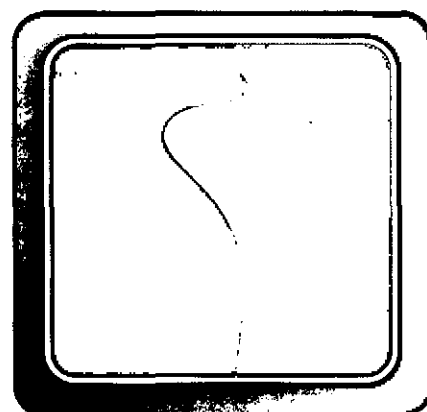
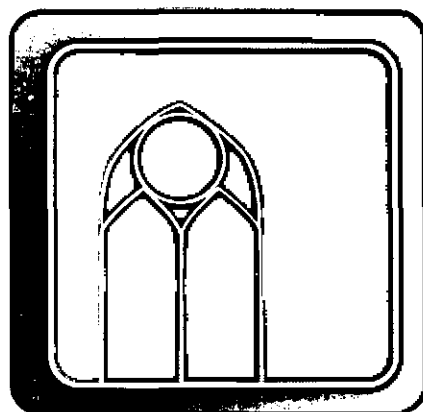
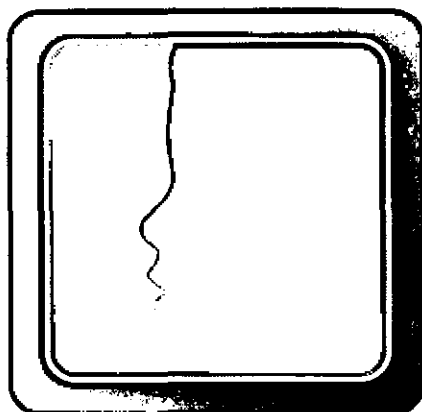


# Acorn House, Evesham Street, Alcester, Warwickshire

## Archaeological Evaluation



*understanding heritage matters*

Report No 1308  
February 2013



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

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## Summary

An archaeological evaluation at Acorn House, Evesham Street, Alcester, within the southern suburb of the Roman town, found extensive, well preserved Roman deposits just below the modern garden soil. Pottery analysis suggests that the main occupation phase was mid-1st – early 2nd century AD.

An undated soil layer apparent in all three trenches has been interpreted as a relic soil that pre-dates the occupation of the area. Intensive Roman period occupation began in the Flavian period with a hint that some activity preceded this implied by residual pottery of pre-conquest and Transitional types. Early deposits included a succession of layers associated with an ashy occupation layer. A sequence of cardinally aligned gullies may relate to a complex of enclosures or paddocks. These were succeeded by gravel and stone surfaces, possibly even a metalled street. Several large postholes cutting these layers could relate to large wooden buildings either side of the street.

Less well dated and poorly stratified were a series of inhumation burials and a substantial stone wall. The wall lay parallel to the street and on the same alignment as walls excavated in 1975 to the west of the present site. A parallel gully, dating to at least the 3rd century, implies that some semblance of the former alignments remained in the later Roman period.

Acorn House was built c.1800 and at least two drainage features could be related to its use. The complete absence of medieval finds from the site would suggest that it lies outside the core of the medieval town.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission is to be sought from Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the erection of a new dwelling on land adjacent to Acorn House, Evesham Street, Alcester. Warwickshire County Council Planning Archaeologist, Anna Stocks, has advised that an archaeological evaluation must be undertaken before any decision can be made on the planning application as insufficient is known about any archaeological remains that might survive on the site. Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire has been commissioned to produce a Written Scheme of Investigation for a suitable programme of archaeological work.

1.2 The proposed development lies within an area of significant archaeological potential, within the southern suburb of the Roman town of Alcester. There is therefore a potential for the proposed works to disturb archaeological deposits associated with the utilisation of this area from at least the Roman period.

1.3 A programme of Archaeological Works, consisting of the excavation of 24m of trench divided into three trenches, in accordance with a Brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist (September 2012) was carried out in January 2013. This report represents the results of that work and the archive will be stored at Warwickshire Museum under the site code AL129.

## **2 Location**

2.1 The development site is located in the parish of Alcester at map reference SP 0864 5719. The site appears to have been part of a large garden since Acorn House was originally built.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is 1st and 2nd Terrace River Gravels (British Geological Survey 1974).

## **3 Aims and Objectives**

3.1 The main aim of the evaluation was to determine if there were any significant archaeological remains in the area to be developed; to form an understanding of their value and their potential to shed light this area of Roman Alcester.

3.2 Secondary aims included placing the results in their wider local and regional contexts as appropriate.

3.3 The objectives were to locate, record and analyse archaeological materials and deposits and to disseminate the results in an appropriate format.

