

GROUNDWORKS **ARCHAEOLOGY**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

23 Wood Street

Hinckley

Leicestershire



Report Number 351

Final

Heritage Consultancy and Planning Services Ltd T/A Groundworks Archaeology.
8 Mercia Business Village, Torwood Close, Coventry, CV4 8HX

Company Registration: 11534563 VAT number: 304037842

Client Name: Stronghold Homes

Document Title: Archaeological Evaluation Report, 23 Wood Street,
Hinckley, Leicestershire

Issue No.	Report Type:	Checked by:	Approved by:	Date Approved:
1	Draft for LA Review	James Roberts	Aimie Roberts	17/06/2026
2	Final Issue	James Roberts	Aimie Roberts	16/07/2026

National Grid Reference: SP 43019 94033

Planning Reference: 22/00695/HYB

Site Code: WSH24

Museum Accession X.A175.2024

Report no.: 351

Author: Michael Blake

Illustration: Michael Blake & Jame Roberts

Groundworks Archaeology

Web: groundworksarchaeology.co.uk
Email: contact@gwarch.co.uk
Phone 0333 200 4844

Disclaimer: This document has been prepared for the titled project or part thereof. It should not be relied upon for any other project or purpose without an independent check as to its suitability. Prior written authority from Groundworks Archaeology must also be obtained. No responsibility or liability is accepted by Groundworks Archaeology for consequences arising from this document being used for a purpose other than that for which it has been commissioned. Groundworks Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned. Any person/party who uses or relies on the document without the express consent of Groundworks Archaeology will, by such use, be taken as confirming their agreement to indemnify Groundworks Archaeology against any and all losses or damage arising as a result.

© Groundworks Archaeology

Heritage Consultancy and Planning Services Ltd T/A Groundworks Archaeology.
8 Mercia Business Village, Torwood Close, Coventry, CV4 8HX

Company Registration: 11534563 VAT number: 304037842

List of Contents:

	Summary	1
1.	Introduction	2
2.	Site Location and Description	2
3.	Planning Background	2
4.	Archaeological and Historical Background	3
5.	Aims and Objectives	7
6.	Methodology	8
7.	Results	8
8.	The Finds	10
	8.1 Pottery	10
	8.2 Flint	11
9.	Discussion and Conclusions	12
10	Archive	12
11.	Acknowledgements	13
12.	Bibliography	13

Appendices:

Appendix 1:	Trench Summary
Appendix 2:	Plates
Appendix 3:	OASIS Summary (groundwo2-535626)

List of Figures:

Figure 1:	Site Location
Figure 2:	Trench Location Plan
Figure 3:	Trench Plans

Heritage Consultancy and Planning Services Ltd T/A Groundworks Archaeology.
8 Mercia Business Village, Torwood Close, Coventry, CV4 8HX

Company Registration: 11534563 VAT number: 304037842

- Figure 4:** Archaeological Sections
- Figure 5:** Hinckley Tithe Map 1844
- Figure 6:** Ordnance Survey 25" 1st edition Map 1877

Summary

Groundworks Archaeology was commissioned by Stronghold Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 23 Wood Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire. The work was carried out at the proposed development site between the 6th May and 2nd June 2026.

The evaluation identified a number of features across all trenches, the earliest chronologically represented by a possible tree throw or heavily truncated layer in trench 3 containing two pieces of late Mesolithic flint.

A linear, or possibly curvilinear, feature crossing trenches 2 and 3 is the heavily truncated base of what is likely to have been a large ditch given the surviving dimensions at its base. The pottery is closely dated to the 13th century, and likely the first half of the century given the presence of Brill Ware which is unusual in this area beyond the first 50 years before the production of Chilvers Coton ceramics (Paul Blinkhorn pers. comm). This suggests a relatively short period of use.

The settlement at Hinckley was an Anglo-Saxon foundation, and by 1086 it had developed into a relatively large village with a population of 300. A motte and bailey castle was built by Hugh de Grantemesnil (the Earl of Leicester) and was fully established by the mid-12th century. This is the period in which Hinckley was developing into a market town and was clearly undergoing significant development. The castle motte is located approximately 160m south-west of the proposed development site with the bailey stretching out to the south. The ditch identified in the evaluation was clearly substantial and is located on high ground to the north-east of the castle. It is possible that it represents a defensive ditch for the developing market town or given its close proximity to the castle perhaps an as yet unidentified outer bailey lying to the north-east of the motte.

All three trenches contained brick wall foundations along a north-north-west to south-south-east orientation between 4 and 5 courses deep 0.13m to 0.52m below ground level. These correspond to the Old Castle Works factory founded in the 19th century and potentially earlier structure fronting onto Castle Street as evidenced by the historic mapping.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Groundworks Archaeology was commissioned by Stronghold Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 23 Wood Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire. The work was carried out at the proposed development site (PDS) between the 6th May and 2nd June 2026.
- 1.2 The work was carried out according to the requirements of an archaeological condition, which was attached to the granting of planning consent (Ref: 22/00695/HYB). This is in accordance with the principles established in *NPPF: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (Department of Culture, Media and Sport, revised 2021), and *Standard for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA, 2023).

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site is located on the south side of Wood Street, Hinckley at the junction with Priory Walk, within the Hinckley town centre conservation area. The site comprises a 19th century former hosiery factory with a 1930s extension fronting onto Wood Street. A derelict building is located on the western boundary of the site with open car parking to the east and west side of the original factory building. The site is centred on NGR SP 43019 94033 at an approximate height of 134m AOD (figure 1).

Geology

- 2.2 The British Geological Survey (BGS) website identifies the bedrock geology as the Mercia Mudstone Group, a mudstone sedimentary bedrock formed between 252.2 and 201.3 million years ago during the Triassic period.
- 2.3 Superficial deposits are recorded as the Dunsmore Gravel, a sand and gravel sedimentary superficial formed between 480 and 423 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period.

3. Planning Background

- 3.1 A hybrid planning application (22/00695/HYB) comprising of: *Outline application (access, appearance and scale to be considered) for the demolition of existing factory building and erection of a residential building comprising up to 12 residential units; a Full application comprising the change of use of the existing factory building to residential including the addition of an extra storey and comprising 14 residential units* at 23 Wood Street, Hinckley has been approved by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

3.2 Condition 30 stated that:

No demolition/development shall take place/commence until a written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing for the first phase of archaeological works. Further WSI/s would be needed for Mitigation stage/s. For land that is included within the WSIs, no demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives, and

- *The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works*
- *The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme as set out in the WSI.*

Reason: *To ensure satisfactory archaeological investigation, recording, dissemination and archiving in accordance with the requirements of Policies DM11, DM12 and DM13 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016).*

3.3 Accordingly, Groundworks Archaeology produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing an appropriate methodology for an archaeological evaluation which was duly approved by the local planning authority (Roberts 2026).

