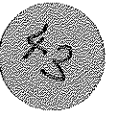


Report on test excavations at Grimes
Reserve, Footscray

Iain Stuart, Megan Goulding

Historical Archaeological Unit

Internal Working Document June 1989



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Test excavation at Grimes Reserve has been planned as part of the program of archaeological work on the City Link Site. The aim of the work was to attempt to locate any remains of the tracks and roads that led from the punt across the Maribyrnong to Geelong and Williamstown.

1. Historical Background

The overall history of the City Link site has been discussed in the report produced by the historical team (Lack et al 1989). Evidence of the track is found in the early maps of the area.

The two major influences on the location of the track are topography and the subdivision of land. When crossing the Maribyrnong from the Melbourne side, the traveller was faced with a fairly steep climb up what is now Bunbury St, to a flat plain where the main centre of Footscray is today. To the South-West the gradient is a little easier although swamps existed along the Maribyrnong banks. The easiest and most direct route to Geelong would have been to follow along the bottom of the rise roughly South-West avoiding both the steep climb and the swamps. As this land was unsurveyed in 1841 this route would have been relatively easy (Fig 1).

The pub's associated with the punts would have been placed along the line of this route to pick up the passing trade.

With the gradual increase in settlement along the Maribyrnong banks and the subdivision in 1848 new barriers were put in the way of the direct route to Geelong. It is clear from the maps that as the properties beside the Stanley Arms were developed the position of the track was adjusted. (see Fig 2 and Fig 3).

By 1864 the position of the track had been formalised into a road reserve running diagonally across what is now know as Grimes Reserve. Thames St, as the road was known, was officially abolished in 1888.

Following this a series of paths and landscaping works were undertaken on the gardens. As Lack et al 1989:91-93 point out they were used for a variety of open area functions from patriotic rallies to CEP schemes.

2. Archaeology

The purpose of the archaeological work was to find any evidence of the 1840 - 1850's track. The location of the track was variable and imprecisely marked on the existing maps. It was therefore difficult to say exactly where the track was. Different alignments of the track were drawn on the 1890's MMBW map. A trench across Grimes Reserve seemed the best method of excavation so as to cut across the alignment of the tracks. The trench was aligned with regard to the map and the existing features on Grimes Reserve.

It was also considered that as these tracks would have been poorly defined and most likely unmade they would be most easily identified in section rather than in plan. A trench is an ideal method for achieving a clean section.

Accordingly a trench was marked out across Grimes Reserve and the Council backhoe directed to excavate it (fig 4). The trench was dug, stratigraphically, that is its depth was determined by the presence of a deposit of white clay, similar to that located at the rear of the Stanley Arms site, which appeared to be a natural deposit.

2.1 Stratigraphy

The excavation revealed a number of stratigraphic layers which are described as units in this report (see Table 1). The position of each unit is shown on the section (Fig 5). The stratigraphic relationship between each unit is shown in the Harris matrix (Fig 6). The horizontal relationship between Unit 3 and Unit 4 is obscured by a PVC pipe and trench.

2.2 Finds

The excavation located 3 P.V.C. pipe drains. Two were 1 inch size pipes the other was 2 inch and associated with some miscellaneous wires. All pipes contained water.

| No. | Description | COLOUR |
|-----|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Clayish soil containing plastic and modern bricks | 10YR 5/4 Yellowish Brown |
| 2 | Clayish soil containing organic material such as roots | 10YR 4/4 Dark Yellowish Brown |
| 3 | Course sandy-clay | 5YR 5/3 Yellowish red |
| 4 | Sandy soil | 10YR 2/2 Very dark brown |
| 5 | Sandy soil full of large quartz pebbles | 10YR 2/2 Very dark brown |
| 6 | Sticky mottled clay | 10YR 8/1 White |
| 7 | Sandy soil | 10YR 2/2 Very Dark brown |
| 8 | Sandy soil | 7.5 YR 6/8 Reddish Yellow |
| 9 | Dark clayish soil containing abundant artefacts | 10 YR 2/2 Dark Yellowish Brown |
| 10 | Sandy soil | 7.5 YR 6/8 Reddish Yellow |

Unit 1 contained a number of brick fragments some bearing the name CLIFTON others NORTHCOTE. The bricks appear to have been manufactured fairly recently. Unit 9 contained abundant artefacts. The most diagnostic were collected for later identification. A catalogue of artefacts is given in Appendix 1. Two easily datable artefacts were recovered. One was a cup base with the Coplanar trade mark on it dating its manufacture to 1875-1890. The other was a bottle base manufactured by the Melbourne Glass Bottle which operated from 1873-1890. No sacred rocks were recovered.

