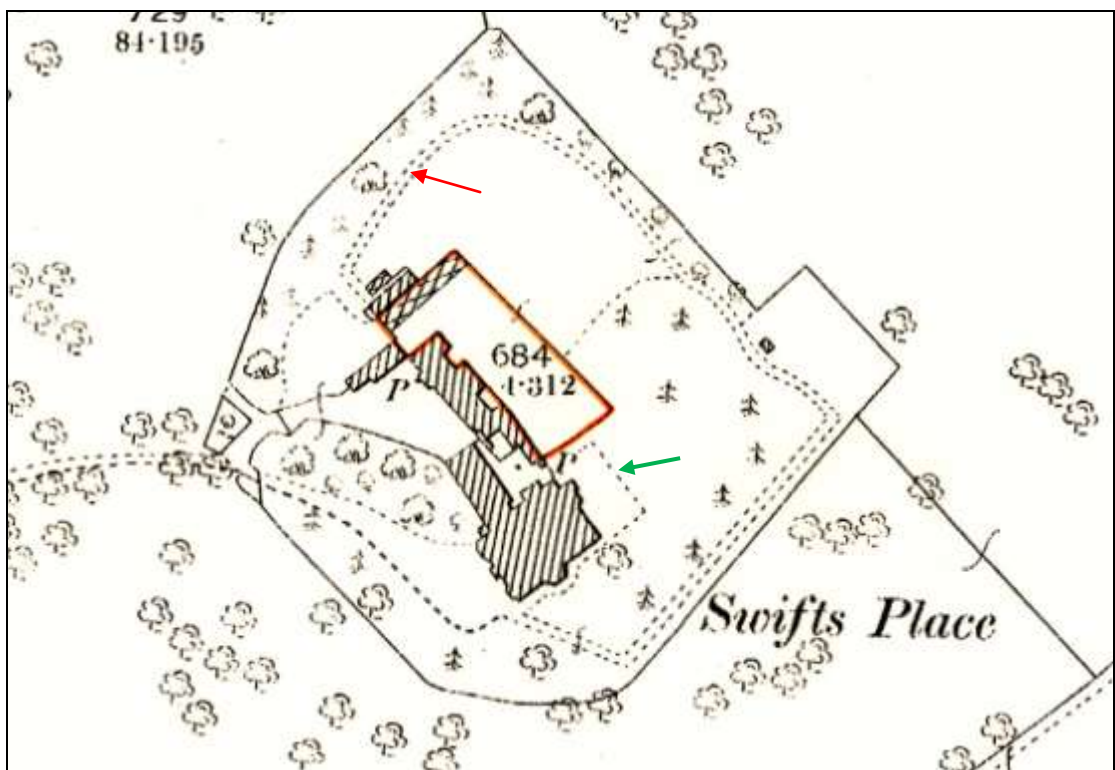


Figure 3. OS map of 1869 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 25"