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 A search of the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (HER) with a 1km radius identified 130 monuments (of which 84 comprise extant buildings) and 49 events. There is one 1 scheduled monument in the study area but no registered parks and gardens or registered battlefields

Prehistoric

4.2 The Palaeolithic period was characterised by hunter gatherers using relatively simple stone tools. At this time the area was part of the Great Forest of Arden and numerous flint implements particularly hand axes have been found in the county suggesting repeated visits. It appears from the evidence that this activity was much reduced by the onset of the Ice Age.

4.3 As the climate became warmer and the ice sheets retreated, the forest was re-established. Scatters of flint are the most common evidence of Mesolithic

- and Neolithic activity, and it is likely that these scatters represent camps, either temporary or permanent in forest clearings. Numerous sites are known in the wider area of which the most important is Blacklow Hill, near Warwick. Excavations here have revealed a substantial tool-making site. Towards the end of the Neolithic period the hunter-gatherer way of life was gradually being replaced by a simple farming economy. As farming developed, clearings were made in the forest.
- 4.4 The Bronze Age saw further development of farming communities with the establishment of field systems and more organised communities. Leicestershire being a rich agricultural area, farming continued to expand and by 1500 BC much of the woodland had been cleared and settled. Only one find of Bronze Age date has been identified within the study area, a site at 'The Vicarage', St Mary's Road.
- 4.5 During the Iron Age, the population continued to expand and was divided into clearly demarcated tribal zones. This changing society is reflected in the ever-increasing number of settlements found across the county. There was a wider move to more defensive settlements witnessed in the later Iron Age with the construction of hillforts such as those at Burrough Hill, Breedon Hill and Beacon Hill. The closest hill fort to the site is that of Oldbury near Nuneaton. Only one find of Iron Age date has been made within the study area, a brooch (MLE6500) reputedly found on Castle Hill 165m south-west of the site. However, the HER description records the location as "suggestibly false".
- Roman**
- 4.6 For the first few decades following the Roman invasion of Britain in AD 43, the Leicestershire area found itself at the frontier of Roman rule. Major roads such the Fosse Way were established which ran through Leicester and went north to Lincoln (Lindum) and south-west towards Cirencester (Corinium) and Bath (Aquae Sulis) marking the western frontier of Roman rule in Britain for several decades. Watling Street passed close to Hinckley linking London (Londinium) with Chester (Deva Victrix). The area was heavily fortified during this period and several military settlements were founded to defend the roads. The Roman period also saw the establishment of towns and an urban economy supported by villa estates in the hinterland. Leicester itself was the important site of the Roman city of Ratae Corieltavorum, the centre of the Coritani tribal territory. Roman Leicester as a tribal capital or civitas had its origins as a military fort, certainly before 80 A.D. and eventually grew to a walled city of just over one hundred acres.
- 4.7 Within the study area itself a potential Roman site (MLE2895) has been identified near Priory Cottage 475m north-east of the site. In c.1905 a glass tear bottle, fragments of pottery and portions of a tessellated pavement were said to have been found on allotments at the site. In 1930 a Roman

portrait bust was found on a rubbish heap nearby. This may suggest the presence of a high-status site although to date no further evidence has been found. An archaeological investigation (ELE7298 and ELE9927) at the Priory site adjacent to St Mary's Church 344m west-south-west of the site identified numerous sherds of Roman greyware with fragments of brick and tile.

Early-medieval and Medieval

- 4.8 Hinckley originated as a Saxon settlement the name deriving from the Old English *leah* for clearing in a wood and a personal name '*Hinca*' meaning Hinca's clearing. Domesday (1086) records Hinckley as a fairly sizable settlement with a population nearing 300. The Earl of Leicester built a motte and bailey castle (MLE2980, scheduled monument 1010299) 161m south-west of the site. A Benedictine priory (MLE2878) was founded 344m south-west of the site. It was an early foundation of probable 11th century date. Investigations in 2004 (ELE7298) identified masonry remains, a cobbled surface and a cobbled 'amphitheatre' shaped feature that could relate to the Priory. Medieval fishponds (MLE2880) are also present adjacent to the Priory which were still shown on maps in 1782.
- 4.9 The 13th century saw the village of Hinckley develop into a small market town. The market (MLE2884) was first recorded in 1311 although it almost certainly existed before then. There are numerous findspots of Medieval material across the study area including a coin hoard (MLE6792) of Edward III found 288m east of the site, and pottery (MLE16343) 250m south-west of the site.

Post-medieval

- 4.10 The Post-medieval period witnessed the continued growth of Hinckley, despite major outbreaks of plague in 1626 and again in 1666. By the early 17th century Hinckley's population had grown to 1,000, the next 100 years saw this population double to 2,000 by 1700.
- 4.11 The industry of Hinckley was transformed in 1640 with the introduction of the stocking frame; stocking manufacture came to dominate Hinckley for the next 250 years. By 1801 the population had expanded to 5,158 mainly thanks to the success of the hand weavers.
- 4.12 The first turnpike road connecting Leicester to Nuneaton (MLE20657) was opened in 1755 passing to the north-east of the site later becoming the A47. A second turnpike road connecting Hinckley to Lutterworth (MLE20924) was opened in 1761 and ran just south of the site along what is now London Road.
- 4.13 In the first half of the 19th century Hinckley grew little. The population rose only slightly to 6,177. Industry was still dominated by hand weavers and in

the early 19th century there was a great deal of poverty and hardship. However, in the later 19th century the hand frames were replaced by steam powered frames in factories and Hinckley boomed. The population grew to over 11,000 by 1900. The first steam powered factory (MLE17921) was built by Thomas Payne in 1853, located on Wood Street only 95m west of the site. During the mid-1890s Ginns Son and Moore took occupancy of these premises and subsequently traded as 'Castle Street Works'. The factory buildings also included Ebenezer Chapel built in 1802 by William Gadsby (a stockinger, hosier and preacher) and his congregation. The site was subsequently demolished and is now a B&Q. The site at 23 Wood Street represents one of these earlier factories (MLE17922) and is thought to have been built in the later 19th century. The last manufacturing occupant of the factory was Capital Leisurewear, founded by Mr David Moore and Mr Brian Taylor in 1972. Of the many factories built in this period, the example represented by the site at Wood Street is one of the few survivors.