2.3 Interpretation

Unit 1 represents the most recent deposition of fill dating no earlier than the mid 1960's. Unit 2 seals a series of units (in order of deposition) representing a period of filling. The wedge shape of the deposits suggests individual loads of fill over a short period of time. These layers rest of what appear to be remains of the precontact soil profile, Units 7, 5 and 6. Units 5 and 6 appear identical to layers found underneath the buildings at the rear of the "Stanley Arms".

The datable artefacts from Unit 9 were manufactured in the period 1873-1890. This suggests the fill was deposited (allowing a 20 year time lag for the artefacts to be thrown out) around 1890-1910.

Lack et al (1989-93) note that the reserve was used as a ballast ground in the 1880's. Assuming this means removal of ballast, then by the period 1890-1909 there would have been a need to fill the site to create the Napier St Gardens.

What this means is that the evidence of the earlier tracks has been destroyed by the process of cutting and filling associated with the transformation of the ballast ground into the gardens.

References

Lack, J. May, A. Mayne, A 1989 Heritage Survey, City Link Development Site. Draft Report to the City of Footscray.

Acknowledgements

Bill Jennison turned up unexpectedly and helped in the field work which we really appreciated as it was cold and wet, City of Footscray especially for the backhoe, City Link Properties Pty Ltd and John Lack.

APPENDIX ONE - GRIMES RESERVE ARTEFACTS

- GRIMES 1/1 - Pale green glass bottle
 - intact
 - long and thin with twisted middle
 - cork still in position although deteriorated
 - length - 24.7cm
- GRIMES 1/2 - Small bright green glass bottle
 - intact
 - irregular lip
 - number '5' stamped on base
 - length - 17.2 cm
- GRIMES 1/3 - Small brown glass bottle
 - intact but has 2 large cracks
 - irregular lip
 - length - 11.4cm
- GRIMES 1/5 - Pale green glass bottle
 - top quarter missing
 - same as GRIMES 1/1
 - length - 19.1cm
- GRIMES 1/6 - Light blue/green glass bottle
 - top half missing
 - markings on side - 'ONALD
 UNE S
 OURNE
 C^o MELBOURNE'
 - 'TRADE
 MARK
 GLASS BOTTLE'
 - length - 12.8 cm
- GRIMES 1/7 - Dark green glass bottle
 - top half missing
 - large bubble base
 - diameter - 8.3cm
- GRIMES 1/8 - Light blue glass bottle
 - angular shaped
 - top half missing
 - width - 6.0 cm
 - thickness - 3.8cm
- GRIMES 1/9 - Green glass bottle neck

- GRIMES 1/10 - Clean glass bottle
- neck only
- metal seal still intact although deteriorated
- GRIMES 1/11 - Small clear glass bottle
- neck & portion of body only
- GRIMES 1/12 - Pale blue glass bottle
- neck only
- irregular lip
- GRIMES 1/13 - Clear glass tumbler
- base only
- GRIMES 1/14 - Light blue glass bottle
- base only
- marking "40" stamped on base
- GRIMES 1/15 - Light green bottle glass
- piece only
- marking "OODALL BACK"
stamped on side
- GRIMES 1/16 - Piece of stoneware bowl
- glazed both sides
- GRIMES 1/17 - Piece of ceramic bowl
- glazed both sides
- GRIMES 1/18 - Piece of recent ceramic plate
- white glaze with red stripes around the rim
- GRIMES 1/19 - Base of ceramic cup
- white glaze
- small amount of blue decoration
- GRIMES 1/21 - Piece of ceramic cup
- part of GRIMES 1/19
- short continuation of blue floral/leafy design
- GRIMES 1/22 - Piece of ceramic
- white glaze with small red mark, probably part of the ceramic plate (GRIMES 1/18)
- GRIMES 1/23 - Piece of ceramic
- glazed both sides with green glaze
- intricate patterning on both sides
- has a seal on base
- distinguishing letters 'ARINE F & C'
- GRIMES 1/24 - Neck of stoneware bottle
- glazed inside and out