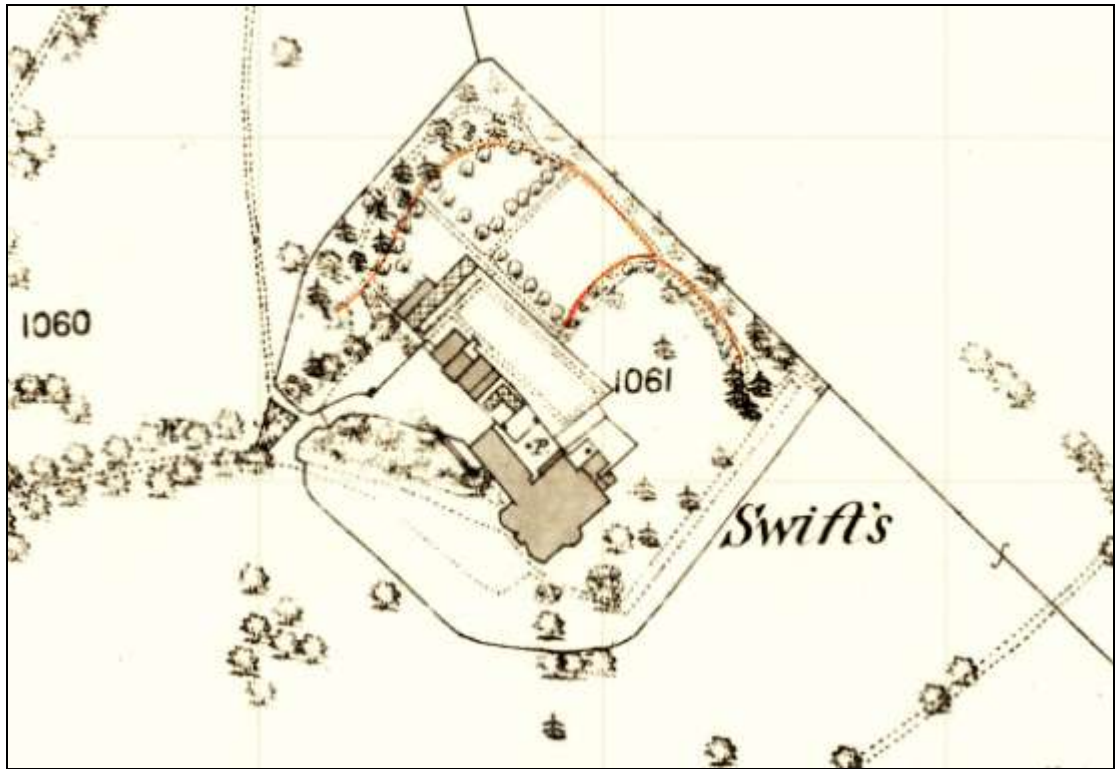


Figure 4. OS map of 1870

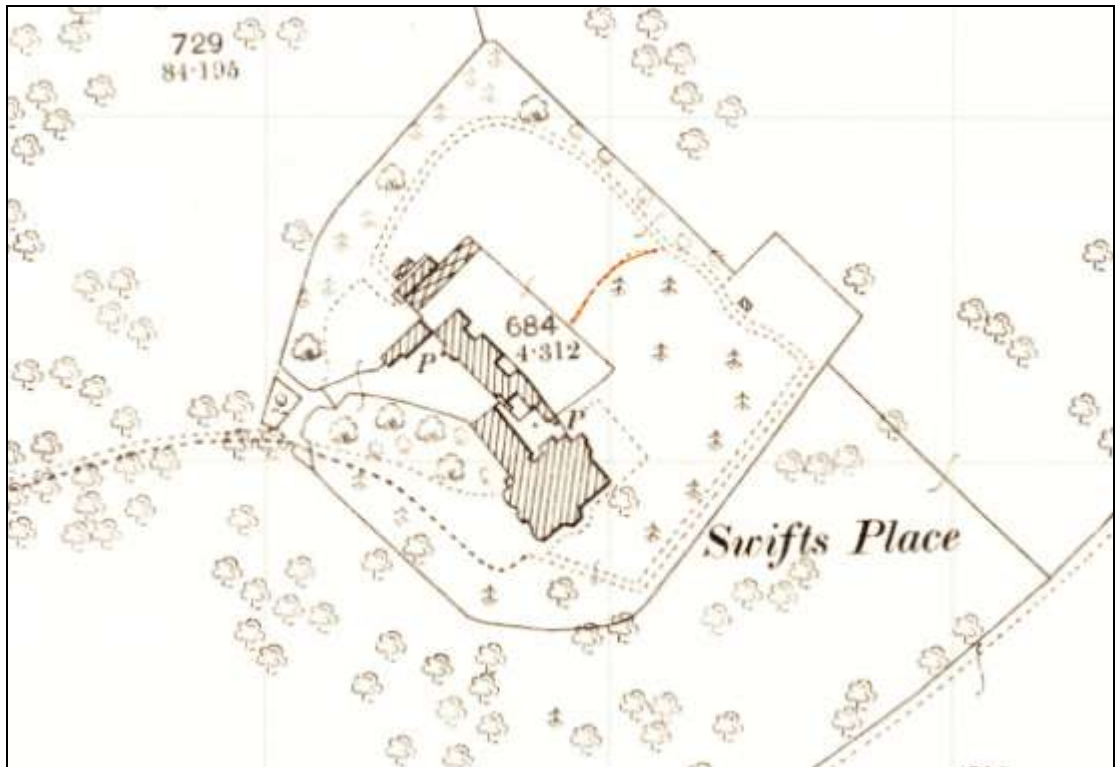


Figure 5. OS map of 1898