- 4.14 The 19th century saw further development in Hinckley including the opening of the Ashby canal in 1804 and the connection to Nuneaton via the railways in 1862 followed a year later by a connection to Leicester.

Recent work

- 4.15 In 2019 Groundworks Archaeology undertook a level 2/3 historic building survey on the site. The research undertaken for this project provided an in depth history of the factory development which is summarised below.
- 4.16 In 1894 Arthur Davenport dissolved a partnership with Joseph Ginns to establish a new partnership with an Atherstone hosier. For unknown reasons this partnership also failed and in 1898 Arthur Davenport set up in business independently as Arthur Davenport and Sons based at 126a Castle Street (listed in Kelly's directory up to 1900), a site directly behind Wood Street. At some point between 1900 and 1904 the Castle Street business was expanded, and the extant T-shaped factory was built fronting onto Wood Street.
- 4.17 Kelly's directory of 1904 lists Arthur Davenport and Sons at 126a Castle Street and Wood Street demonstrating that is operational by this date. The business continued to grow and by 1937 plans had been laid to build a further extension to the east of the T shaped factory. This extension was built by a local builder named Jephcotte (Ian Davenport via Rhianyyd Murray *pers. com*). A further extension of four bays was subsequently added in the same style, but identifiable by being built in a brighter orange brick. The date of this further extension is uncertain as the plans do not survive; however, it is likely to be no later than the late 1940's and it is possibly a wartime extension associated with the need to provide uniforms in ever greater number.

- 4.18 The factory remained in the hands of Arthur Davenport and Sons until 1972 when the business was dissolved and sold to the three brothers, Fred, Ronald and Arthur Davenport. In 1973 the three brothers sold the factory to a Mr Stanley Lockley, who in 1980 leased the entire premises to Christian Dior Couture Marketing for a period of two years. In 1984 Tritex Engineering (a manufacturer of machinery for textile, apparel and leather production) leased 50% of the site, while John Martin Hosiery and S Lockley Hosiery each leased 25%. In September 1984 Pilgrims Webster leased 7000 square feet, presumably the premises of Tritex engineering which was dissolved as a company in 1958. At some point in the late 1980s or early 1990s the premises were again split between two hosiery companies, Barry Lager Fabrics (a wholesale material supplier) and Country Knit (a small-scale hosiery manufacturer). In 1994 the owner Stan Lockley gifted the premises in trust to his wife.
- 4.19 In 2004 the present owners purchased 23 Wood Street, letting the ground floor of the 1930s extension to Business Print. By 2006 Colour Flex Labels had taken the lease of this area and were still in operation in 2019. Other businesses who have leased space within the earlier structure include a car mechanic and dance studio, although dates are uncertain.

5. Aims and objectives of the project

- 5.1 ClfA defines field evaluation as “a programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which seeks to determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts. It may form a single or final phase of work within a defined area or site on land, in an inter-tidal zone or under water.” (ClfA 2023).
- 5.2 The aim of the project was to determine the presence or otherwise of archaeological features within the application site, knowledge of which could be used to inform further mitigation.
- 5.3 The objectives of the project were:

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of the development site.

To determine the type, extent, condition, nature, character, quality, function, and date, of any archaeological remains encountered.

To gain information about heritage assets identified within the area of the proposed development site.

To mitigate potential threats.

To interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional and national context.

To provide sufficient data to formulate a suitable archaeological mitigation plan.

6. Methodology

- 6.1 The archaeological evaluation was carried out between the 6th May and 2nd June 2026. This involved the mechanical excavation under archaeological supervision of one 30m and two 20m x 1.80m trial trenches. The trenches were laid out via DGPS survey as specified in the WSI.
- 6.2 Where necessary, surfaces were hand cleaned for examination and recording and deposits observed were recorded on standard pro-forma recording sheets.
- 6.3 Full context descriptions are provided in the trench summary which is presented in Appendix 1.
- 6.4 A digital colour photographic record was also maintained, some of which is reproduced in this report as plates 1–10 Appendix 2.
- 6.5 All work was carried out according to the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation and in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) standards and guidance for archaeological evaluations.

7. Results

Trench 1

- 7.1 Trench 1 was orientated east to west and was excavated to a total length of 27.9m and was foreshortened due to tight space constraints for the excavator adjacent to the site boundary (figure 2, plates 1 to 3).
- 7.2 The uppermost deposit (101) was the tarmac yard surface of the carpark which was 0.06m thick. This overlay a bedding layer (102) made up of stone, gravel and sand up to 0.09m thick which in turn sealed an uneven mixed made ground (103) that contained modern crush and rubble including glass and plastic which was between 0.42m and 0.9m thick. The made ground directly overlay the natural geology (104).
- 7.3 The trench contained two brick wall foundations orientated north-north-west to south-south-east which correspond with the outer walls of the original

Castle Street Factory constructed in the later 19th century and shown on the 1877 Ordnance Survey 25" map (figure 6). There was some evidence for a part brick, part cobble surface between the foundations however the ground was too heavily disturbed to allow a reliable interpretation. Up to 4 gas pipes, 2 salt glazed ceramic water pipes, a lead water supply, electricity supply and a ceramic field drain crossed through the trench.

- 7.4 No other archaeological features were present within the trench.

Trench 2

- 7.5 Trench 2 was orientated north-east to south-west and was excavated to a length of 18.5m (figures 2 and 3, plates 4 to 6).
- 7.6 The stratigraphy in trench 2 was similar that of trench 1, with the uppermost deposit represented by the tarmac yard surface (201) 0.06m thick overlying a concrete surface (202) 0.15m thick. This in turn sealed the made ground (203) which was between 0.52m and 0.7m thick. As with trench 1 the made ground sealed the natural geology (204).
- 7.7 The trench contained one feature, a large ditch [205] which cut the natural (204) and was orientated approximately north-west to south-east (figure 4, section 1). It was heavily truncated on both sides by modern services and from above by former building and demolition work. Its width in section was 6.4m, however as its exact orientation could not be ascertained it could be that this was at an oblique angle exaggerating the width. Only a single the basal fill (206) remained, a mottled sandy-clay and sandy-silt, that contained frequent patches of charcoal and from which 16 sherds of 13th century pottery was recovered.
- 7.8 The trench also contained two brick wall foundations orientated north-north-west to south-south-east which again correspond to the original Castle Works factory as seen in trench 1.