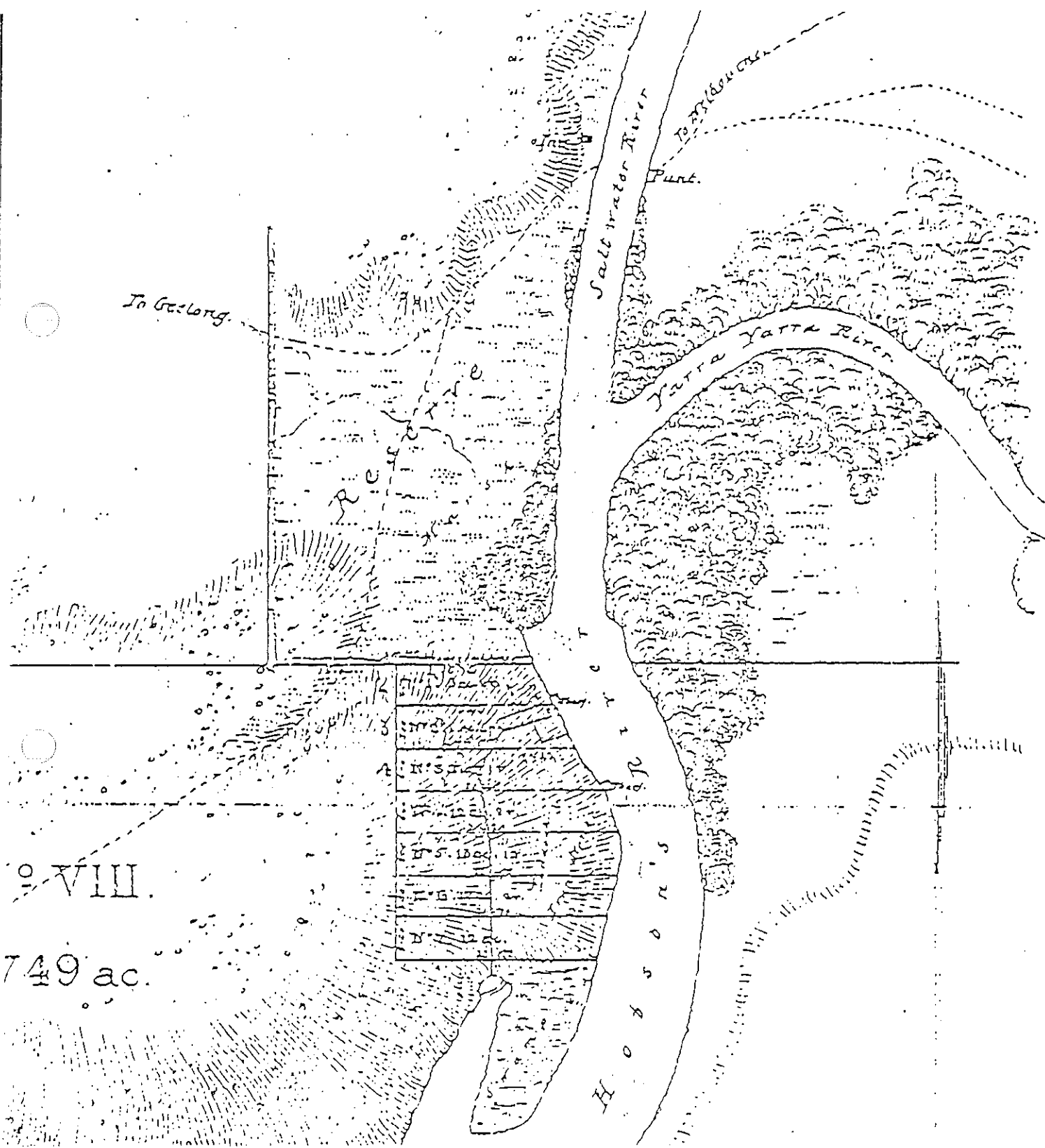
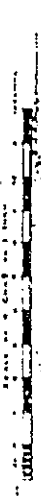