## **4 Archaeological and Historical Background**

### **Prehistoric**

4.1 There is currently no evidence for Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer activity at Alcester but possible Mesolithic (c 8000-4000 BC) flintwork is recorded from topsoil and a pit group at nearby Oversley Mill (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 6399; Warwickshire Museum 1990). Within Alcester, evidence for pre-Roman activity is elusive and fragmentary. A possible Neolithic and perhaps Bronze Age settlement that was recorded in Meeting Lane in 1927 (MWA 5495), is far from convincing and may more accurately pertain to an isolated flint find spot; one of only a few within Alcester, although a Neolithic pit was recorded in Bleachfield Street (MWA 4492).

4.2 A small group of postholes and a pit found in Tibbet's Close were broadly dated to the Iron Age by Cracknell (1989, 12-25), and if the identification is correct, the site may have been part of one of a number of Iron Age settlement foci in the area; although more substantial evidence comes from Cold Comfort Lane (Jones and Palmer 1995, 1999). In addition, a number of undated cropmarks visible on air photographs of the area surrounding the town could represent activity in this period.

### **Roman (AD 43 – 410)**

4.3 During the Romano-British period Alcester was an important town, probably known as Alauna (MWA 4495; Fig 1). The town probably grew from an ad hoc settlement (vicus) surrounding a mid-first century fort in the Bleachfield Street area on the junction of two

important roads, Ryknild Street and the Droitwich Salt Way. If it existed then this fort will have succeeded a short lived fort, indicated by a cropmark at Lower Oversley Lodge on a high ridge that overlooks Alcester from the south (Booth 1996, 32). The Bleachfield Street fort may have been used as late as the early second century by a small garrison whereas the town continued to expand and was inhabited throughout the period of occupation (Palmer 1997).

4.4 It is generally assumed that the Ryknild Street on the far west side of the town was an early military road, and that the Roman road to Stratford (MWA 446) was later, but perhaps still earlier than the fort (Booth 1994, 167). This road became a significant thoroughfare; its embankment (agger) was still evident as an earthwork in 1958 (Hughes 1960, 11). A large public building, possibly an official stopover place (mansio), was built across the road (Booth 1994).

4.5 The Roman settlement was extensive, being far larger than the medieval settlement and comparable to 21st century Alcester. However, a number of areas that have remained free from modern development in the town are collectively Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (Warwickshire No 128: Alcester Roman Town).

4.6 A large part of the town was defended by a rampart in the 2nd century and by a wall in the 4th century (Cracknell 1996). This 'defended area' lay to the south of an area of marshland.

### **Anglo-Saxon (AD 410 – 1066)**

4.7 There is no unequivocal evidence for continued settlement in Alcester in the early Saxon period, although Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from excavations at Lloyds Bank in 1975 (Booth and Evans 2001, 116-123) and 1997 (MWA 501, MWA 8176). In 1964 Hughes recovered a 7th-century silver bracelet from his excavation south of the former Almshouses on Bleachfield Street (MWA 6461) and Alcester may have been that 'celebrated place called Alne' where an ecclesiastical council was held in AD 709 to consecrate the foundation of Evesham Abbey by Ecgwin, Bishop of Worcester. An Evesham Chronicle account of c 1125, had Ecgwin preaching to the wealthy, hardhearted people of Alcester, but being drowned out by the smiths hammers and anvils. Ecgwin's invocation of divine retribution summoned an earthquake which swallowed up both town and smiths. The vacant site was therefore given to Evesham Abbey and though many had since tried to follow the trade of a smith in Alcester, none had succeeded (VCH 1945, 9-22).

### **Medieval and Post-medieval (1066 – 1800)**

4.8 In the medieval period Alcester was a prosperous small town concentrated around the parish church and the present High Street (MWA 9585). The medieval plots fronting on to High Street formed a series of extended narrow properties, and another group of these continued along the north end of Bleachfield Street. The surviving lines of these boundaries may be seen on 18th century estate maps (Sutton 1754; Eyre 1760). A number of late medieval and early post-medieval buildings survive within the town (VCH 1945, 9-12). The parish church has a 14th century tower but was largely rebuilt in the 18th century (MWA

541). Gunnings Bridge stands on the site of one of the medieval bridges of Alcester, but the present structure is of probable 19th century date (MWA 538).

4.9 Immediately to the north of the town was the Benedictine abbey of St Mary and St John the Baptist, founded in 1140 by Ralph le Boteler (Scheduled Ancient Monument Number 21562; MWA 534). The abbey would have been an economic as well as religious centre. The financial fortunes of the abbey suffered through the negligence of later abbots, and its status was reduced to a cell of Evesham Abbey in 1465. It was dissolved in 1536 (VCH 1908, 59-61). After this time the site was used as a source of stone for Beauchamp Court and by the 18th century was in agricultural use. The site of the town's water-powered medieval corn mill survives just to the north of the abbey site. This was converted into a needle mill in around 1805 and most of the existing buildings date from the 19th century (MWA 5023, not on plan).

4.10 The Grade II listed 17th-century town hall was originally the market hall with an open ground floor, enclosed in the 19th century (MWA 540). The town continued to develop as a market town into the 19th century, and also had a thriving industrial base, particularly needle manufacturing. The railway from Redditch to Evesham via Alcester opened in 1866, with a further line from Alcester to Bearley opening in 1876, but are both now closed and dismantled.