Trench 3

- 7.9 Trench 3 was excavated to a length of 19m orientated north-north-east to south-south-west (figures 2 and 3, plates 7 to 10).
- 7.10 The stratigraphy in trench 3 comprised of an upper layer of mixed rubble and crush made ground (301) between 0.48 and 0.65m deep overlying a silty layer (307) up to 0.11m deep. This in turn sealed the natural geology (302).
- 7.11 Two features were present in the trench, one was a large, heavily truncated ditch [303] orientated approximately north-west to south-east and forming a continuation of the ditch [205] seen in trench 2. As with in trench 2 it was severely truncated and only a basal fill of sandy-clay and sandy-silt (304)

survived from which 6 sherds of 13th century pottery were recovered. The second feature present in the trench [305] was shallow and irregular in both profile and plan. Its single fill (306) contained two pieces of later Mesolithic worked flint, part of a microlith and a notched, retouched tool made on a large broken flake. The irregular form of this feature might suggest a natural origin, perhaps a tree throw which are known to have provided a convenient sheltered focus for early activity, or perhaps a heavily truncated layer. Both features were sealed by (307).

- 7.12 The trench also contained two brick wall foundations orientated north-north-west to south-south-east. One ran through the full width of the trench, the other stopped by foundations at right angle west-south-west to east-north-east. These may correspond with either the north-western wall of the Old Castle Street Works as shown on figure 6, or perhaps the rear elevations of the buildings fronting onto Castle Street on the 1844 Tithe Map (figure 5).

8. The Finds

8.1 Pottery - Paul Blinkhorn

- 8.1.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 22 sherds with a total weight of 177g. It was all Medieval and was recorded using the conventions of the Leicestershire County type-series (Sawday 1994), as follows

BR: Brill/Boarstall Ware, 13th – 14th century. 5 sherds, 38g.

CC1: Chilvers Coton 'A' Ware, AD1200-1400. 1 sherd, 5g.

DT: Deritend Ware, 13th – 14th century. 1 sherd, 3g.

LY4: Shelly Ware, 1100-1400. 2 sherds, 7g.

PM: Potter's Marston Ware, 1100-1300. 13 sherds, 124g.

- 8.1.2 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of contemporary sites in the region.

	PM		LY4		BR		DT		CC1		
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
206	11	110	2	7	2	24	1	3			13thC
304	2	14			3	14			1	5	13thC
Total	13	124	2	7	5	38	1	3	1	5	

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

- 8.1.3 The assemblage comprised a fairly typical mixture of rims and bodysherds from unglazed jars and glazed jugs. The small fragment of Deritend Ware had the underglaze white slip characteristic of the material. The material is

all in reasonably good condition and appears reliably stratified.

8.2 Flint – Lynne Bevan

- 8.2.1 Two worked flints dating to the later Mesolithic period were recovered from a site at Wood Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire (WSH24), both of which came from the same context (306). They comprised part of a microlith (Cat. No. 1) and a notched, retouched tool made on a large broken flake (Cat. No. 2). The flints are viewed as contemporary in both contextual and stylistic terms, as well as in the raw material used for their manufacture. Both were made from light to mid-brown translucent flint with a dense, compacted brown cortex characteristic of flint from a secondary source, probably local gravels. The close similarity in raw material suggests that both tools may even have originated from the same flint core.
- 8.2.2 The microlith (Cat. No. 1), a small backed bladelet (Butler 2005, 92, Fig. 35:8, 93), was broken across the shaft. The retouched tool (Cat. No. 2) had been worked along one side from two different directions, with one area of retouch forming a notch. While the retouch was similar to that usually found on a scraper, the tool was not of a conventional Mesolithic scraper form, and, in any case, scrapers are a class of tool rarely found on later Mesolithic sites (Butler 2005, 105). The tool is more likely to have been a notch (Butler 2005, 112, Fig. 46: 1-2, 115), a type of tool which, on sites interpreted as hunting camps, might have been used to manufacture and finally shape arrow shafts (*ibid*, 112). Alternately, it might have been less-classifiable, one of a range of 'diverse retouched pieces' having 'no apparent function', which were 'probably expedient tools manufactured for a specific task...and then discarded' (Butler 2005, 114).
- 8.2.3 In conclusion, the recovery of these two well-preserved flint tools is significant on a local and regional basis in view of the evidence it provides of later Mesolithic activity in the landscape, activity which was essentially episodic and characteristically left few tangible traces.

Catalogue

1. Microlith/backed bladelet, with steep retouch on one side, broken across the shaft (Butler 2005, 92, Fig. 35:8, 93). Light brown translucent flint. Dimensions: 29 mm x 8 mm x 4 mm. Later Mesolithic. Weight: 1 gram. Context 306.
2. Notched tool on a large broken flake, heavily-retouched on one side from opposing directions, with one area of retouch forming a notch, and with visible use-wear along both working edges. It has a pronounced bulb of percussion resulting from a hard hammer technique and there are two small blade and flake detachments on the dorsal face at the proximal end. Similarly-notched flakes date to the later Mesolithic period (Butler

2005, Figure 46: 1-2, 115). Light to mid-brown translucent flint. Dimensions: 60 mm x 27 mm x 10 mm. Weight: 17 grams. Context 306.

9. Discussion and Conclusions

- 9.1 The evaluation identified a number of features across all trenches, the earliest chronologically represented by a possible tree throw or heavily truncated layer [305] in trench 3 containing two pieces of late Mesolithic flint.
- 9.2 A linear, or possibly curvilinear, feature [205] in trench 2 and [303] in trench 3 is the heavily truncated base of what is likely to have been a large ditch given the surviving dimensions at its base. The pottery is closely dated to the 13th century, and likely the first half of the century given the presence of Brill Ware which is unusual in this area beyond the first 50 years before the production of Chilvers Coton ceramics (*Paul Blinkhorn pers. comm*). This suggests a relatively short period of use.
- 9.3 The settlement at Hinckley was an Anglo-Saxon foundation, and by 1086 it had developed into a relatively large village with a population of 300. A motte and bailey castle was built by Hugh de Grantsmesnil (the Earl of Leicester) and was fully established by the mid-12th century. This is the period in which Hinckley was developing into a market town and was clearly undergoing significant development. The castle motte is located approximately 160m south-west of the PDA with the bailey stretching out to the south. The ditch identified in the evaluation was clearly substantial and is located on high ground to the north-east of the castle. It is possible that it represents a defensive ditch for the developing market town or given its close proximity to the castle perhaps an as yet unidentified outer bailey lying to the north-east of the motte.
- 9.4 All three trenches contained brick wall foundations along a north-north-west to south-south-east orientation between 4 and 5 courses deep 0.13m to 0.52m below ground level. These correspond to the Old Castle Works factory founded in the 19th century and potentially earlier structure fronting onto Castle Street as evidenced by the historic mapping.
- 9.5 The evaluation fulfilled its aims with a high degree of confidence. The evidence for activity within the site dates from late Mesolithic to Post-medieval periods.

