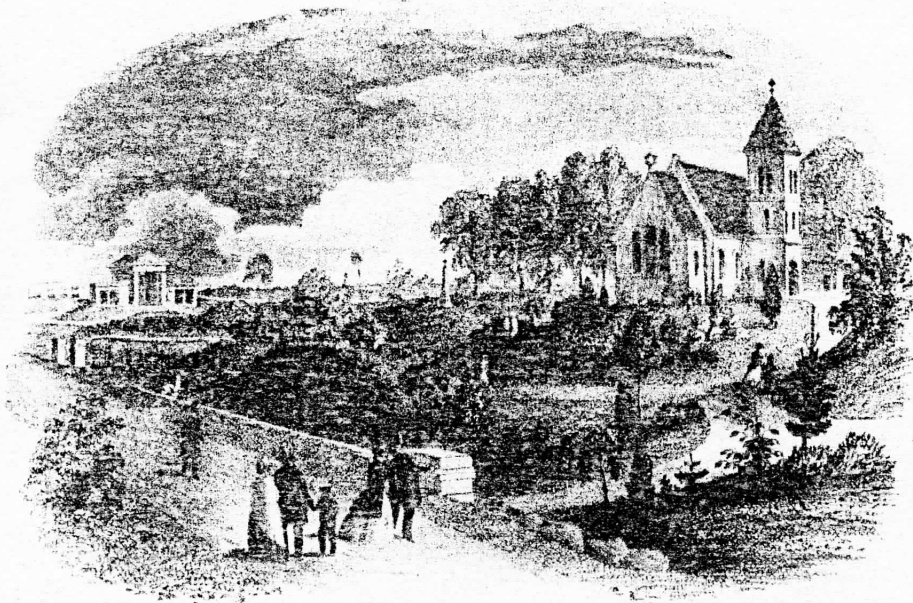


MONUMENTAL
INSCRIPTIONS
FROM THE
LONDON ROAD
CEMETERY, COVENTRY

ISBN 1-900372-24-X



Part 1 – North Section



COVENTRY CEMETERY.

Coventry Family History Society

Published by
© Coventry Family History Society
1998
ISBN 1-900372-24-X

Cover picture:

An engraving of Coventry Cemetery ca. 1847 by T Barfoot
Published by T A Marks

Acknowledgements:

Diane Fisher – Project co-ordinator

Peter Hunnisett – Booklet & database design

Val Hunnisett – Database checking & correction

Members of the society who collected the information, transcribed the data
and checked and corrected printouts

Coventry City Archives

George Demidowicz, of the Coventry City Council Conservation and
Landscape Team, who provided maps and other information.

Enquiries:

Mrs Judith A Riley, 225 Leamington Road, Coventry CV3 6JZ

Contents:

Introduction	2
The Cemetery	2
Some Interesting Inscriptions	3
Explanation of the Index and Maps	5
Maps	6
Site Plan	centre
Microfiche	inside rear cover

NOTE:

The reference numbers quoted in the list are for this database only. They are not the plot references used by the Council on their location maps and quoted in the Burial Registers in the Coventry City Archives.

Introduction

The London Road Cemetery, Coventry's first municipal cemetery, is in two parts; the old part to the north of the railway line and the new part to the south. One of the major projects undertaken by the Coventry Family History Society has been to record and index the monumental inscriptions in the old part of the cemetery. This was started in the summer of 1996 and took two years to complete.

Please appreciate that in view of the difficulties that arise in reading old gravestones some of the transcriptions may be incomplete or inaccurate. Some of the gravestones in this cemetery are 150 years old and a few, particularly those made from sandstone, have eroded very badly and others have sunk into the ground. Researchers who find entries that may be relevant should try to examine the original stone themselves. Inevitably, as new burials are still taking place, there will be inscriptions we have missed and some that did not appear on the map.

If you cannot find an inscription, even though you know the person was buried in the cemetery, you should remember that only a small percentage of burials had monuments erected, less than 1% in the early days!

The Cemetery

During the latter part of the 18th century Coventry had been expanding and by the beginning of the 19th century the local parish churches own cemeteries were filling up and there was a need to provide alternative burial grounds. Mortality soared during the 1830's, partly due to overcrowded living conditions, and in 1845 Coventry Corporation decided to build a municipal cemetery on the site of a disused quarry on London Road. Joseph Paxton was employed to design the cemetery, which was formally opened in 1847, although work on it continued for some time after.

Joseph Paxton (1803-1865) had been head gardener at Chatsworth and in 1843 had designed the 'Peoples Park' in Birkenhead. He later designed the 'Crystal Palace' in Hyde Park for the Great Exhibition of 1851 (in which year he was knighted) and also its permanent replacement at Sydenham along with the extravagant public gardens surrounding it. In 1854 he was elected Liberal MP for Coventry. An impressive memorial to Joseph Paxton, designed by Joseph Goddard, was erected near the entrance lodge in 1868.

The cemetery was to be both a burial ground and a public park and Paxton achieved this by drawing on his past experience. The site was landscaped and planted with a variety of trees from around the world. The sweeping curved pathways were lined with weeping silver limes and a Terrace was laid out along the top of the wall built to screen

the cemetery from London Road. The Italian-style Entrance Lodge, for the cemetery superintendent, was built at the northern end and at the other side of that entrance, now the main entrance, is the octagonal Prospect Tower. As well as being visible to passers-by on London Road, the Prospect Tower would have given the cemetery staff advanced warning of the approaching burial parties. Two chapels were built; a Norman-style Anglican chapel and a Classical-style non-conformist chapel. Later a small Jewish chapel was added at the southern end. Originally the main entrance to the cemetery was halfway along the London Road wall and had wrought iron gates, but these have now gone and the entrance is bricked up. Beneath the Terrace are a vault and a mortuary. The latter is long disused but rather bizarrely saw service as an air-raid shelter during the Second War.

Paxton's intention was that the graves should be aligned with the curving paths and that there should be areas with relatively few graves. Inevitably this ideal soon gave way to the demand for space, and in 1883 land was purchased to the south of the original cemetery, on the other side of the railway. Only monuments in the old part have been recorded for this section of the index.

Today the cemetery is rather dilapidated and the chapels are in a state of disrepair. Many of the monuments have subsided, sometimes tilting to crazy angles, and some of the taller ones have fallen. However it still retains a sense of its original splendour and the visitor taking a sunny afternoon walk is likely to be rewarded with the sight of birds, squirrels, and dozens of rabbits.

Some Interesting Inscriptions

Although the majority of inscriptions concern people who were buried in the cemetery, many commemorate relatives who were buried elsewhere. Some of the more far-flung deaths include:

George Newman, late of the First Battalion 53rd Kings Shropshire Light Infantry, who departed this life at Suakim Egypt December 12 1885 aged 20 years.

Sergt. Leonard Bennett Dufner, Locker Lampsons Armoured Cars who fell in action at Baku, Russia Aug 26 1918 aged 20 years.

Ralph Henry Smyth died Oct 27th 1878 aged 28 years. Interred at Melbourne, Australia

Colonel the Honble. F. Grosvener Hood, son of Lt. Col. the Honble. F. Wheeler and Caroline Hood, commanded the Grenadier Guards at Alma xx Sep Mdccliv, killed before Sevastopol xvii Oct Mdccliv aged xlv.

Long distance travel was often by sea and took a long time, so inevitably some travellers died 'en route' and were buried at sea. Among these were:

Rose, the beloved wife of Robert B. Duncan and third daughter of Thomas Leavesley, who died on her passage from China Dec 21 1876 aged 35 years.

Fredric Stuart, who died on the voyage from South Africa and was buried at sea December 12th 1905 aged 25 years.

Mary Sophia, the dearly loved wife of T E Slater, missionary to India, and second daughter of T & E R Ransford, who died off Trafalgar and was laid in the deep in the Bay of Cadiz August 11 1870 aged 27 years

Some inscriptions give details of how the person died and these include:

Edmond Waters MD, for 21 years surgeon to the Coventry Hospitals, who was suddenly taken away from his work to his rest by a fall from his horse July 15 1873

Charles Benjamin, third son of James & Martha Hart of this City, who died from a fall from the Cheddar Cliffs January 12 1872 aged 18 years

Charles Langford Lipscomb, aged 22 years, student of St Augustines College, and his brother George Langford Brooke Lipscombe, aged 16 years, who were drowned while skating.

Lucy, wife of Benjamin Villiers, who died of consumption October 5 1864 aged 21 years.

Arthur Reginald, fifth son of John Kemp and Abigail Starley, drowned at Barmouth Aug 16 1898 aged 16 years

Sergeant David Clarke of the 95th regiment, who died of sun stroke on the 4th of June 1868 at Coomaylee, Abyssinia in the 29th year of his age.

Charles Reginald Bennett, who was killed in a motor accident at Spring Pools, December 2 1919 aged 33 years.

Also recorded among the First World War deaths are a few of the early flyers, killed while defending their country from the air:

Cpl Reginald Arthur Lucas RAF shot down over the North Sea April 27 1918
aged 21 years.

2nd Lieut. William John Salmons MM RAF, killed while flying at Dover
April 22 1918 aged 22 years.

Finally, I really wish Robert Elliott had been an ancestor of mine, as his epitaph is a
veritable goldmine of information that may otherwise be very difficult to discover:

Sacred to the memory of Robert Elliott, Barrack Sergeant at Coventry and
late Sert Major 3rd the Butts Regt, born at Clones, Ireland, March 13 1807
died at Coventry February 16 1864. Served in the army 22 years and in the
Barrack depart. 16 years. Served in India 18 years and was engaged in the
Campaign of Gwalior in 1843 and at the Battle of Punlar.