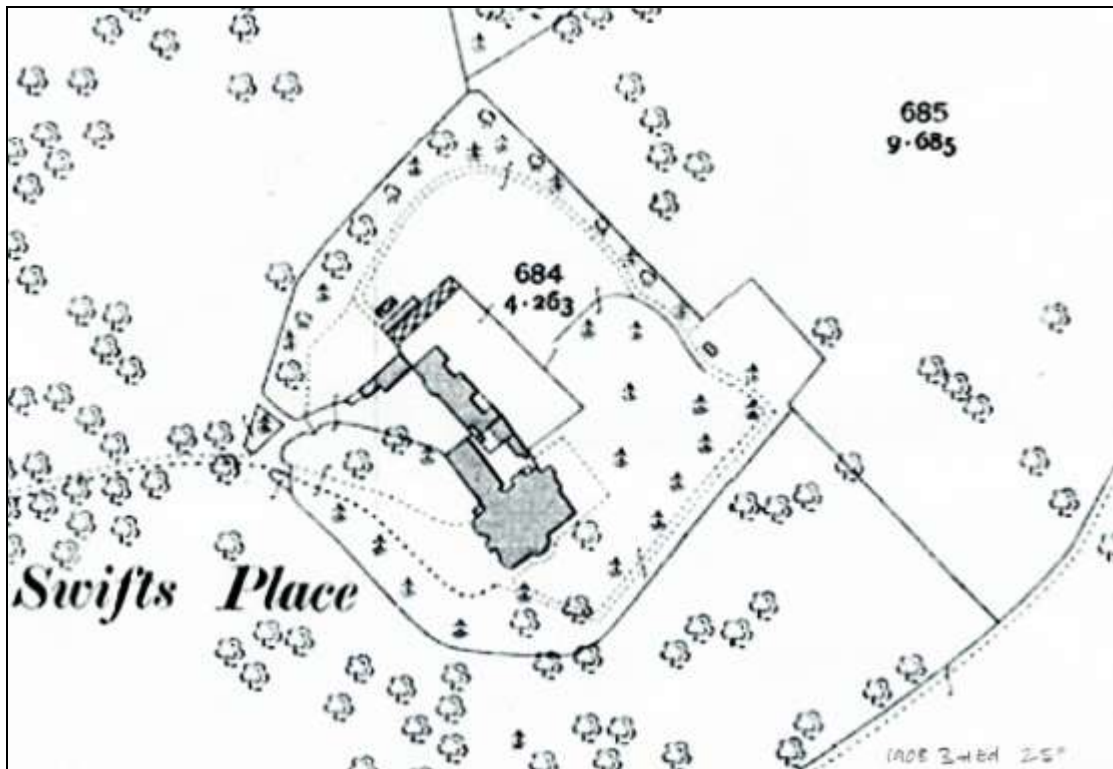


Figure 6. OS map of 1908 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed 25"