10. Archive

- 10.1 The project will be archived with the Leicestershire Museum Service under the accession code X.A175.2024. The digital records will be lodged with the

Archaeology Data Service (ADS) and final report uploaded to OASIS and submitted to the Leicestershire HER.

11. Acknowledgements

- 11.1 Groundworks Archaeology would like to thank Stronghold Homes for commissioning this investigation. We would also like to thank Mr William Kelly of the Leicestershire Historic and Natural Environment Team for his assistance during the course of the project.

12. Bibliography

ADS 2013 *Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice*. Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice

British Geological Survey online viewer (accessed 14th January 2025)
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Brown, D. H. 2011 *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (revised edition). Archaeological Archives Forum

Butler, C. 2005 *Prehistoric Flintwork*. Stroud, Tempus Publishing Ltd

ClfA 2020a *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials*. Reading, ClfA

ClfA 2020c *Code of Conduct*. Reading, ClfA

ClfA 2021 *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*. Reading, ClfA

ClfA 2021 *Code of Conduct, professional ethics in archaeology*. Reading, ClfA

ClfA 2022 *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives*. Reading ClfA

ClfA 2023 *Universal Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Reading ClfA

English Heritage 2011 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory, Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (second edition). Portsmouth, English Heritage

Historic England 2015 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE project managers' guide*. Swindon, Historic England

Historic England 2015 *Geoarchaeology: Using Earth Sciences to Understand the Archaeological Record*. Swindon, Historic England

MHCLG, 2021. *National Planning Policy Framework*

Nichols, J. 1811 *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire*. Vol. 1; Part 2. J. Nichols and Son, London.

Roberts J. 2024 *Written Scheme of Investigation, Archaeological Evaluation, 23 Wood Street, Hinckley*. Coventry, Groundworks Archaeology

Sawday, D, 1994 'The post-Roman pottery' in P Clay and R Pollard *Iron Age and Roman Occupation in the West Bridge Area, Leicester. Excavations 1962-71* Leics. Museums

SMA 1993 *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections*. Society of Museum Archaeologists

SMA 1995 *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive*. Society of Museum Archaeologists

Watkinson, D. and Neal, V. 1998 *First Aid for Finds: practical guide for archaeologists*. United Kingdom Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works

Appendix 1: Trench Summary

Trench 1			
Dimensions: 27.9m x 1.8m		Ground level 133.955m AOD	
Orientation: E - W		Max Depth 1.07m	
Context	Type	Description	Depth
101	Layer	Tarmac yard surface	0.06m
102	Layer	Bedding for <101> sub-round stone 15mm – 60mm in grey gravel & sand	0.09m
103	Layer	Made ground mixed friable dark brown sandy-silt & mid orangey-brown sandy-clay with freq rubble & crush	0.42m – 0.9m
104	Natural	Mid brownish-orange firm sandy-clay with freq rounded stone 40mm – 150mm	>0.15m
2 x brick wall foundations orientated NNW - SSE			

Trench 2			
Dimensions: 18.5 x 1.8m		Ground level 133.866m AOD	
Orientation: NE - SW		Max Depth 0.91m	
Context	Type	Description	Depth
201	Layer	Tarmac yard surface	0.06m
202	Layer	Concrete surface	0.15m
203	Layer	Made ground mixed friable dark brown sandy-silt & mid orangey-brown sandy-clay with freq rubble & crush	0.52m – 0.7m
204	Natural	Mid brownish-orange firm sandy-clay with freq rounded stone 40mm – 150mm	>0.17m
205	Cut	Linear or curvilinear ditch orientation postulated NW – SE; truncated by modern disturbance; gradual b.o.s to shallow concave side & imperceptible b.o.s to flat wide base; >1.8m long x ±6.4m wide	>0.46m
206	Fill	Single basal fill of [205] mottled firm mid brownish-orange sandy-clay & greyish-brown sandy-silt with freq lumps & flecks of charcoal & occa rounded stone	0.46m
2 x brick wall foundations orientated NNW - SSE			

Trench 3			
Dimensions: 19m x 1.8m		Ground level 133.674 m AOD	
Orientation: NNE - SSW		Max Depth 0.79m	
Context	Type	Description	Depth
301	Layer	Made ground mixed friable dark brown sandy-silt & mid orangey-brown sandy-clay with freq rubble & crush	0.48m – 0.68m
302	Natural	Mid brownish-orange firm sandy-clay with freq rounded stone 40mm – 150mm	>0.11m
303	Cut	Linear or curvilinear ditch orientation postulated NW – SE; truncated by modern disturbance; gradual b.o.s to shallow concave side & gradual b.o.s to flat base; >1.8m long x ±6.4m wide	>0.36m
304	Fill	Single basal fill of [303] mottled firm mid brownish-orange sandy-clay & greyish-brown sandy-silt with occa flecks of charcoal & rounded stone	0.46m
305	Cut	Irregular in plan & section, pos. natural feature	0.14m
306	Fill	Single fill of [305] mid brownish-orange firm sandy-silt with freq rounded stone	0.14m
307	Layer	Dark brown soft clayey-silt with mod rounded stone	0.11m
2 x brick wall foundations orientated NNW – SSE, one stopped by foundations at right angle WSW -ENE			

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking east



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking west

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 3: South facing section trench 1



Plate 4: Trench 2 looking north-east

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 5: Trench 2 looking south-west



Plate 6: North-west facing section trench 2 & ditch [205]

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 7: Trench 3 looking north-north-east



Plate 8: Trench 3 looking south-south-west

Appendix 2: Plates



Plate 9: West-north-west facing section trench 3 & ditch [303]



Plate 10: West-north-west facing section trench 3 & possible natural feature [305]

Appendix 3: OASIS Summary

OASIS ID (UID)	groundwo2-535626
Project Name	Evaluation at 23 Wood Street, Hinckley
Sitename	23 Wood Street, Hinckley
Sitecode	WSH24
Project Identifier(s)	
Activity type	Evaluation
Planning Id	22/00695/HYB
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Groundworks Archaeology
Project Dates	06-May-2026 - 02-Jun-2026
Location	23 Wood Street, Hinckley NGR: SP 43019 94033 LL: 52.54245990070695, -1.367113010755104 12 Fig: 443019,294033
Administrative Areas	Country: England County/Local Authority: Leicestershire Local Authority District: Hinckley and Bosworth Parish: Hinckley and Bosworth, unparished area
Project Methodology	The evaluation involved the mechanical excavation under archaeological supervision of one 30m and two 20m x 1.80m trial trenches. The trenches were laid out via DGPS survey as specified in the WSI. Where necessary, surfaces were hand cleaned for examination and recording and deposits observed were recorded on standard pro-forma recording sheets.
Project Results	The evaluation identified a number of features across all trenches, the earliest chronologically represented by a possible tree throw or heavily truncated layer in trench 3 containing two pieces of late