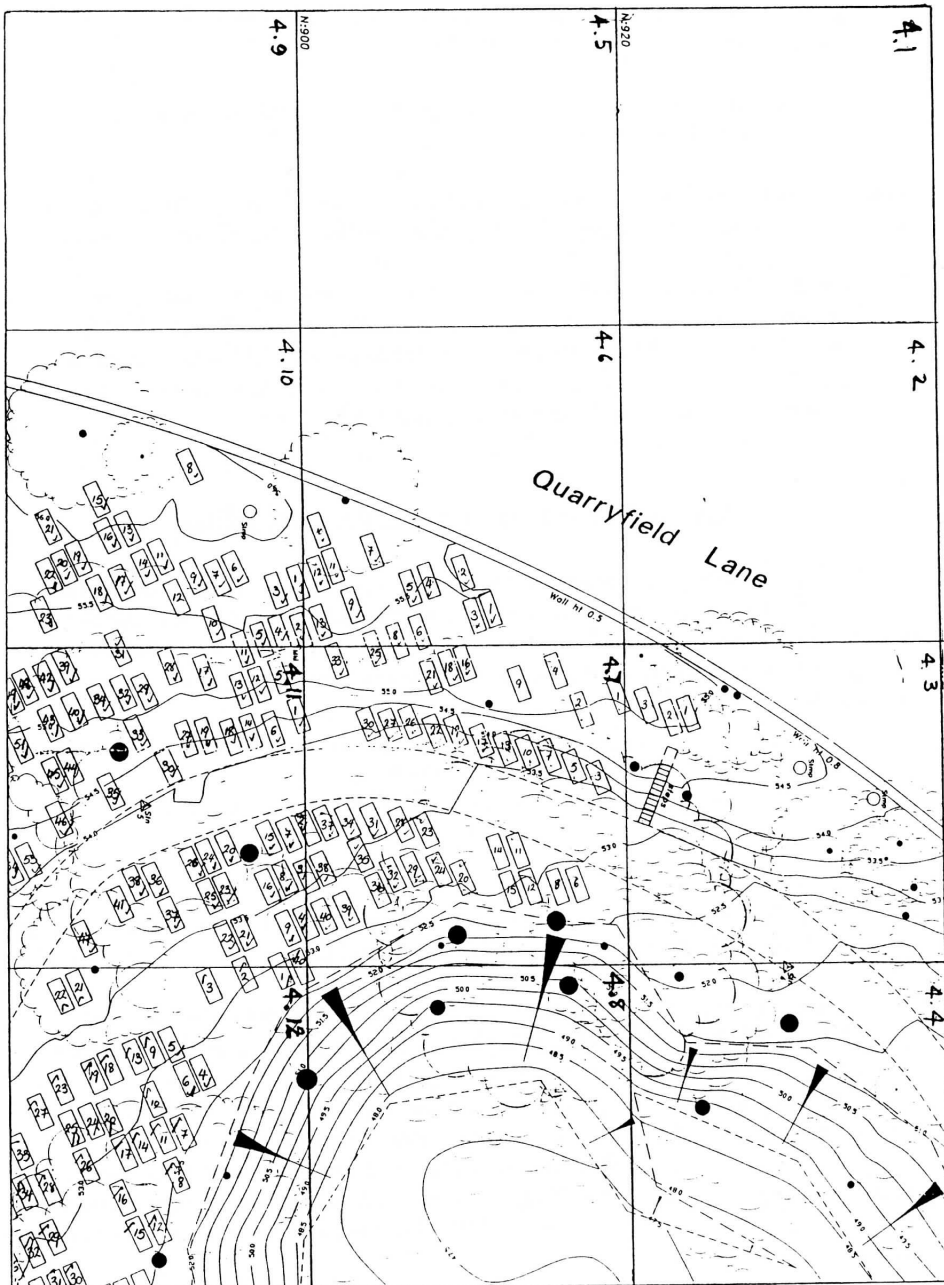
Explanation of the Index and Map

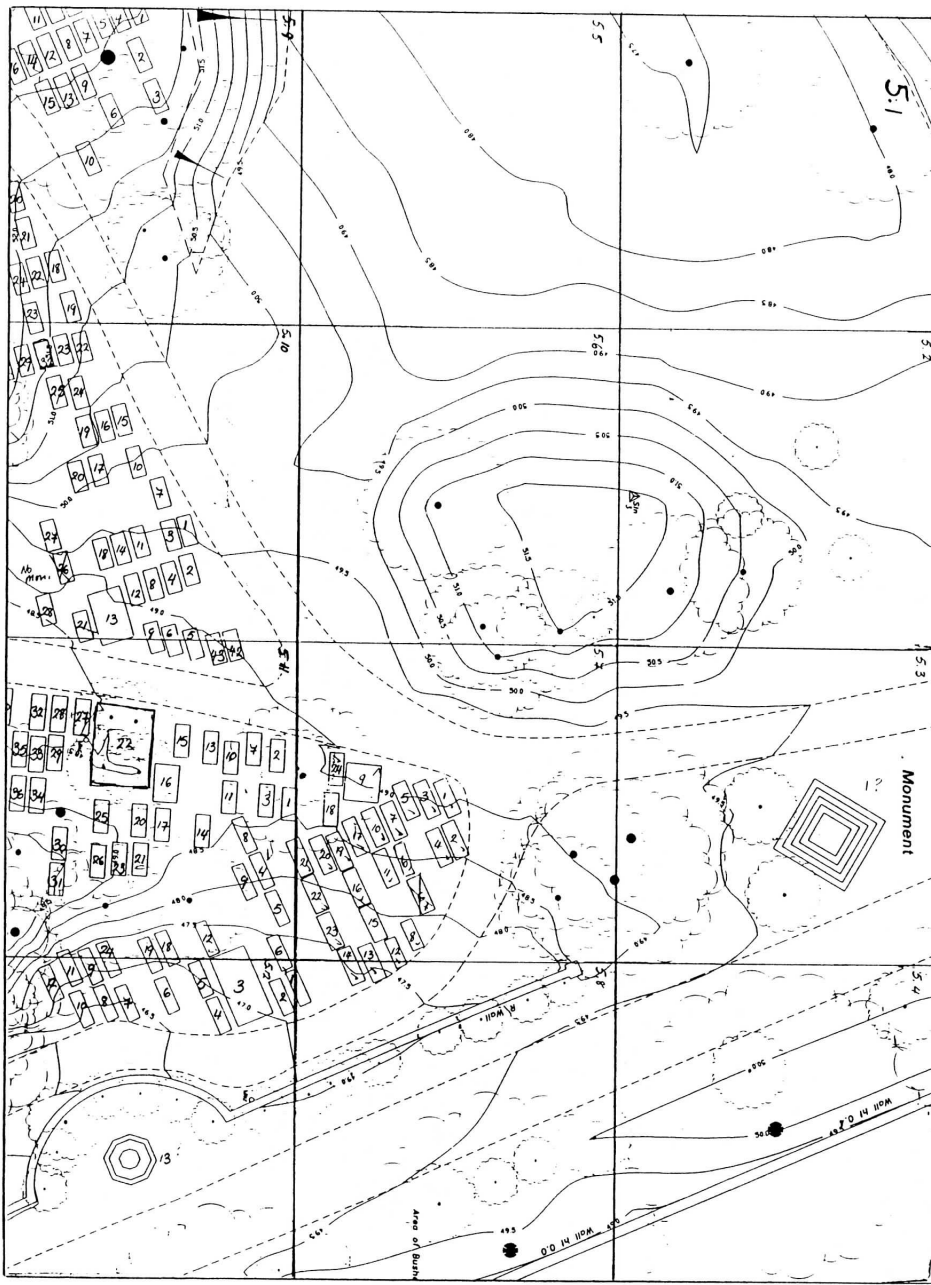
Over 2500 monumental inscriptions were recorded in this part of the cemetery, with
references to over 15000 people and more than 2400 different surnames. All the
surnames have been included in the index, which is on the first of the fiche that
accompany this booklet, along with a list of reference numbers against each surname.
A typical entry in the index would be:

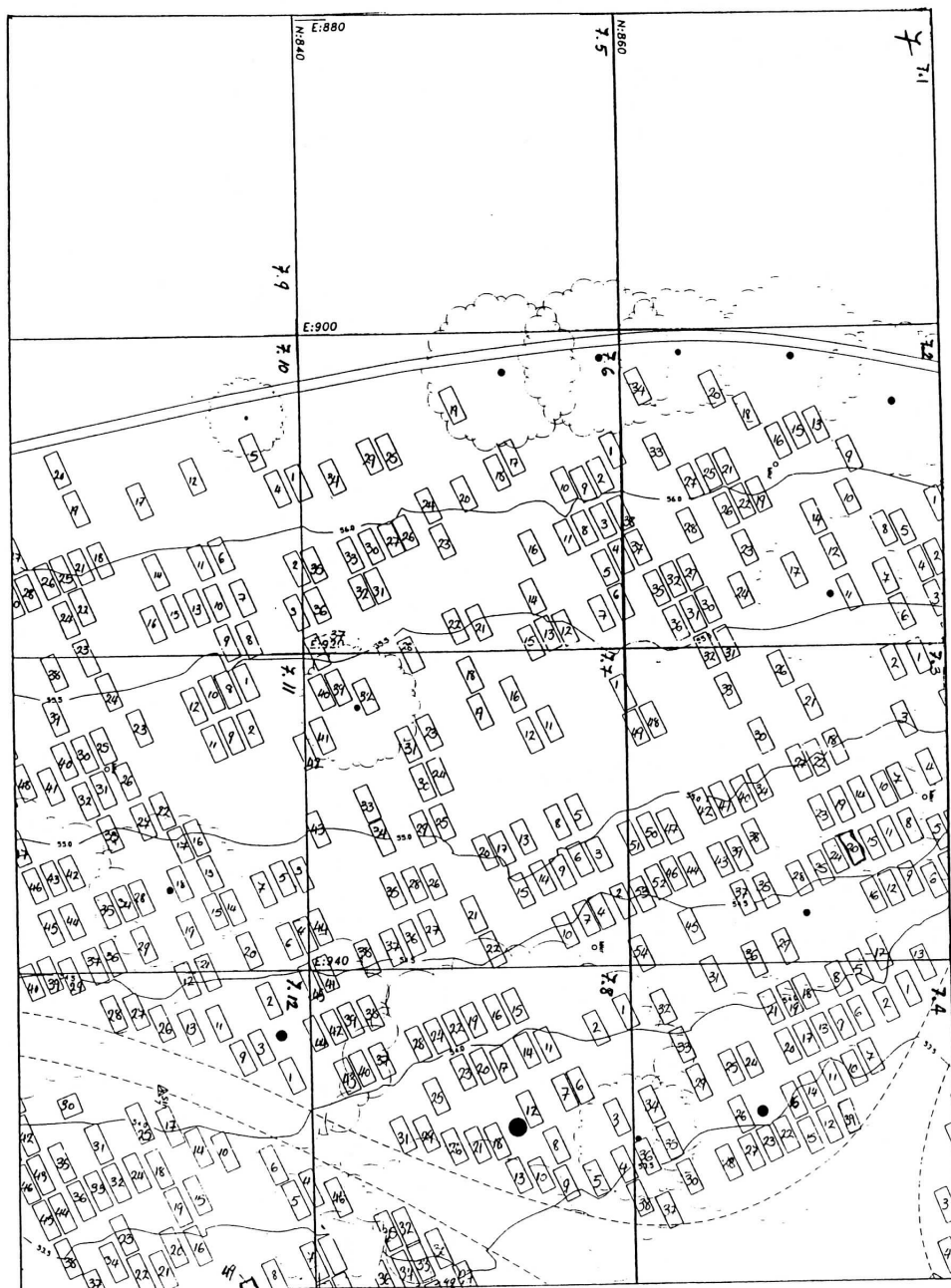
Surname	Reference
Burdett	11 . 5 . 28
	11 . 11 . 9
	12 . 5 . 58