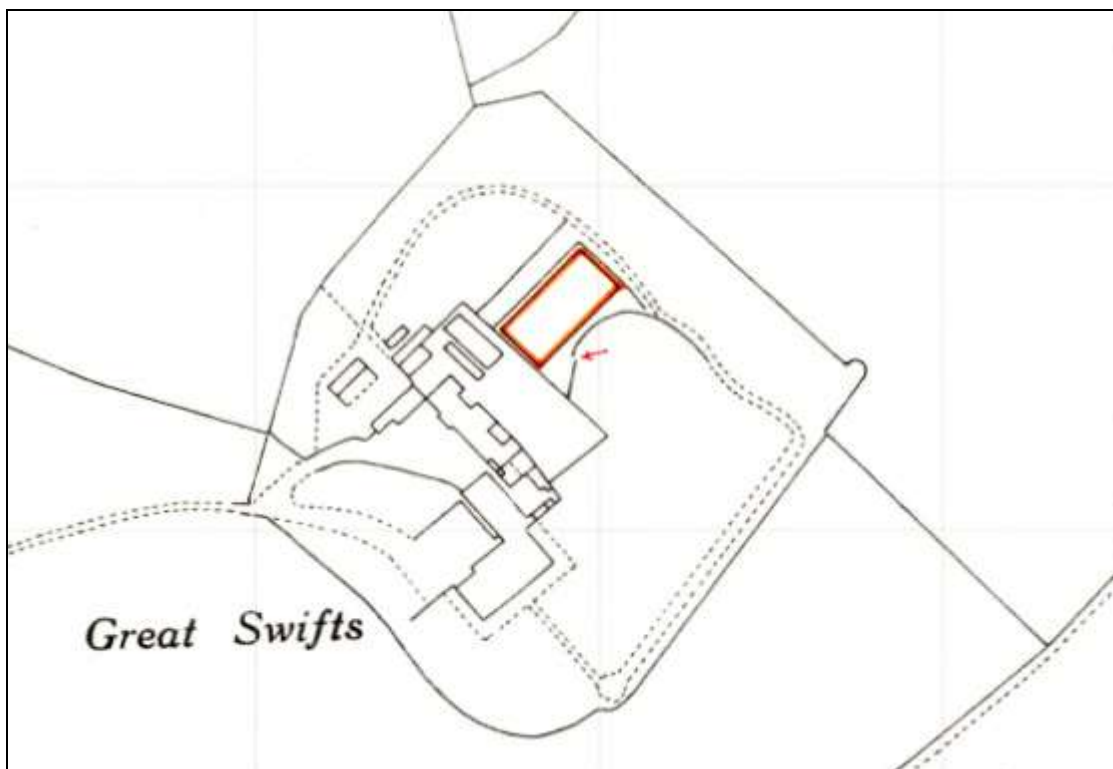


Figure 7. OS map of 1938



Plate 2. Google Earth 1940



Plate 3. Google Earth 1960





Plate 4. Trench 1 looking east (1m scale)



Plate 5. Trench 1 looking west (1m scale)



Plate 6. Showing section (T.1) through Hedgerow 106 and Hollow 104 exposed below hedge



Plate 7. Showing (T. 1) half sectioned Pit 109 (looking north 1m scale)



Plate 8. Showing Trench 2 and Hedgerow 206 in foreground and shallow linear feature 209 and large tree bole 204 in background (looking east 1m scale)



Plate 9. Trench 2 looking west. Natural clay (211) in foreground and tree bole (204) in middle ground (1m scale)



Plate 10. Showing machined slots through tree bole (204) and exposed modern domestic detritus within back fill (205). Looking west. 1m scale