Figure 1

1877

PLAN
OF
FOOTSCRAY TOWNSHIP
SALT WATER RIVER
Surveyed by
LINDSAY CLARKE ABSORNS
1878

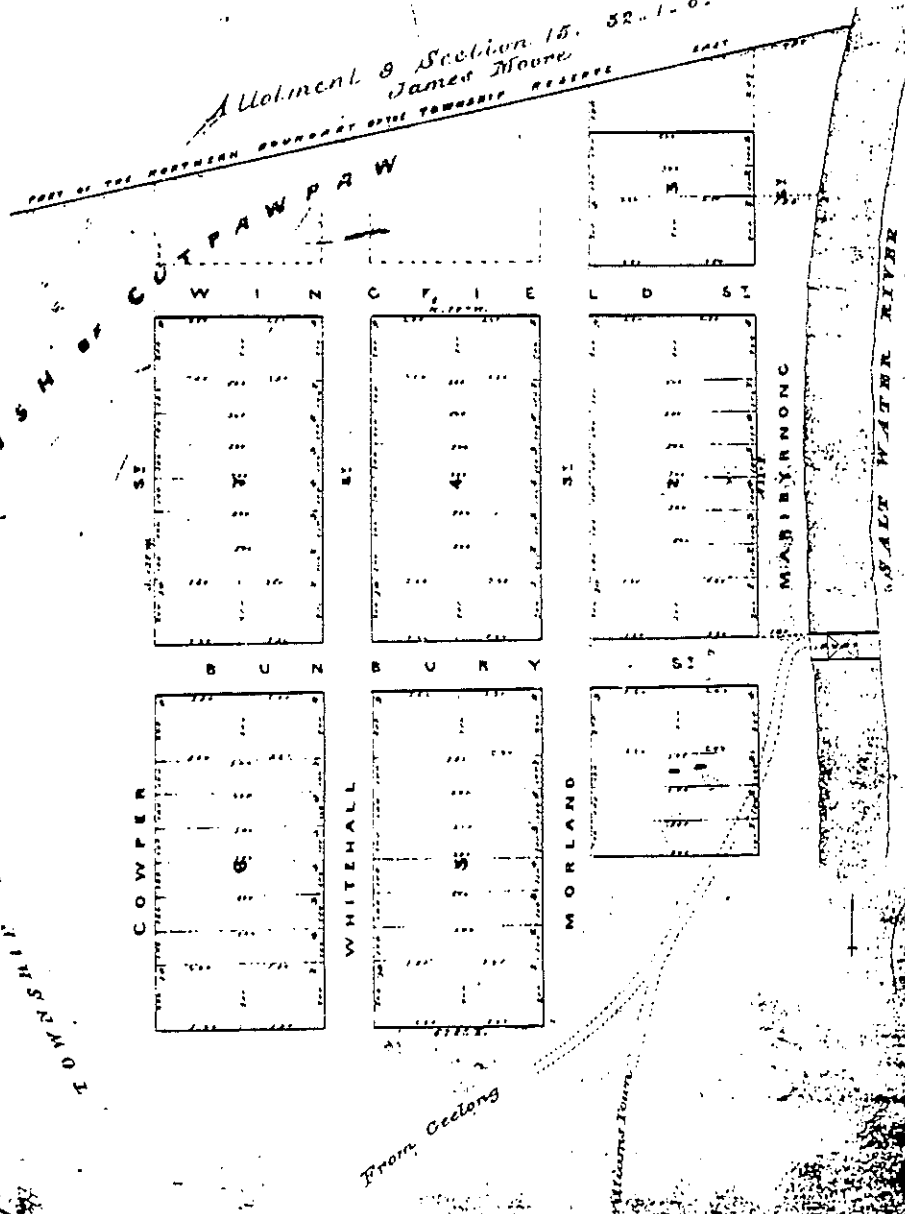


Plan submitted for approval by the Council of Victoria
Returned on 14th Nov 1878
5/11/79 - 29/12/79