The reference is a three-part number, explained below, which locates the memorial on
the maps. The inscriptions, arranged by reference number, are on the remaining fiche.

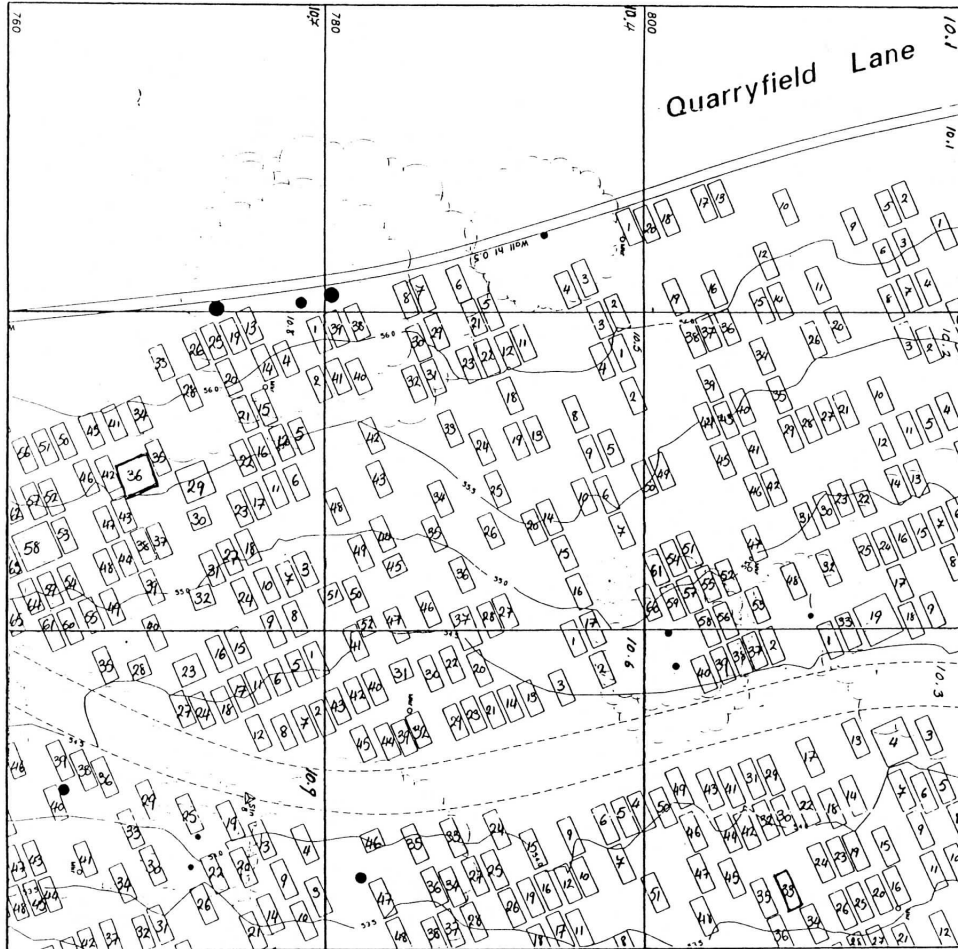
The map, showing the location of each memorial, was supplied by Coventry City
Council. It already had a grid and numbering scheme so we have used this to identify
the inscriptions. The first number in the reference refers to the 'Major' square divisions
on the map. The key to these is shown on the site plan in the centre of this booklet.
Each 'Major' square is divided into 12 'Minor' squares, the second part of the
reference, and within each of these the plots are numbered starting at 1, giving the third
part of the reference number. The 'Major' squares are shown sequentially, generally
one to a page, in the remainder of this booklet. They are always in the same orientation
as the main site plan.