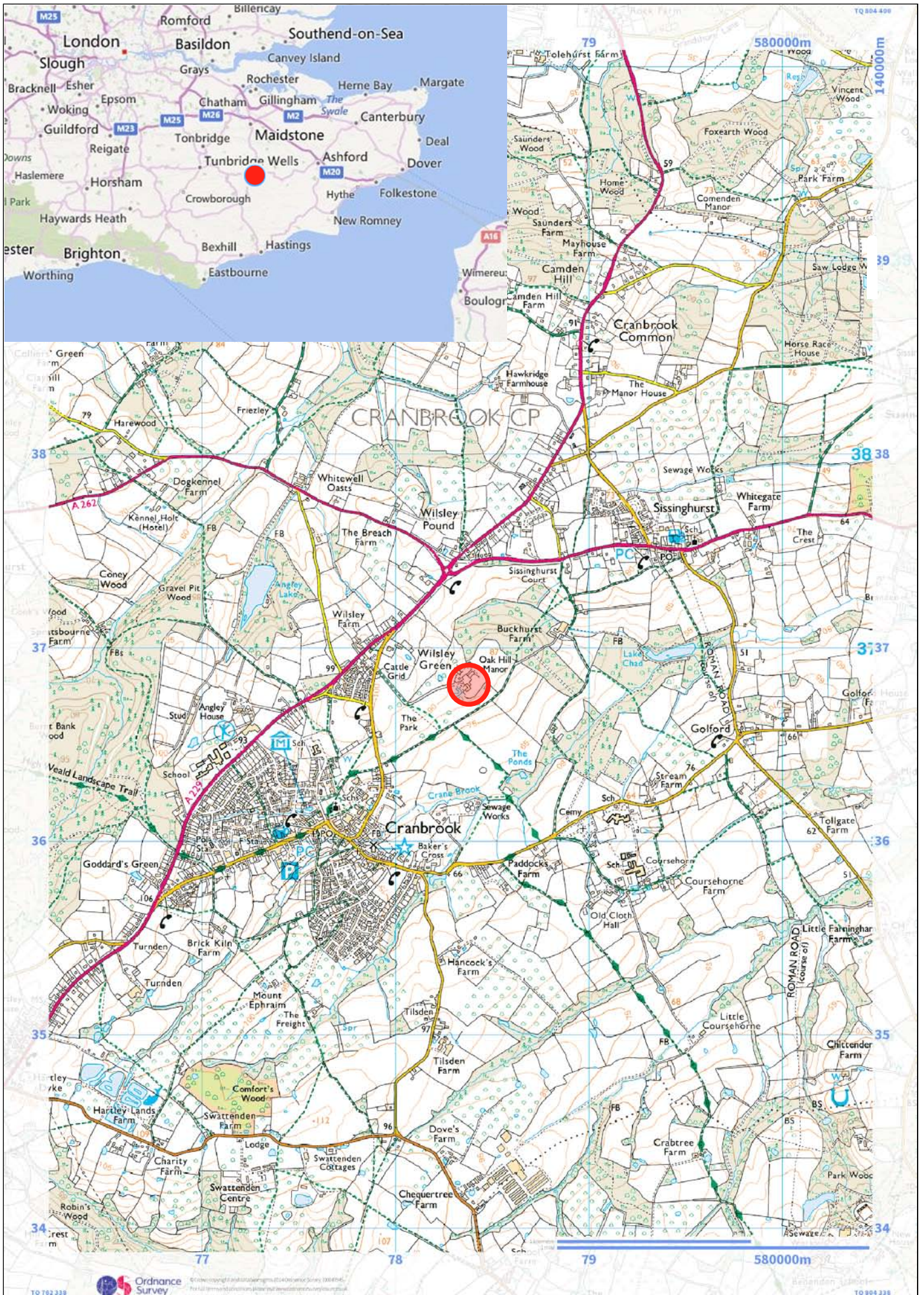
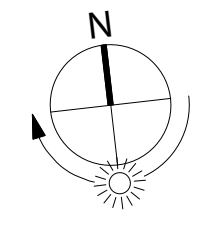