Submitted to Council
17 June 1870

David MacArthur
Clerk of the Council

Allocation of Section 15, 52-1-0.
James Moore



Handwritten notes:
R
1/11/78
1/11/78

Figure 2

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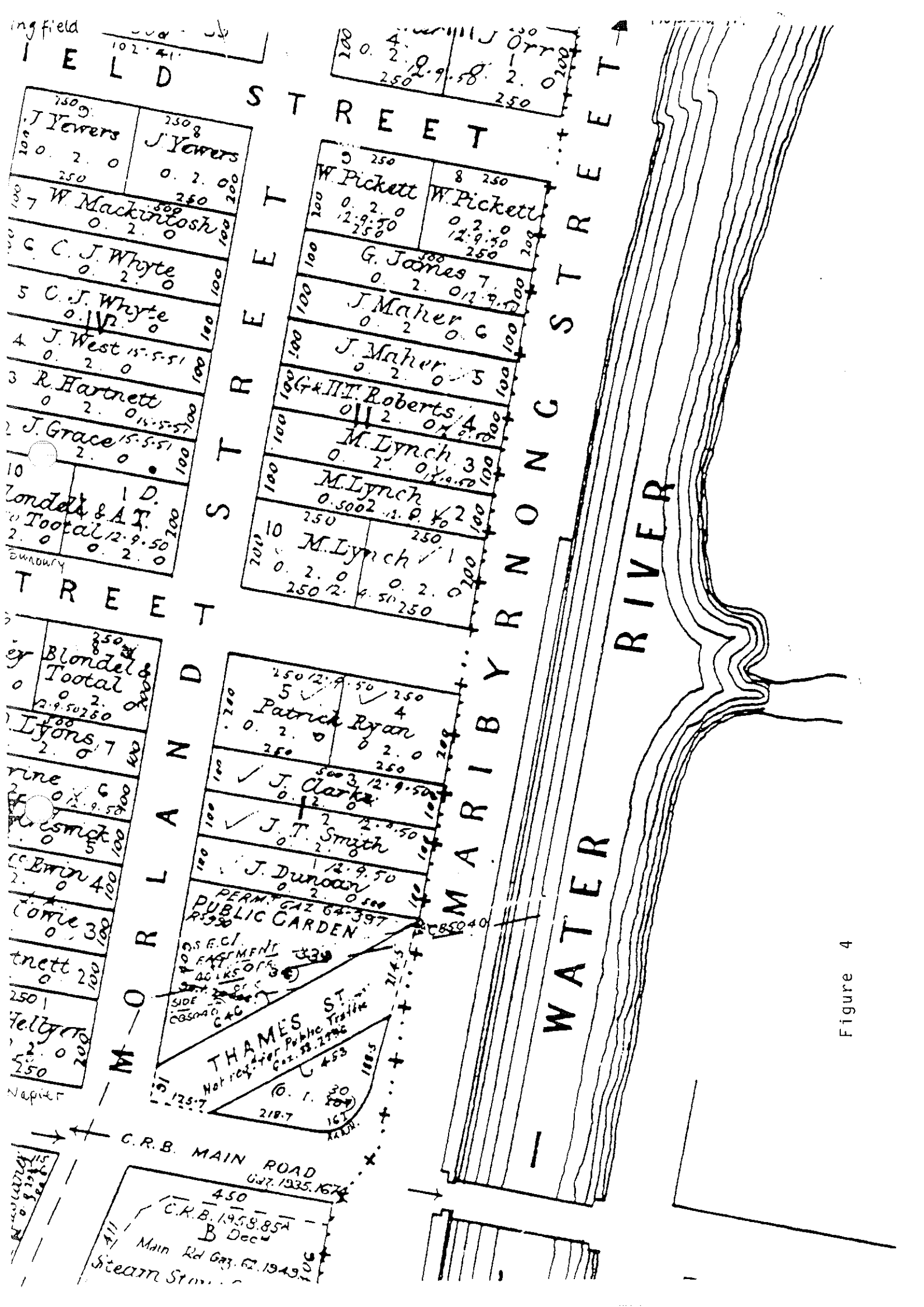