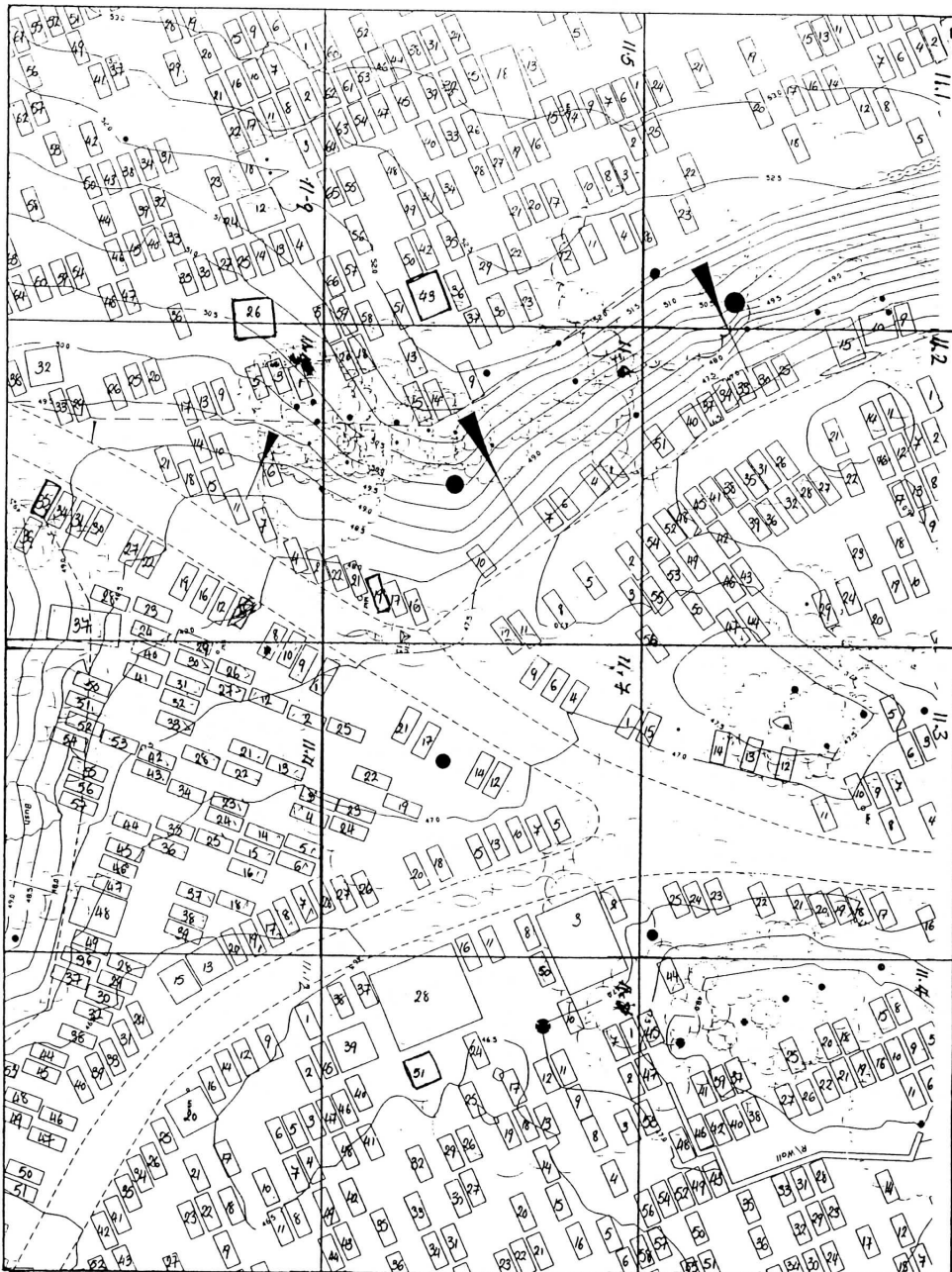


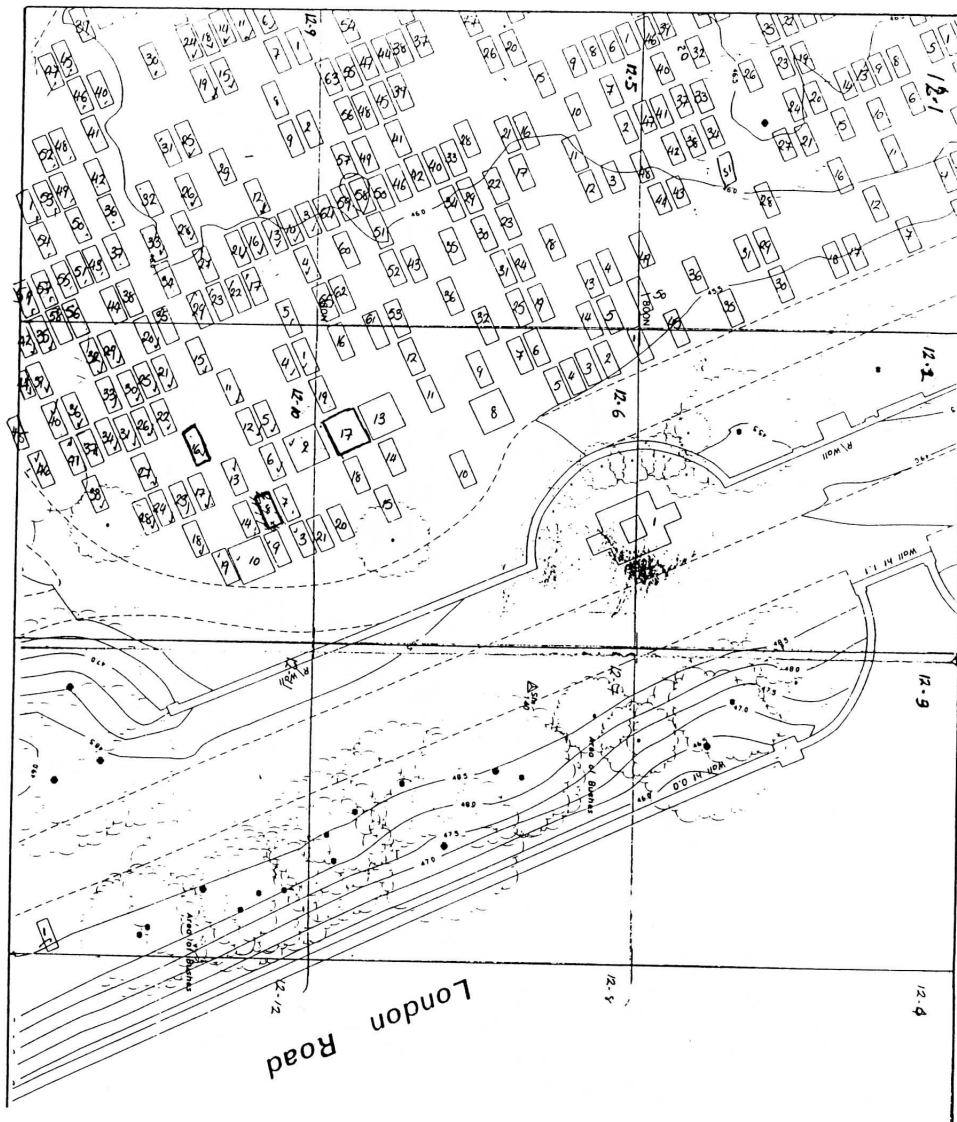


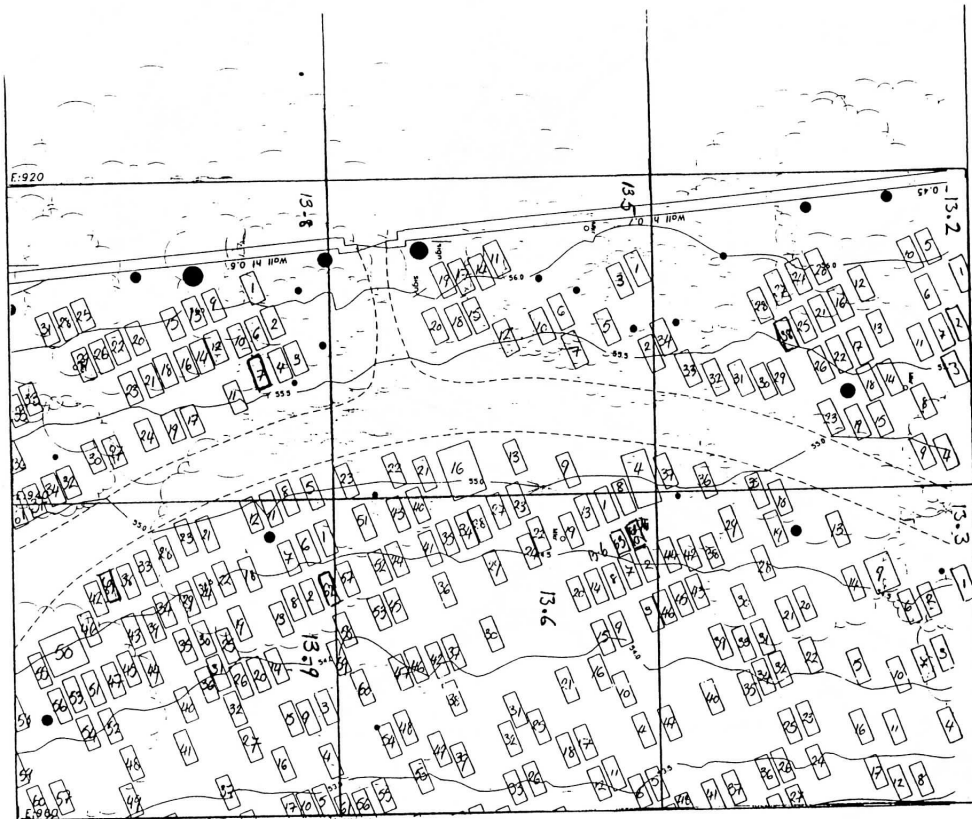