Appendix 3: OASIS Summary

	Mesolithic flint. A linear, or possibly curvilinear, feature crossing trenches 2 and 3 is the heavily truncated base of what is likely to have been a large ditch given the surviving dimensions at its base. The pottery is closely dated to the 13th century, and likely the first half of the century given the presence of Brill Ware which is unusual in this area beyond the first 50 years before the production of Chilvers Coton ceramics (Paul Blinkhorn pers. comm). This suggests a relatively short period of use.
Keywords	Ditch - Medieval - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private or public corporation Stronghold Homes
HER	Leicestershire HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	james Roberts
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Physical Archive, Documentary Archive - to be deposited with Leicestershire County Council Museums;

Report generated on: 16-07-2026:1103

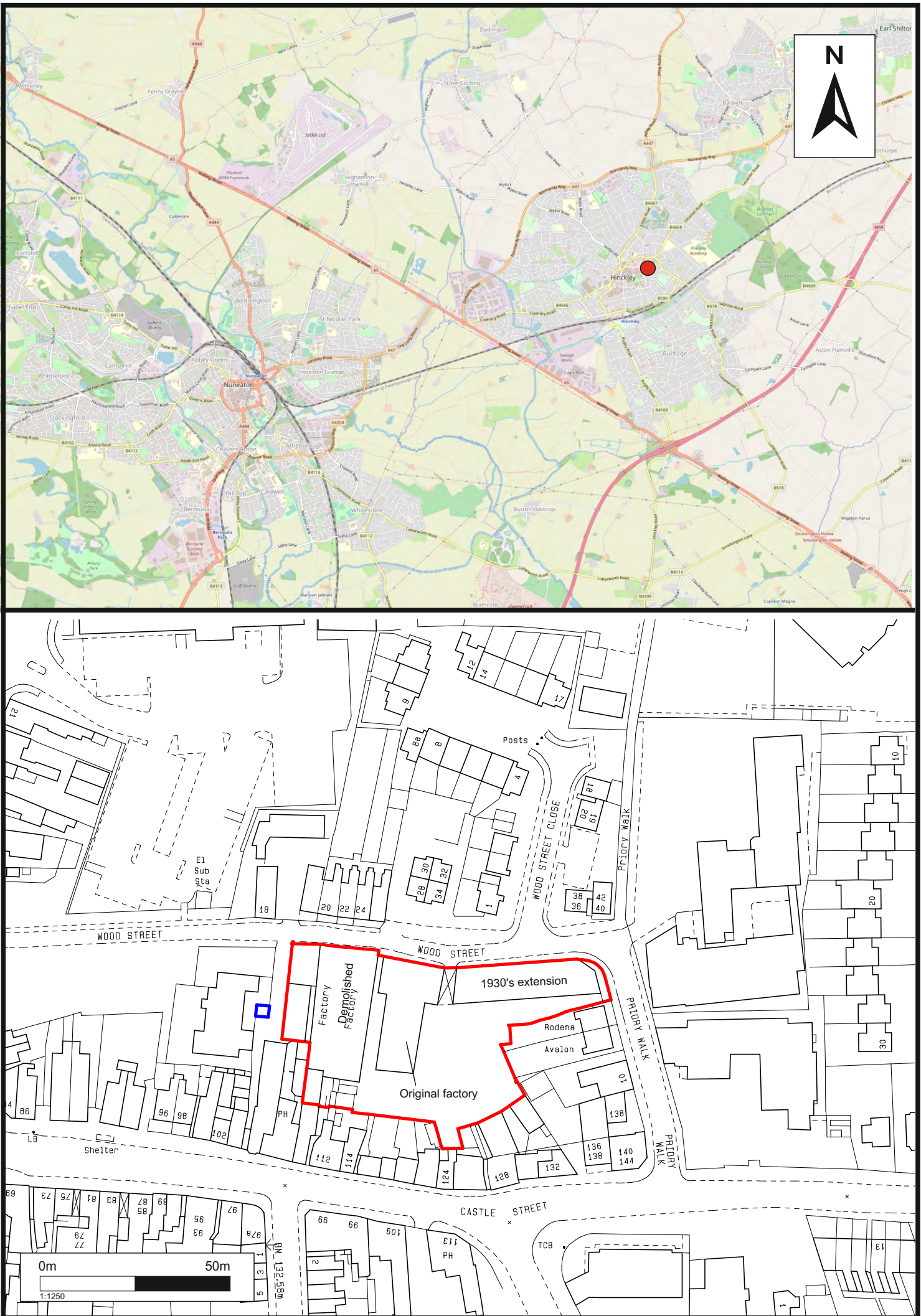


Figure 1: Site location

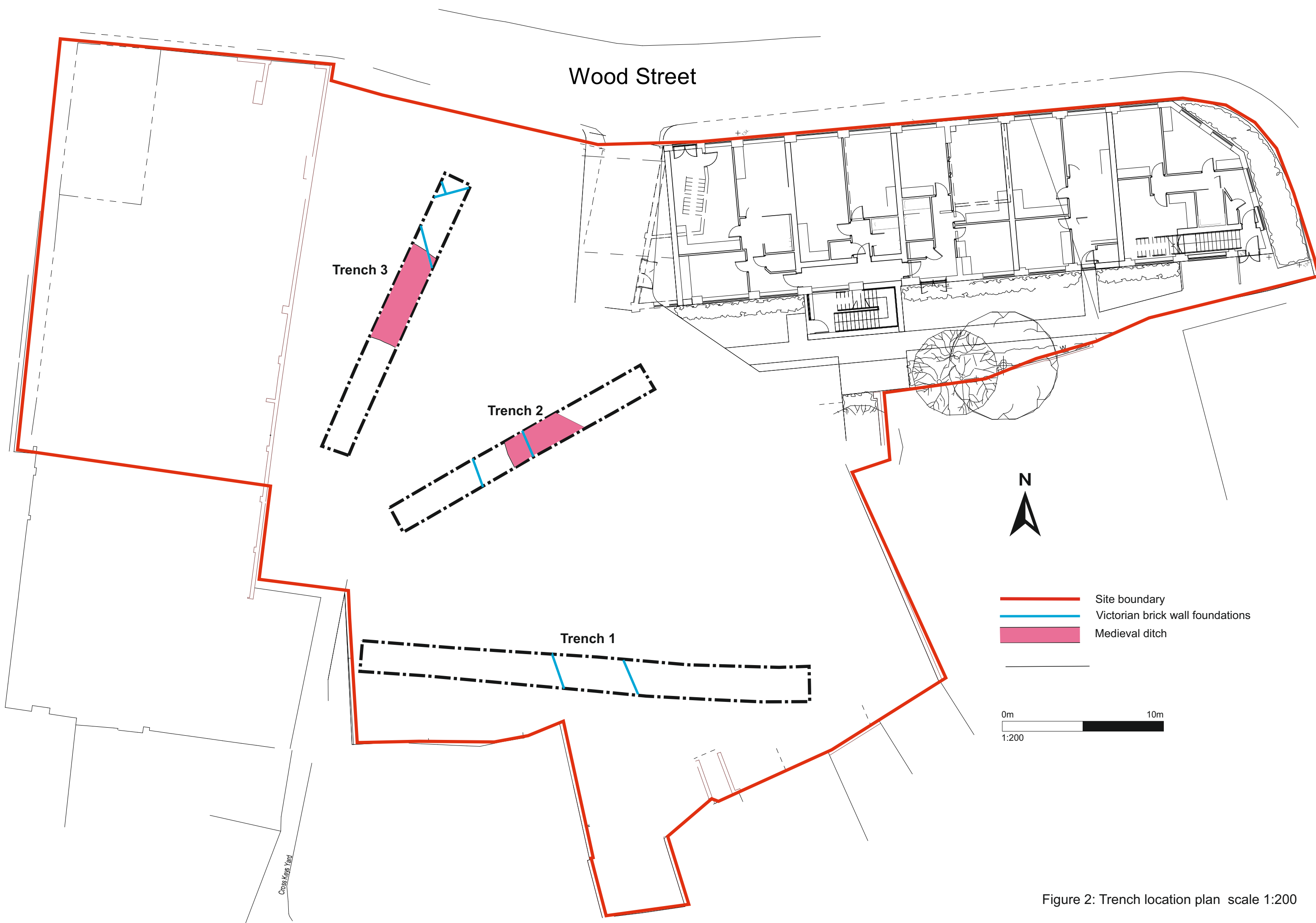


Figure 2: Trench location plan scale 1:200

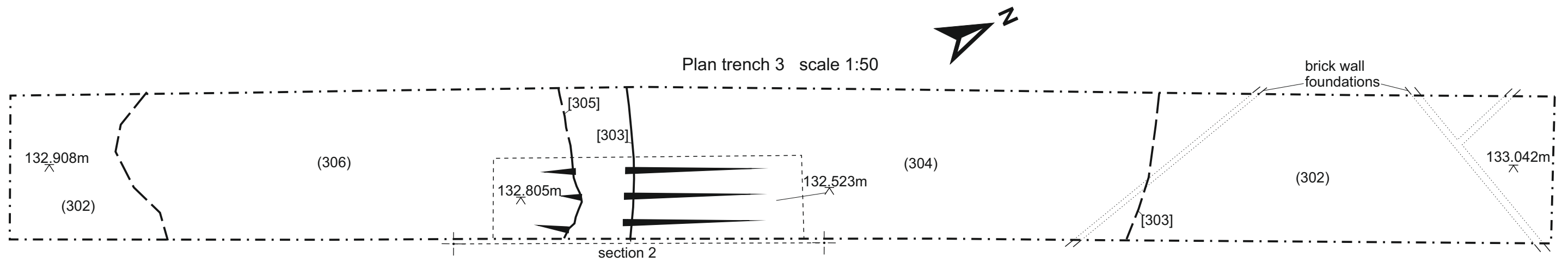
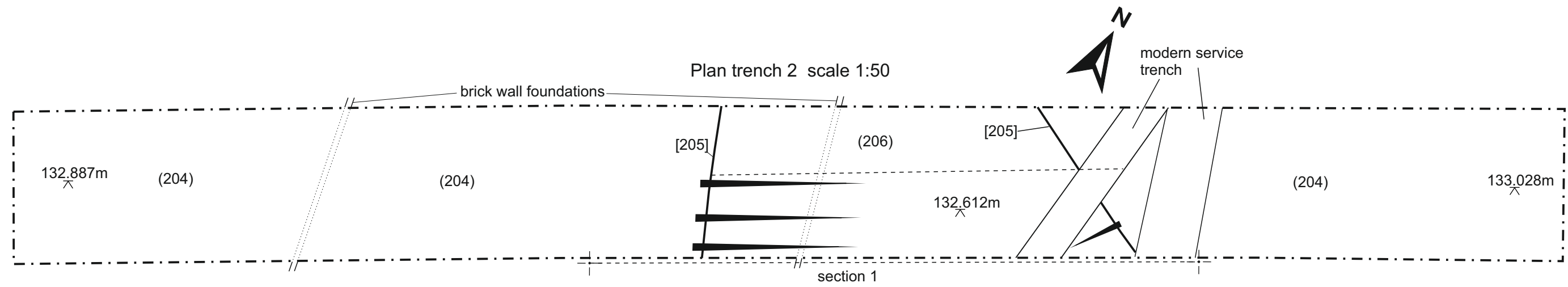
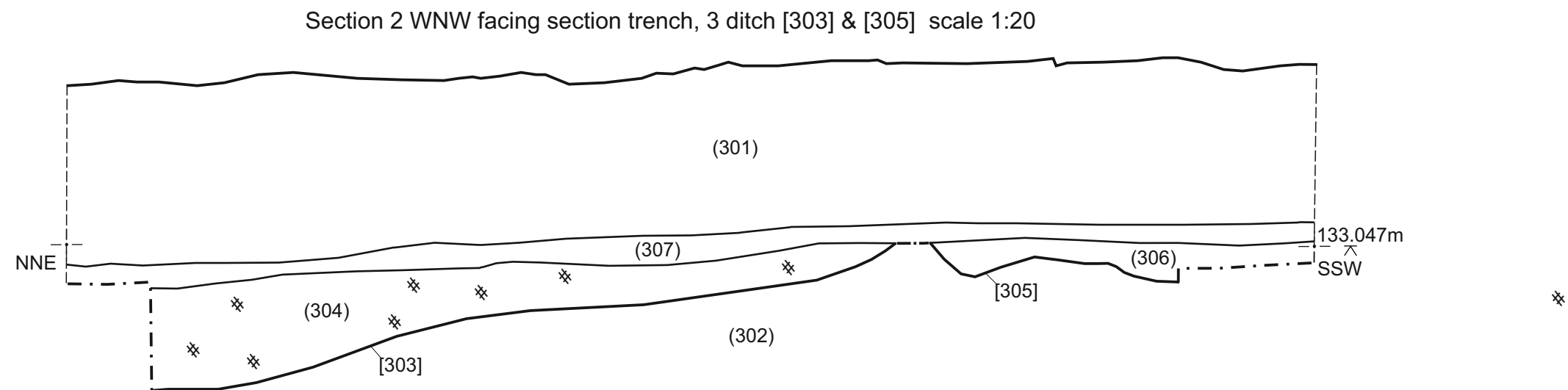
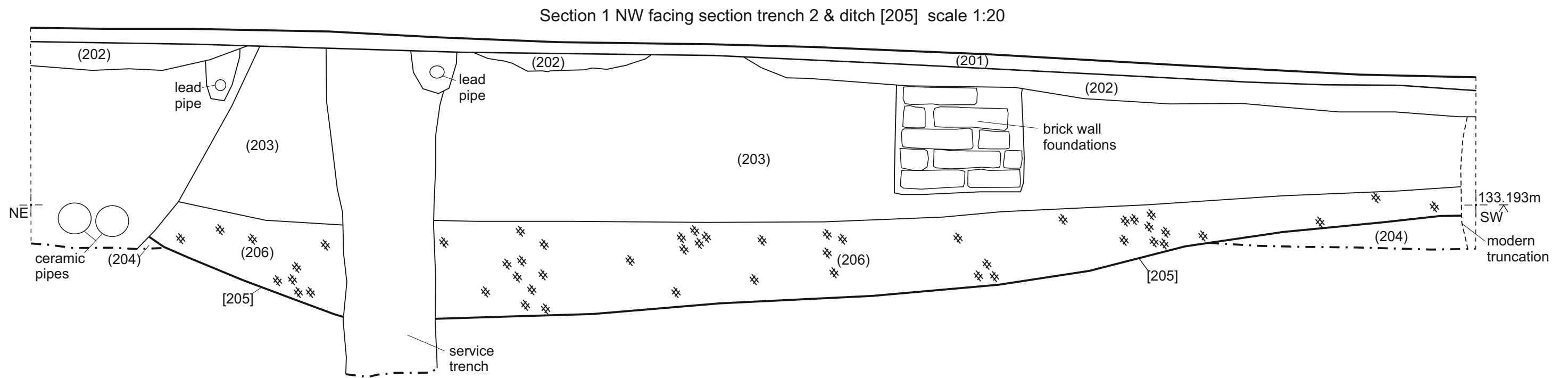