Figure 4

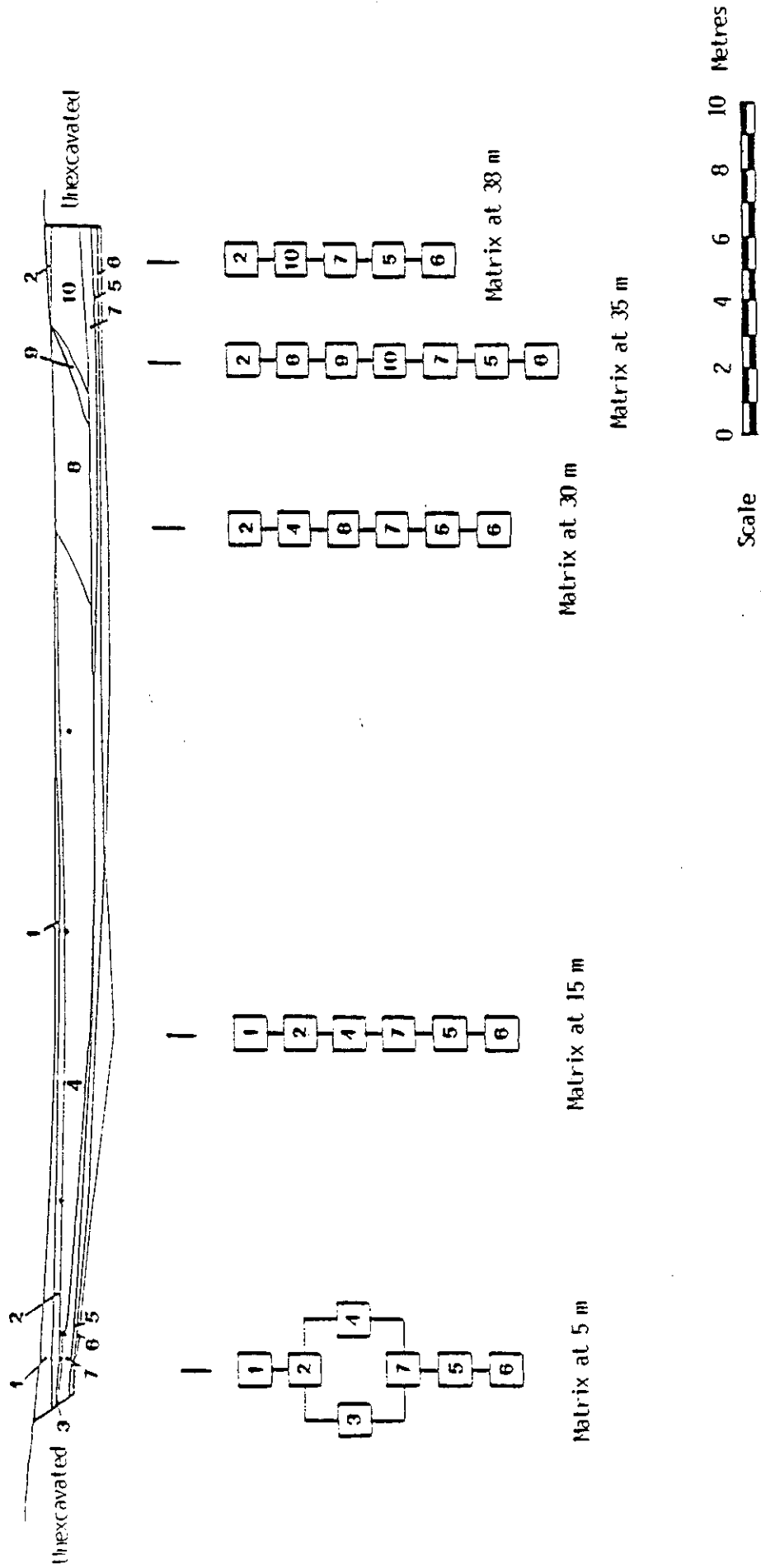


Figure 5 : Section of trench across Grimes Reserve

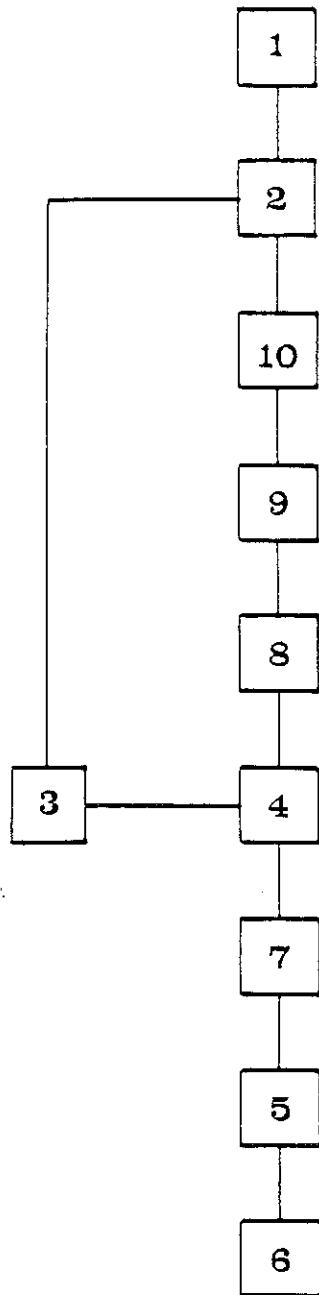


Figure 6 : Harris Matrix showing the stratigraphic relationships between units.