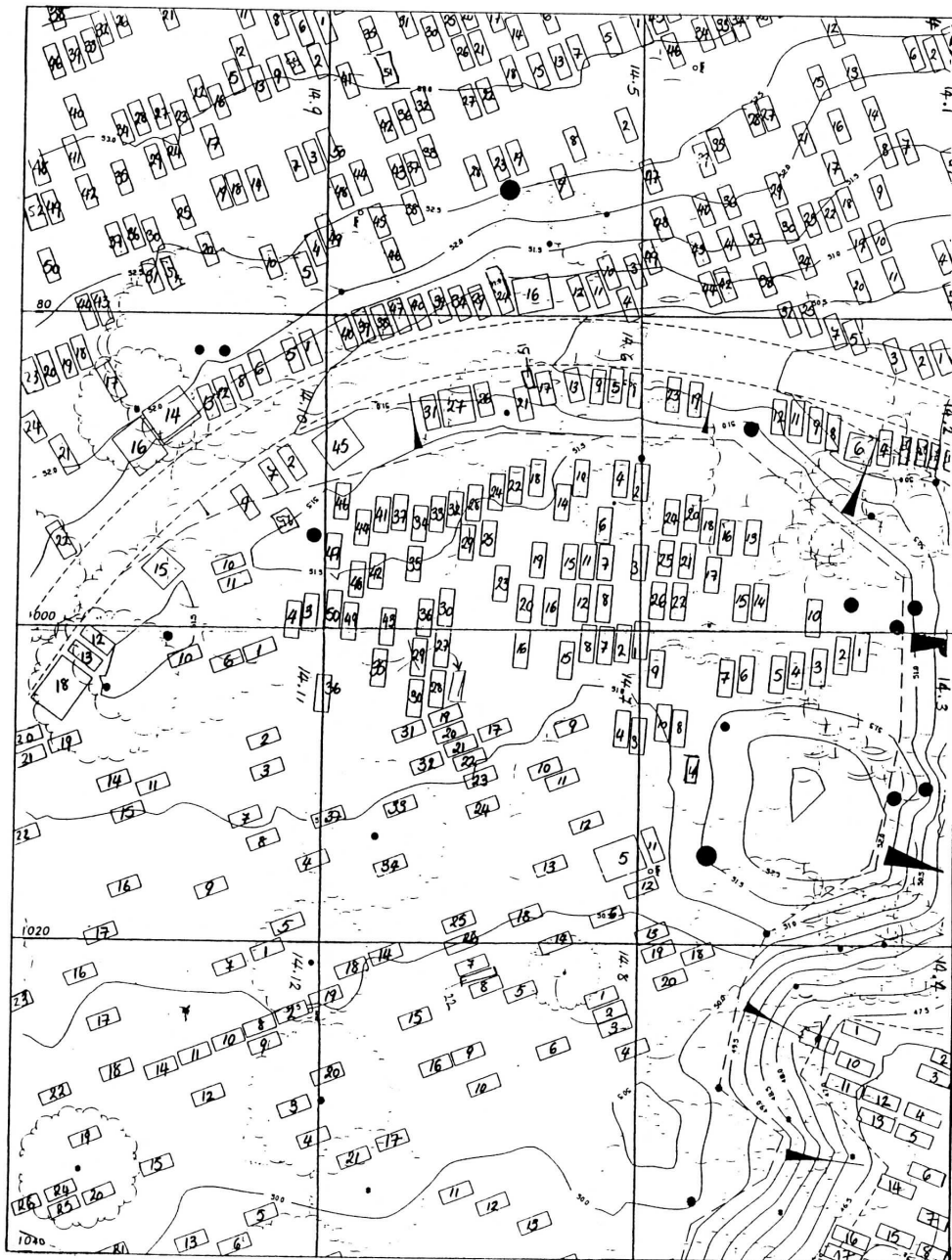


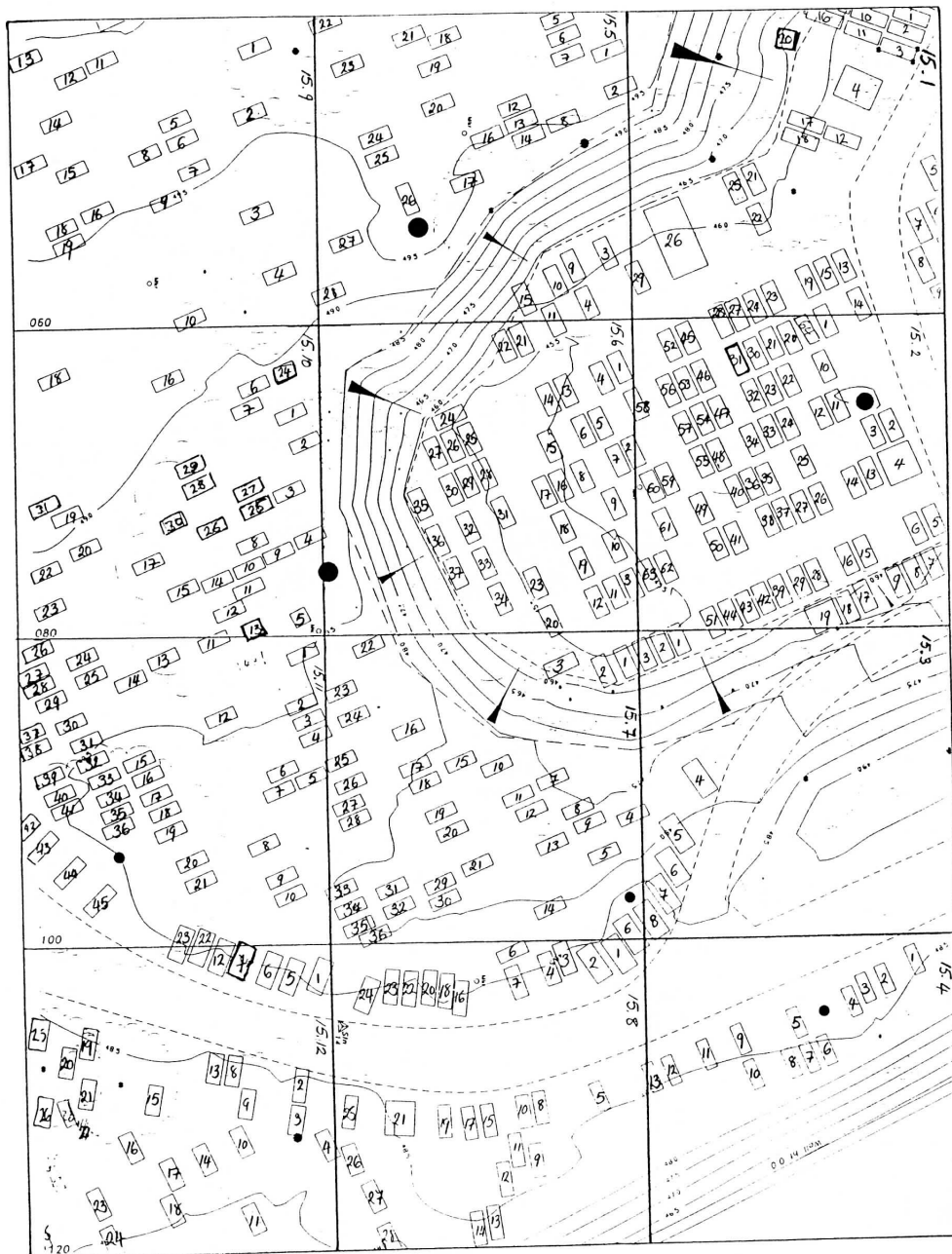


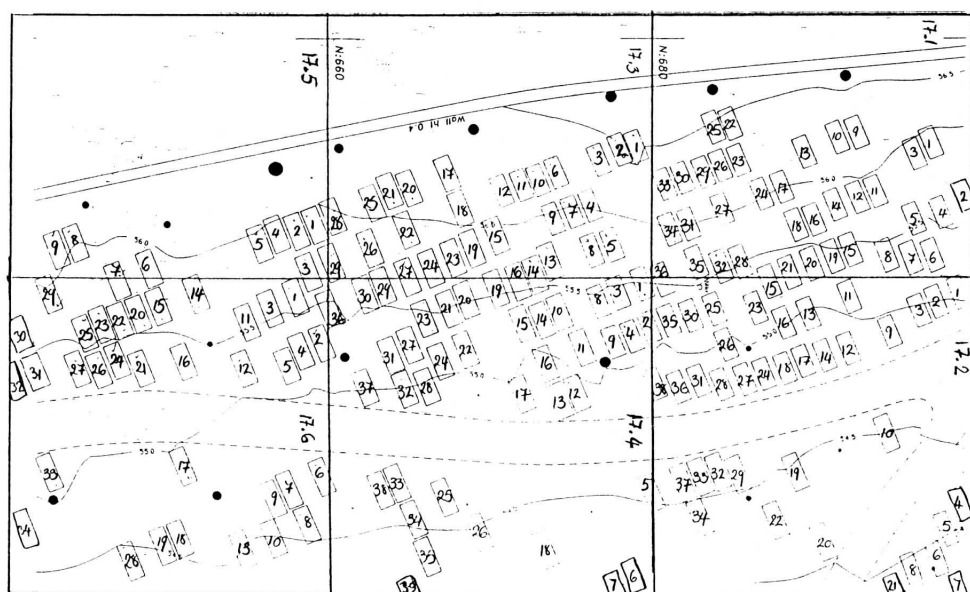


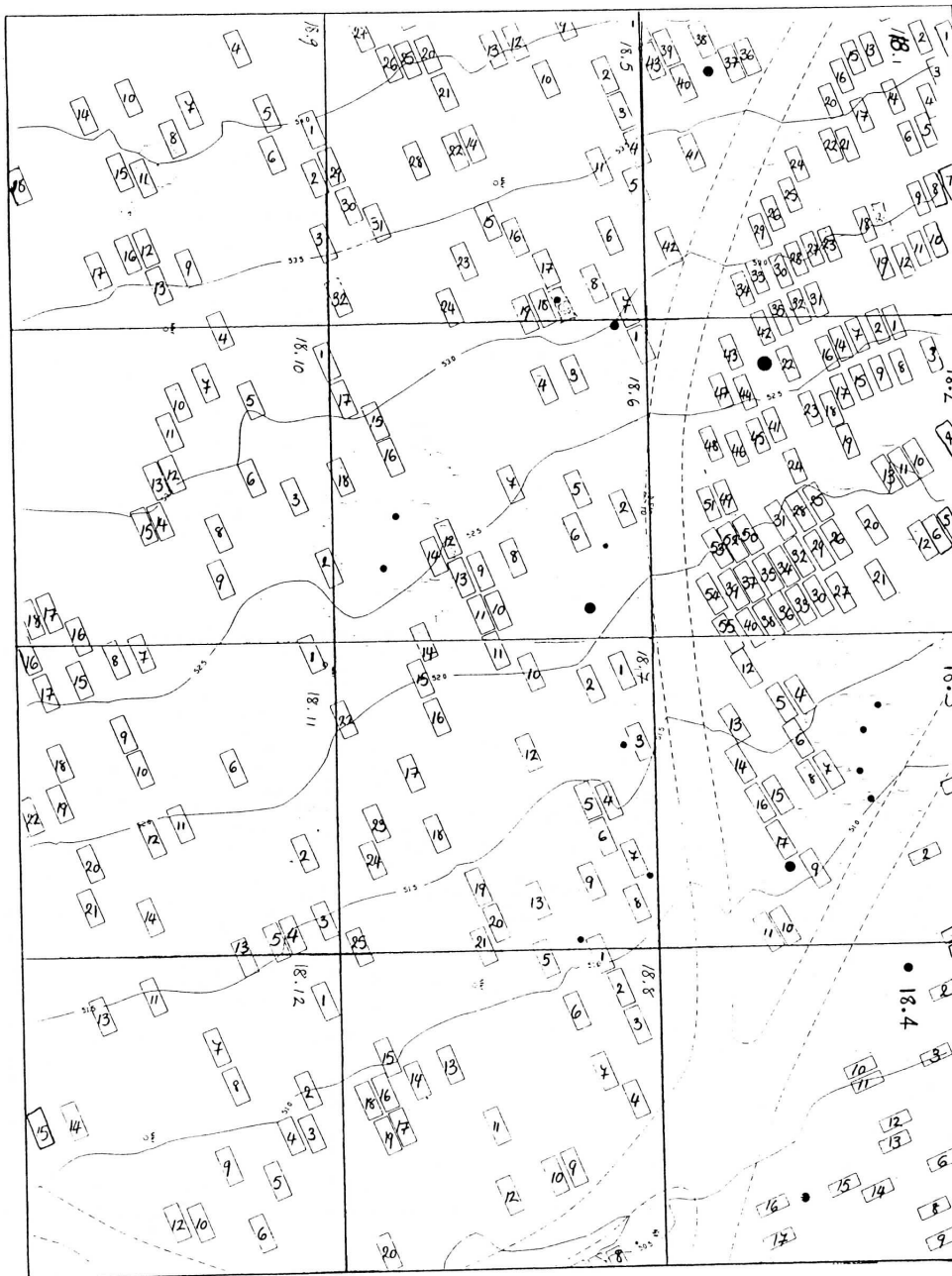