Figure 3: Trench plans



0m 1m

1:20

Figure 4: Archaeological sections



Figure 5: Hinckley Tithe Map 1844

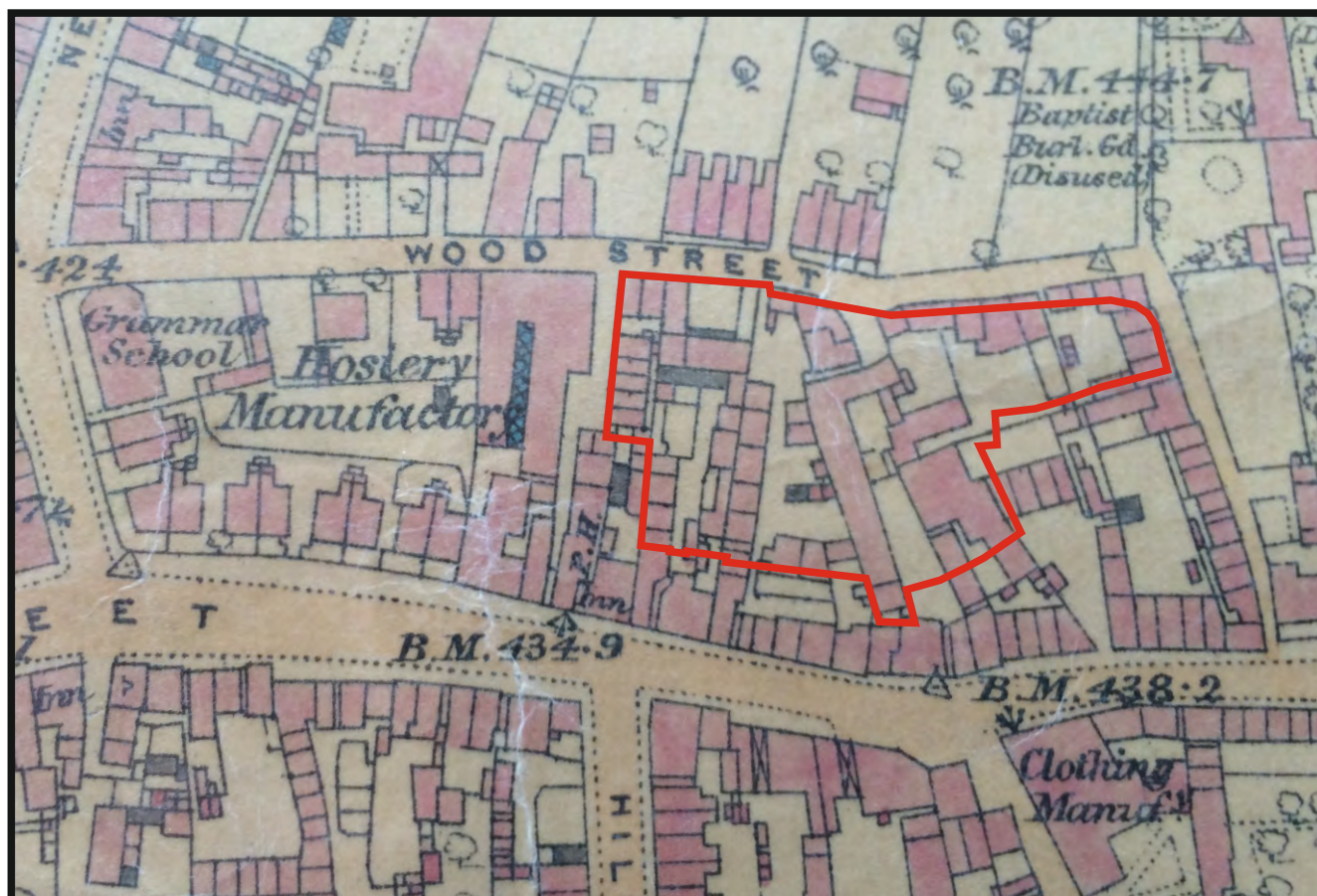


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey 25" 1887, sheet XLII.8