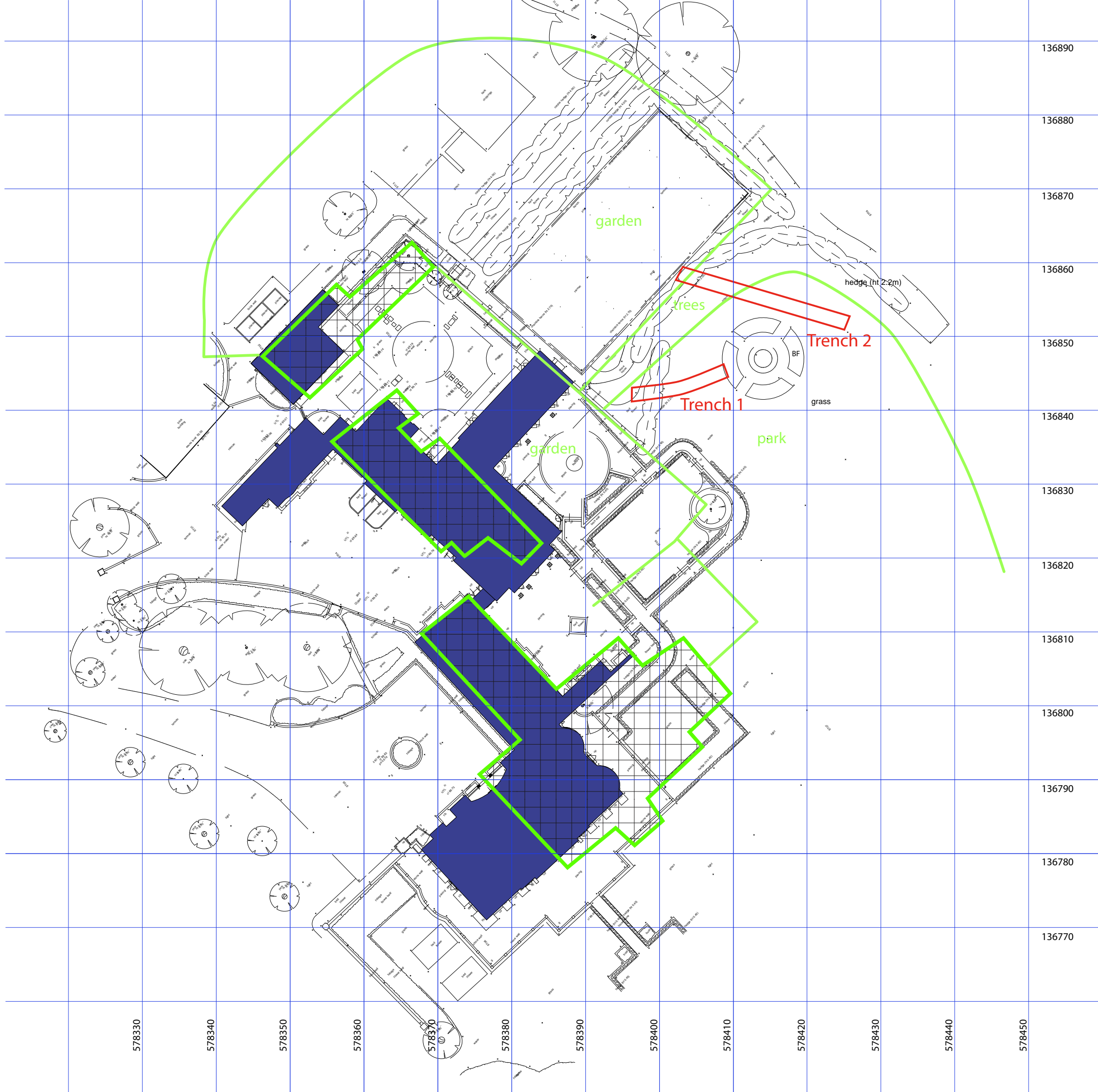