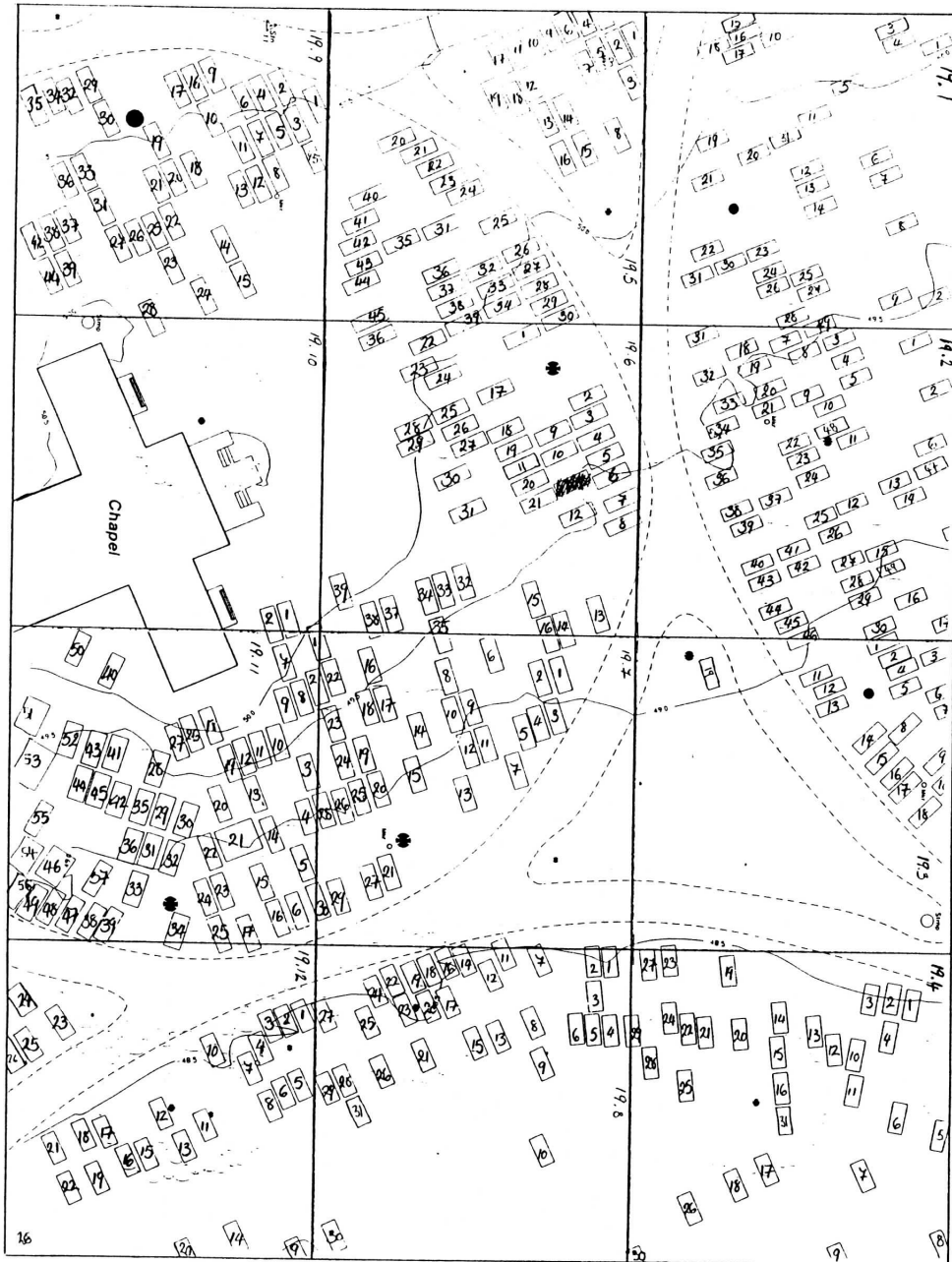


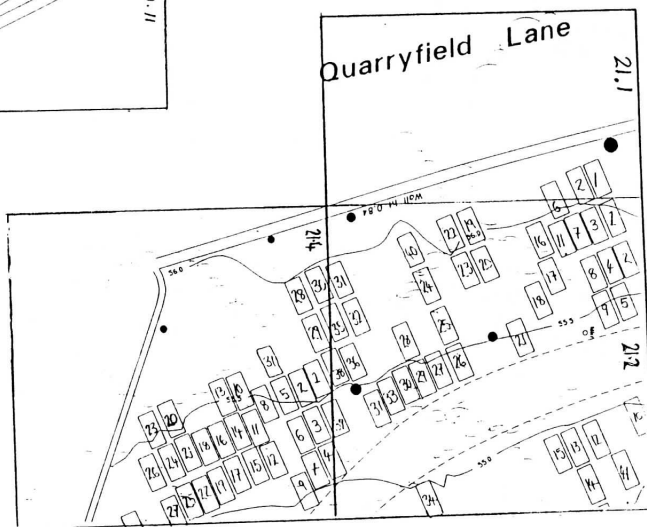
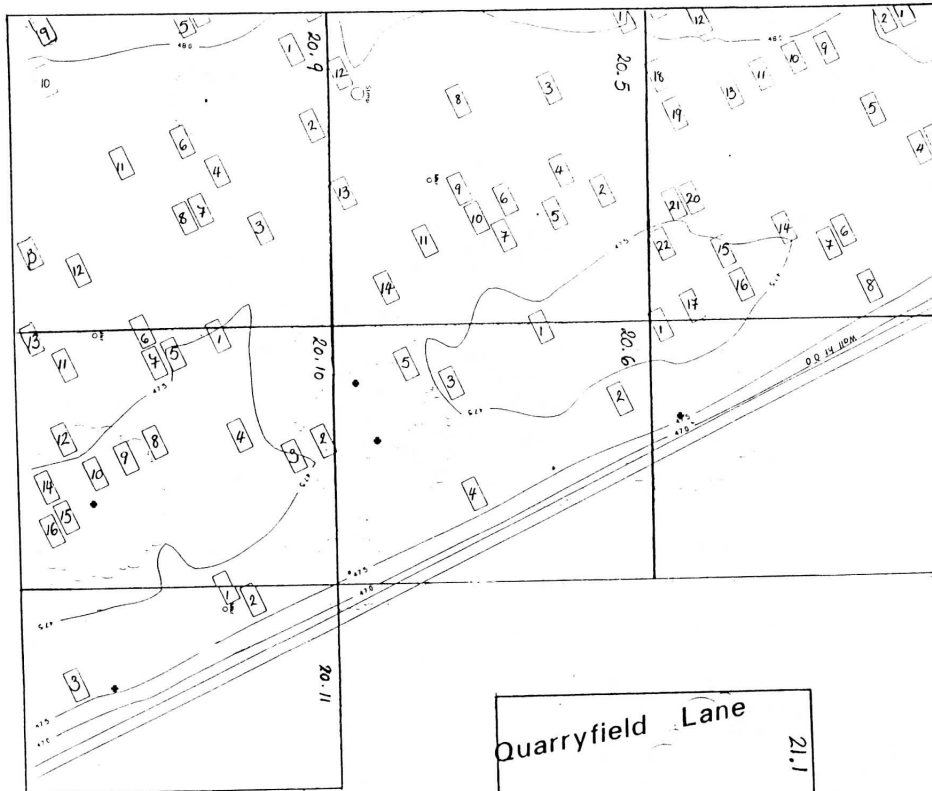