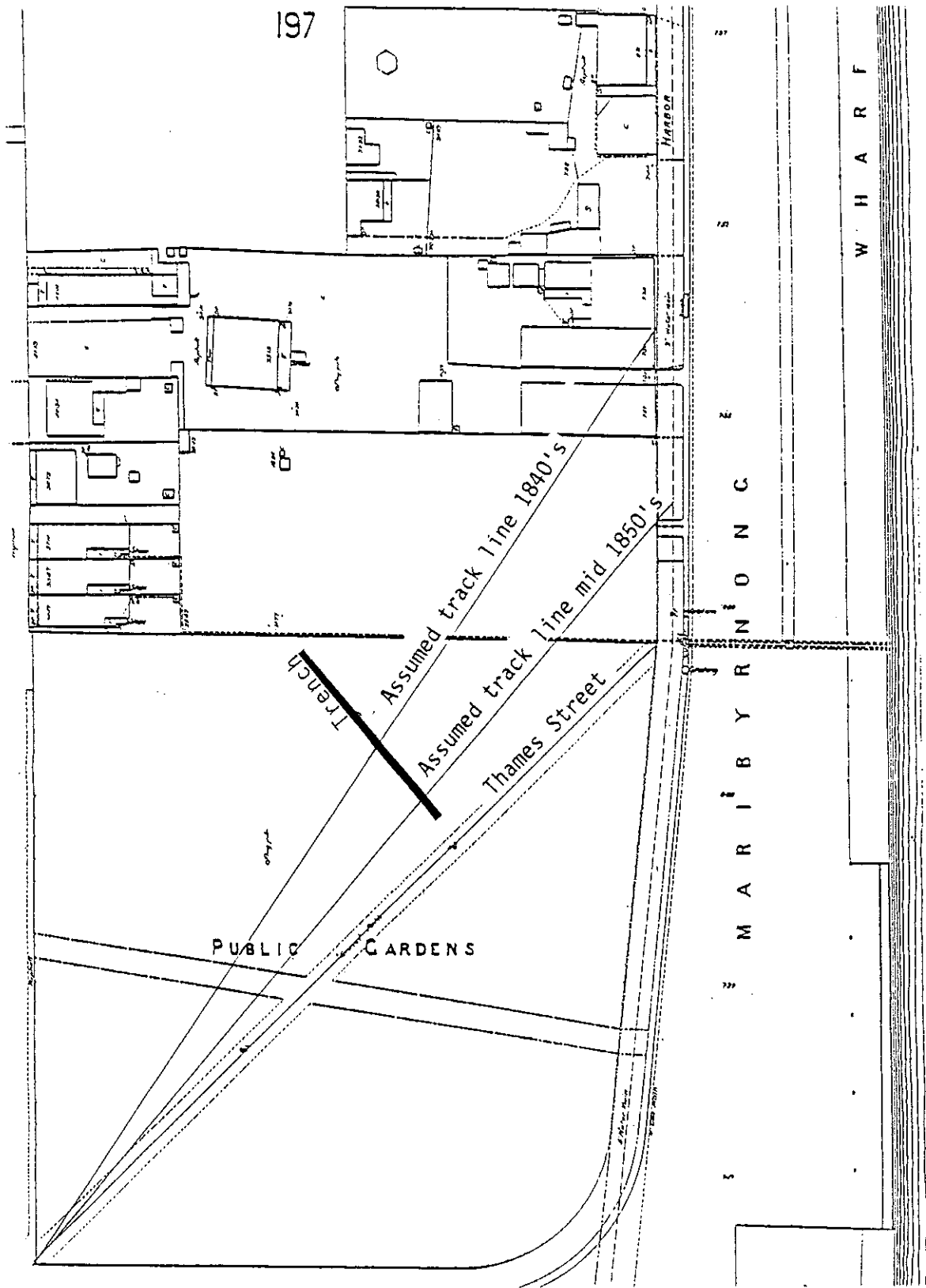


Figure 7 : Probable alignments of historic tracks