Figure 8: Site location map, scale 1:25000



- Key:**
- Evaluation trench —
  - OS map, first edition, surveyed 1870 —
  - building
  - Existing buildings



Figure 9: Site plan



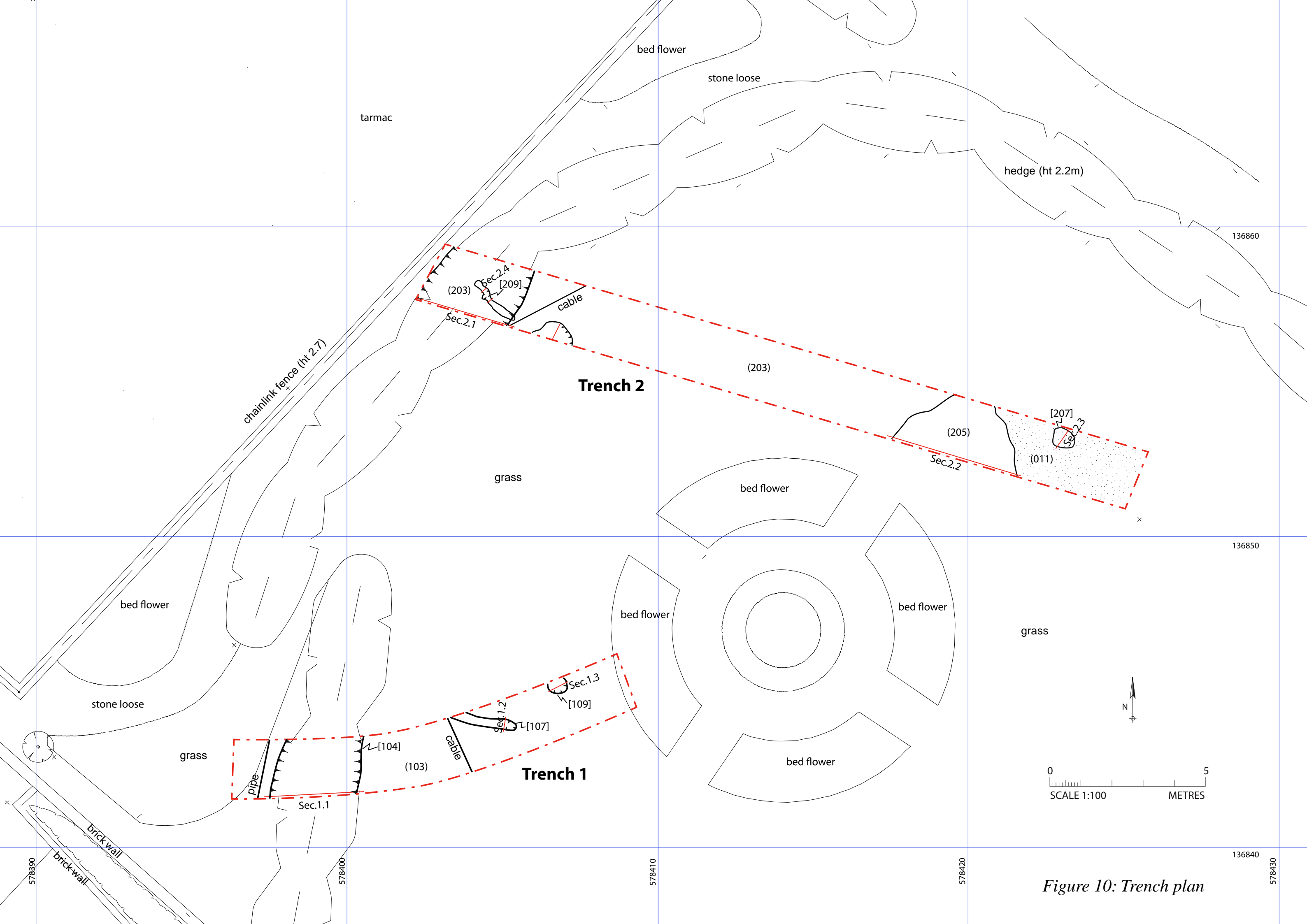
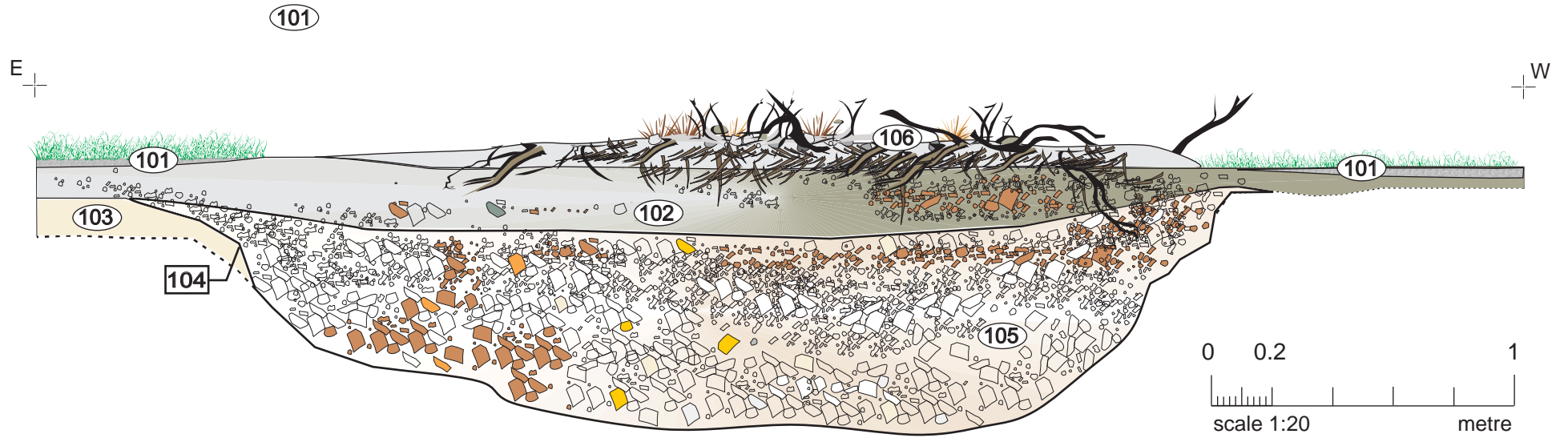
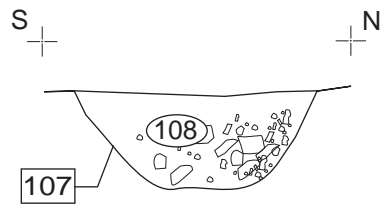