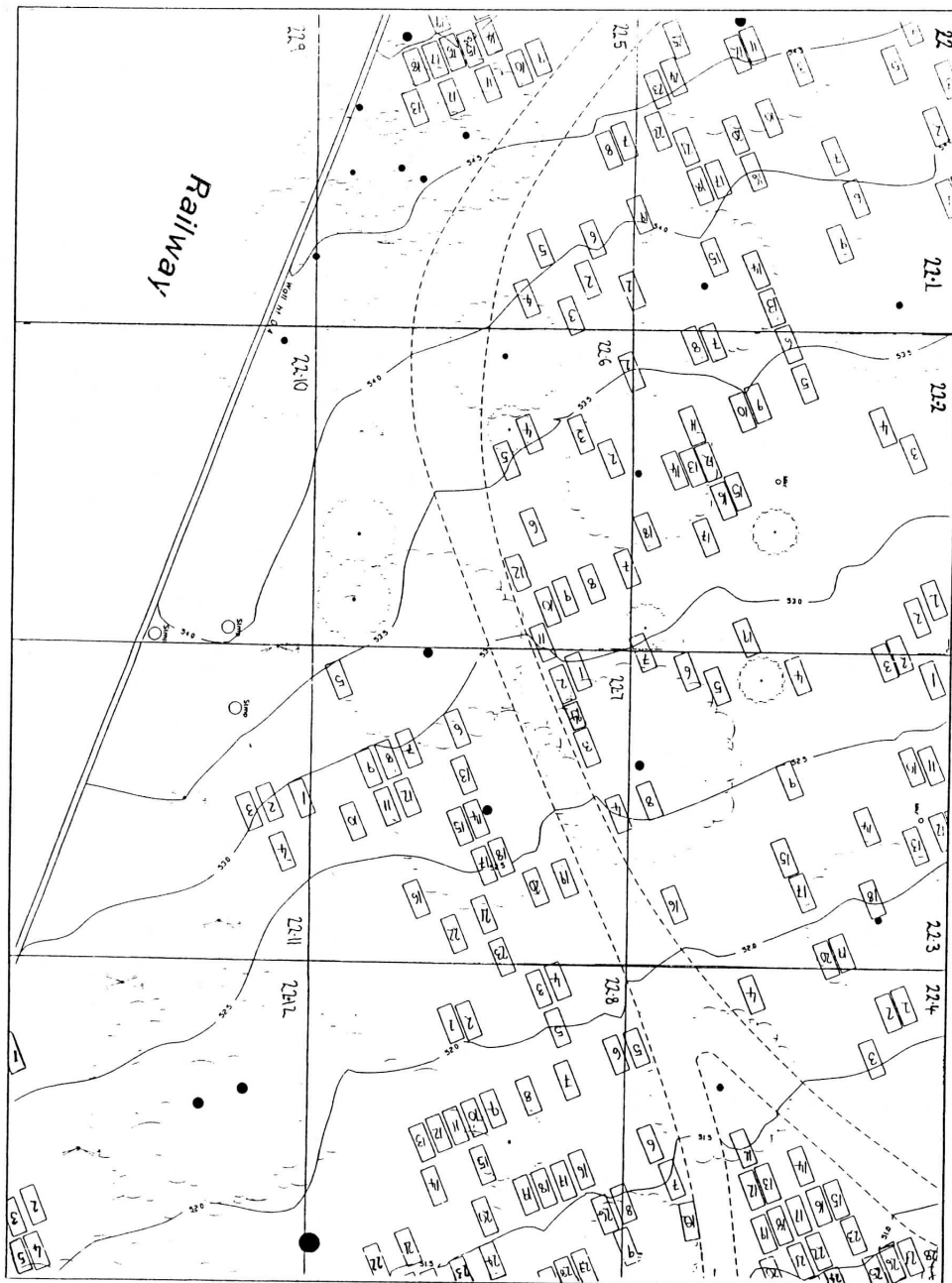


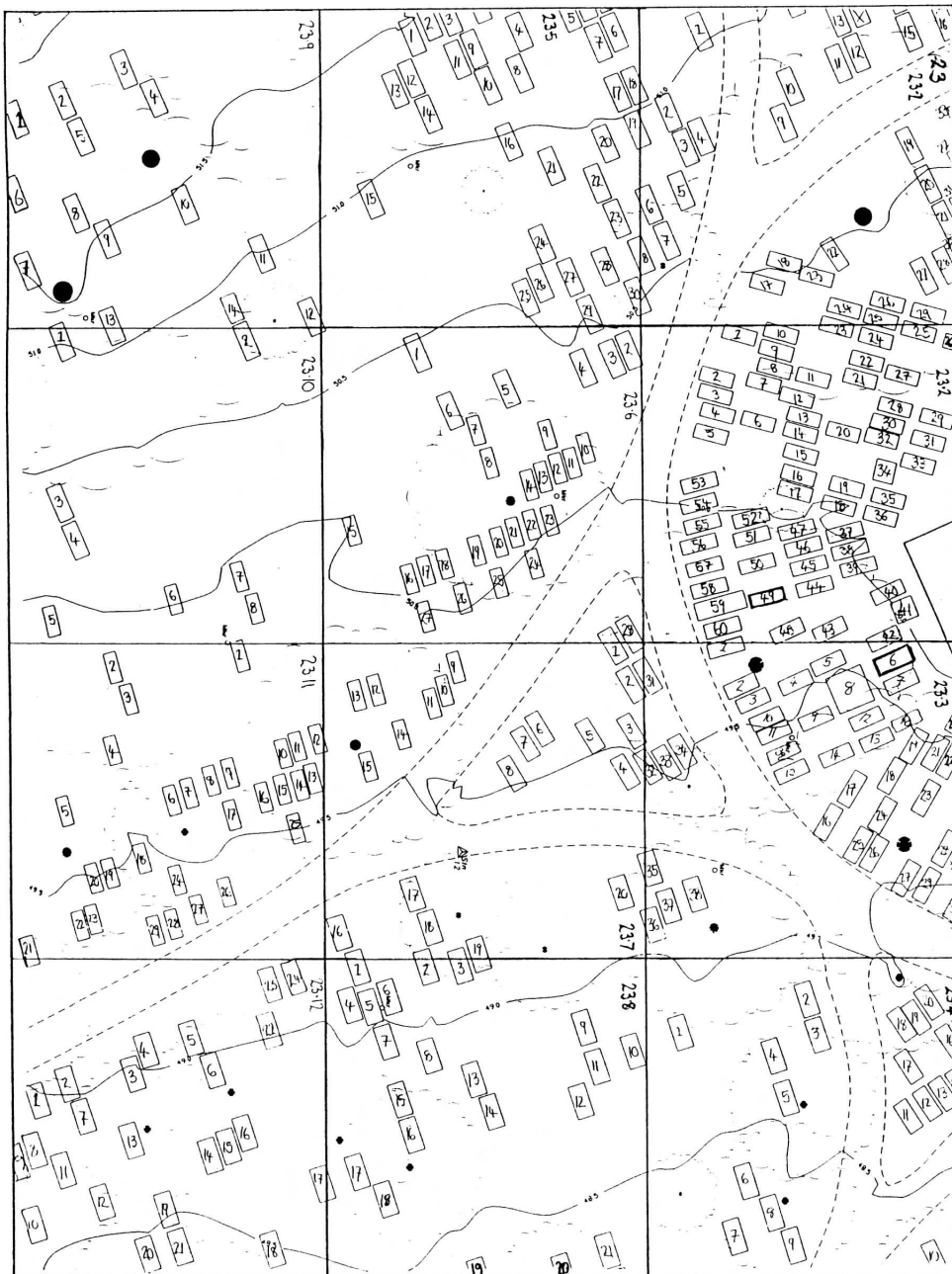


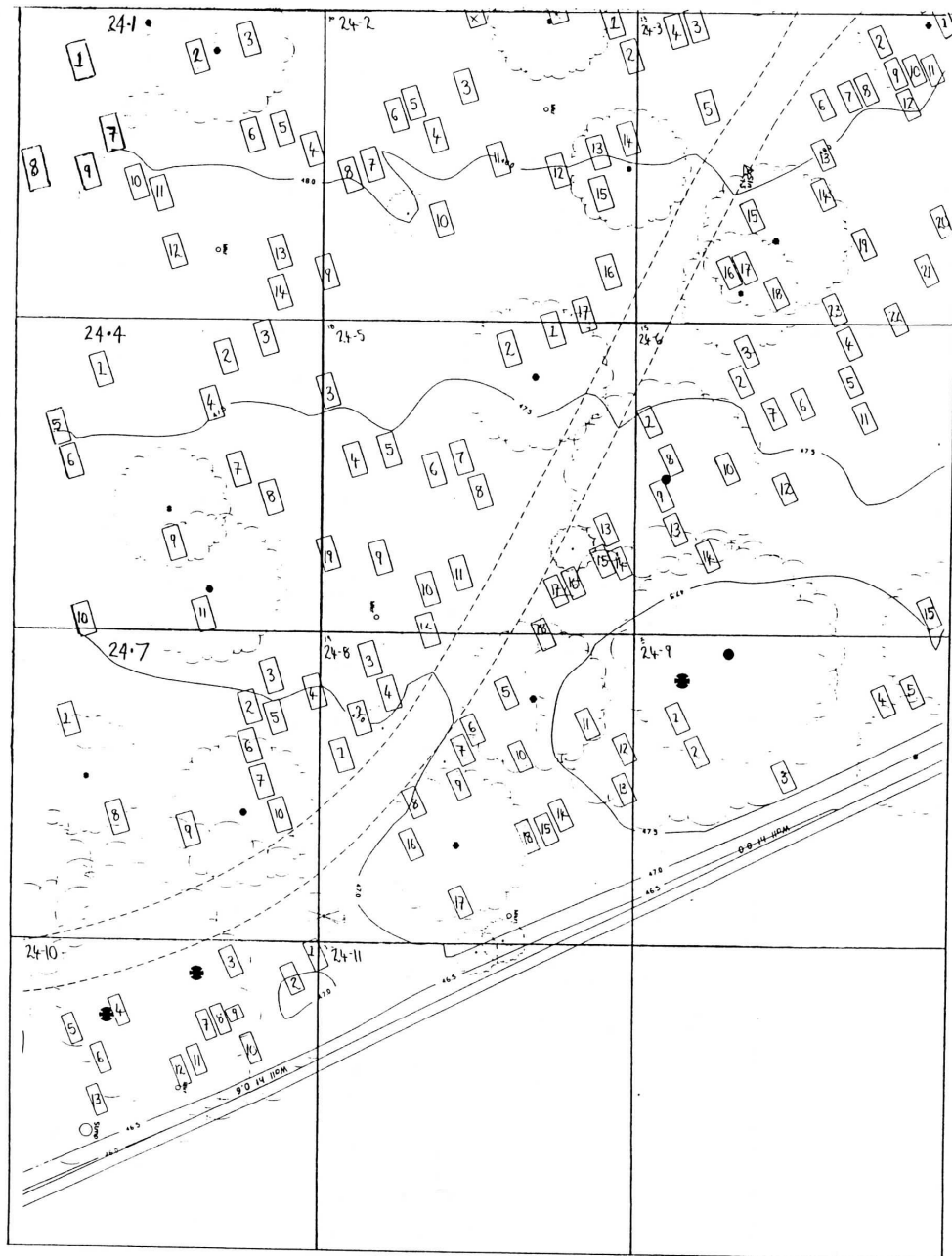


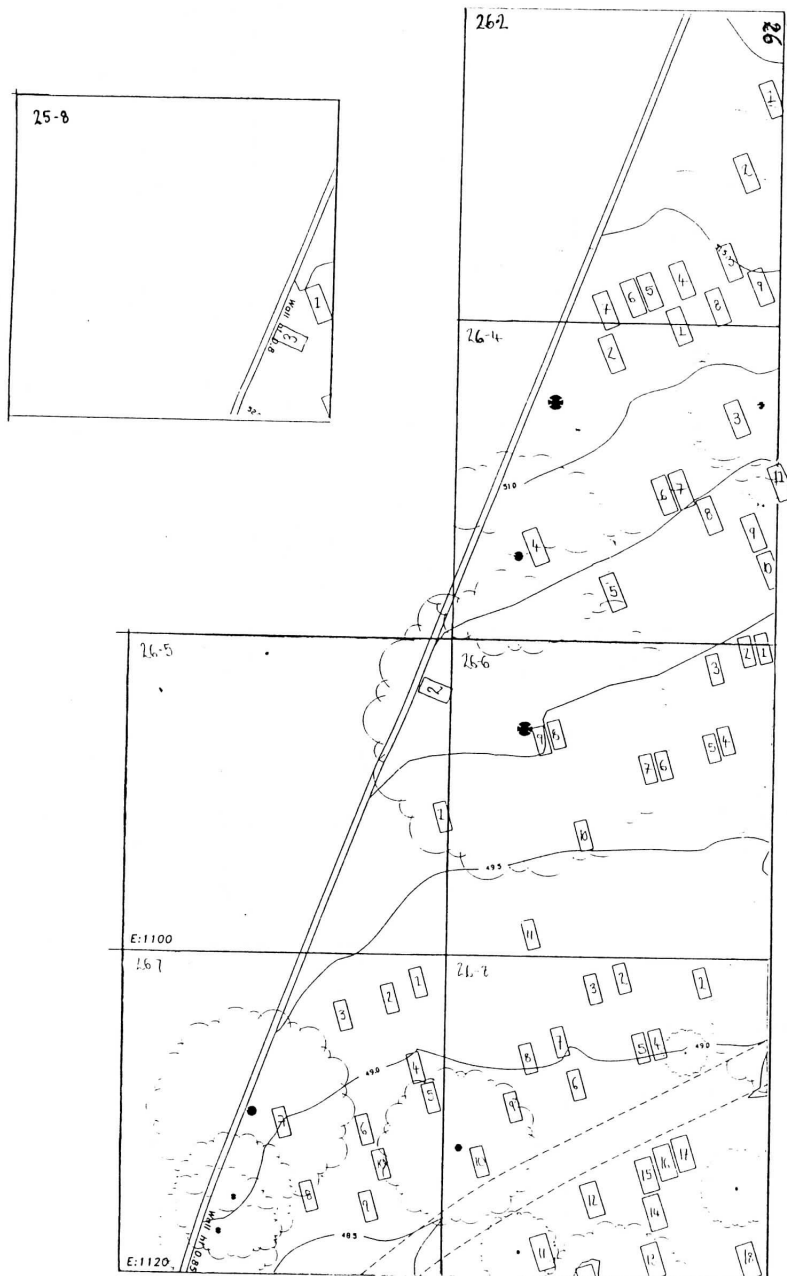




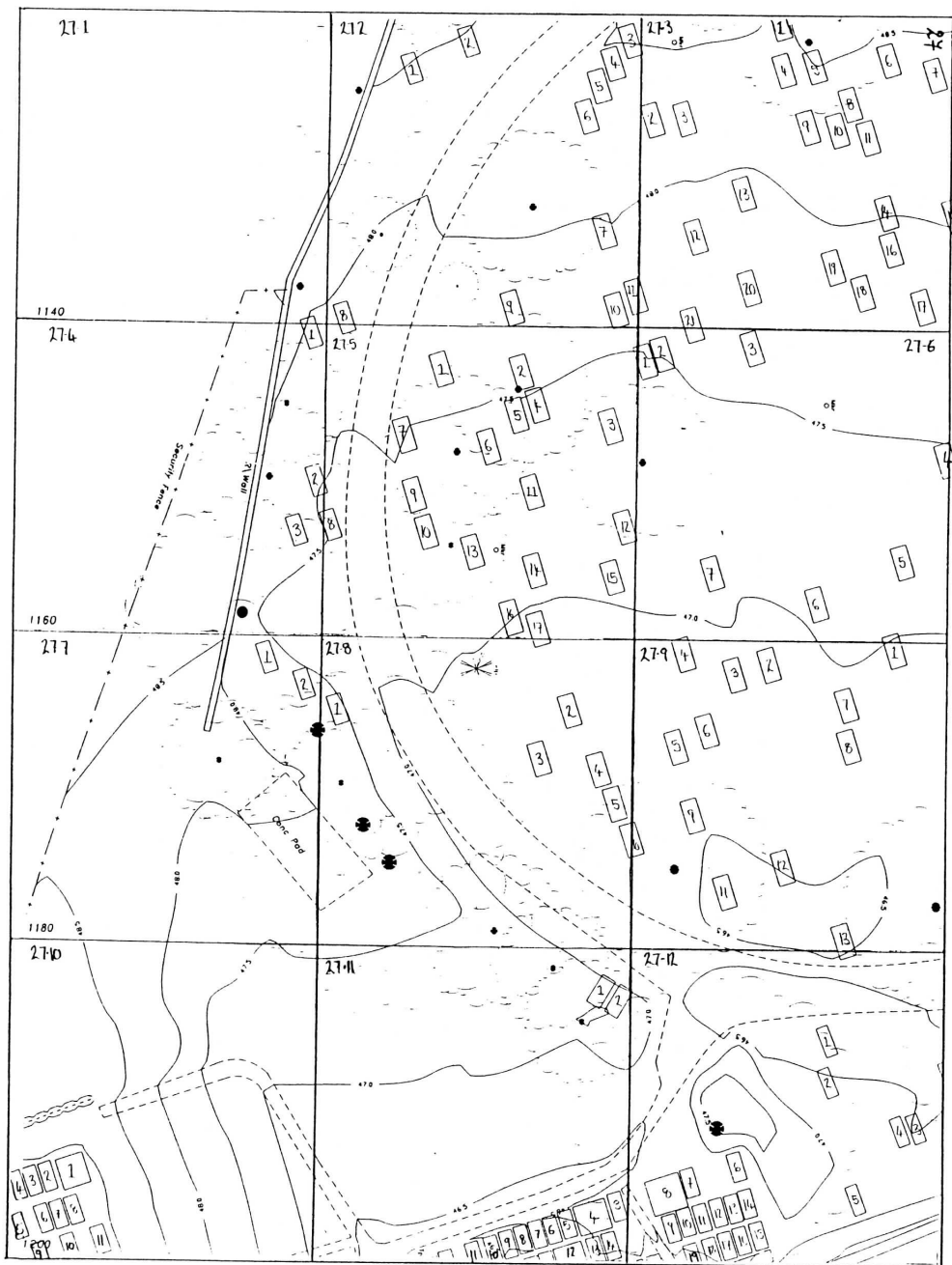


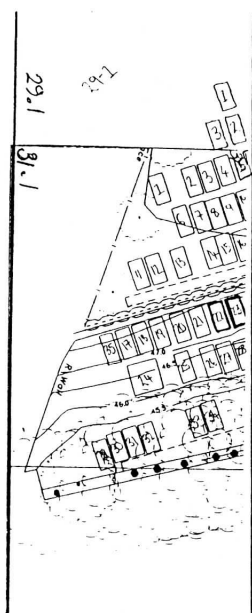
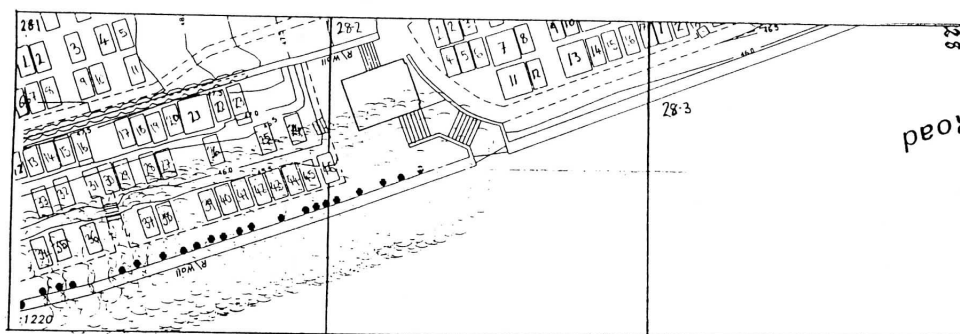


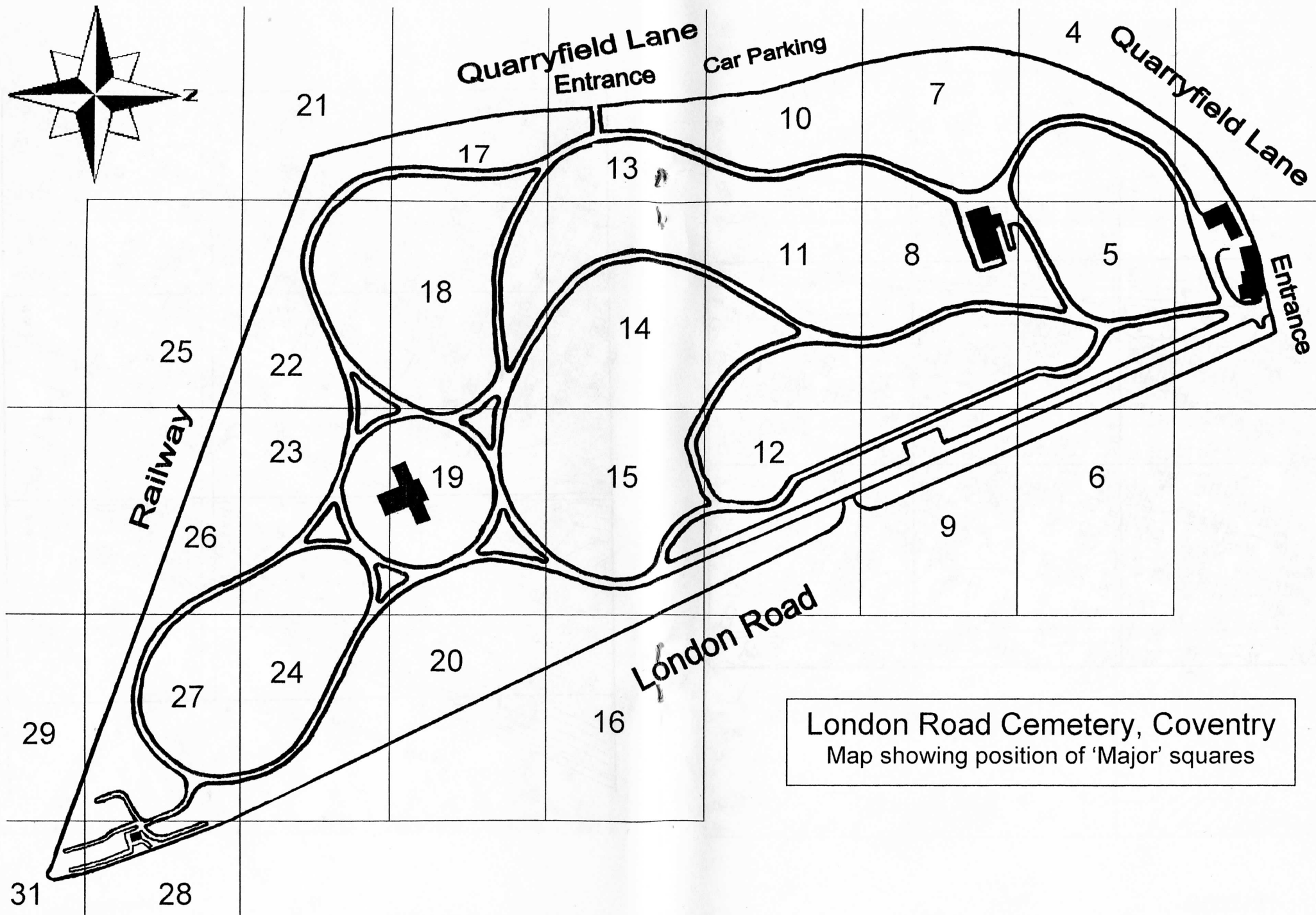
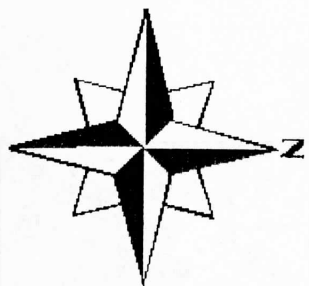




Major Squares 25 & 26







London Road Cemetery, Coventry
Map showing position of 'Major' squares