Figure 10: Trench plan

Section 1.1 Scale 1:20



Section 1.2 Scale 1:10



Section 1.3 Scale 1:10

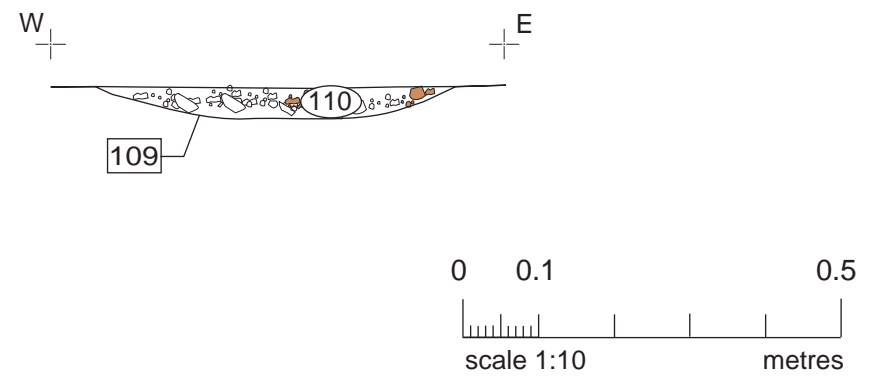
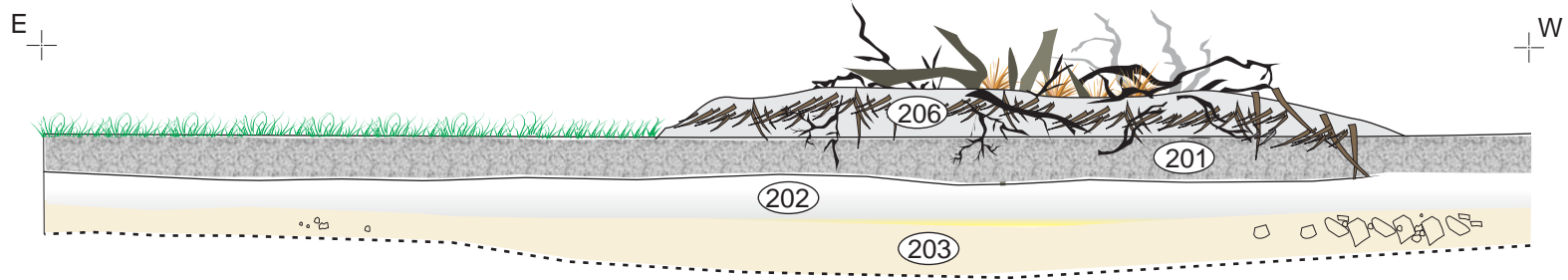
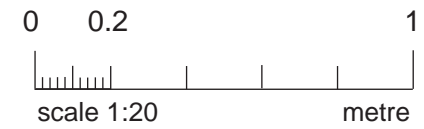
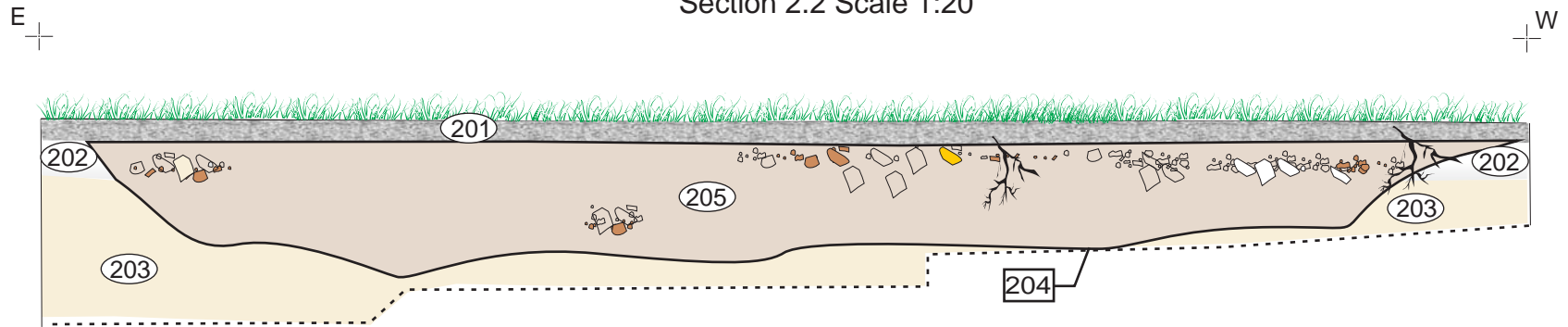


Figure 11: Sections in Trench 1

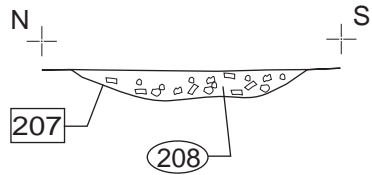
Section 2.1 Scale 1:20



Section 2.2 Scale 1:20



Section 2.3 Scale 1:10



Section 2.4 Scale 1:10

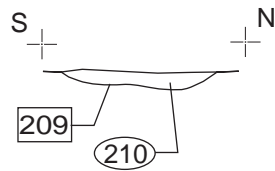


Figure 12: Sections in Trench 2