## **Adjacent Historic Environment Records**

4.11 There are numerous known or suspected Roman sites within the immediate vicinity. The site lies close to the projected meeting point of Ryknild Street (MWA 445) and the major Roman Road heading east (MWA 4757), towards the Roman settlement at Tiddington. Small scale excavations close by have uncovered considerable evidence for Roman settlement and a sample of these are shown (Fig 2). The most significant nearby excavation, immediately to the north-west of the site, was a trench (MWA 482) excavated in 1975 which exposed two Roman walls along with pottery and a brooch. A site alongside Ryknild Street excavated between 1956 and 1958 exposed Roman post holes, ditches and cobbled surfaces (MWA 452). Another adjacent trench (MWA 5496), excavated in the early 1960s, exposed Roman walls and pits dating from the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. To the east of the site (MWA 3789) a trench excavated in 1983 exposed gravel surfaces, a ditch, Roman pottery and coins. Another trench (MWA 7400) excavated in the 1980s, further to the north-east, uncovered similar results. To the south-east of the site larger excavations (MWA 4478) in the 1960s exposed evidence for timber and stone buildings along with numerous finds. Work close by between 1956 and 1958 (MWA 448) also revealed numerous Roman features including stone walls. A street (MWA 450) within the suburb was formerly visible as a parch mark in dry summers before it was built over in the late 1960s.

4.12 The projected extent of the medieval town (MWA 9585) does not reach as far south-west as Acorn House but it is still possible that some remains from this period might be encountered.

4.13 Acorn House itself is Grade II Listed, along with its coach house and walls. It is a three storey brick house of *circa* 1800 (Appendix C). The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886-1887 shows the house and grounds covering a very similar area to today, the main difference being that the area around the house is largely undeveloped.

## 5 Evaluation Trenches (Figs 5 and 6)

5.1 A total of three evaluation trenches, two 8m in length and one 10.5m in length, were excavated using a tracked mini-excavator with a toothless ditching bucket.

### Trench 1

#### *Phase 1: Natural Geology*

5.2 Geological natural consisted of firm orange sand with grey mottling and occasional gravel patches (114) and was exposed in a slot excavated at the eastern end of the trench.

5.3 The same slot revealed the natural to be overlaid by a layer of grey silty loam (113) up to 0.13m thick. No finds were recovered from this layer which is taken here to be an undeveloped relic soil.

#### *Phase 2: Mid-1st – early 2nd Century*

5.4 This was overlaid (as seen in the slot and a section through a later feature [sections A and B]), by a layer of greyish brown silty loam (112), up to 0.19m thick, from which several sherds of Roman pottery were recovered. This was covered by a thin layer of black silty loam (111), up to 0.09m thick, which again contained a few sherds of Roman pottery. This layer appeared to represent burning and was probably also present in Trench 2 (as layer 206). It might represent a fire somewhere near the trench, but may equally have been caused by the spreading of ash from domestic or possibly industrial fires in the area.

#### *Phase 3: Mid-2nd – late 2nd Century*

5.5 Overlying layer 111 was a surface consisting of a hard packed layer of gravel (103). This varied in thickness, where observed, from 0.07m to 0.14m. No finds were recovered from within the gravel but very little excavation took place of this layer.

5.6 Cutting the gravel surface were two unexcavated postholes (108 and 117). They each contained similar stone post settings (110 and 119), which suggests that they may be related to the same structure.

#### *Phase 4: 3rd – 4th Century*

5.7 This phase consisted of a single narrow gully 106 which had steeply sloping sides and a slightly rounded base was 0.19m deep. A few sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from its greyish brown sandy loam fill (107). At the north-western end of the trench numerous flat fragments of Arden sandstone and a lesser number of small pebbles formed a surface (102). This surface may potentially have incorporated the remains of a wall, a hypothesis which could not have been adequately tested within the confines of the trench.



### *Phase 5: Assumed to be Roman and later than the 2nd century*

5.8 A cultivation soil in this trench was greyish brown sandy loam (101) with occasional small gravel fragments which was between 0.20 and 0.25m thick. This contained frequent sherds of Roman pottery and occasional fragments of what appeared to be flat roof 'slates', probably made from Arden Sandstone.

### *Phase 6: Post-medieval – modern*

5.9 A post-medieval drain 104 was aligned east to west across the trench. A section was excavated through this down to the stone capping for the drain beneath. A single stone was removed from the capping and brick walls lining the sides of the drain were visible through the narrow gap. The exact size and shape of the bricks was impossible to determine, but the stone capping consisted of a creamy, yellowish limestone which appeared to have been cut, possibly sawn, into shape. The drain trench, above the stone capping, was filled by a greyish brown sandy loam (105). This feature may relate to Acorn House which was built *circa* 1800.

5.10 The trench was sealed with between 0.20 and 0.28m of dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (100) which contained frequent tree roots from the surrounding conifers.

## **Trench 2**

### *Phase 1: Natural Geology*

5.11 Geological natural (219) was orange sand with grey mottling and approximately 10% gravel content.

5.12 A thin layer of grey silty loam (211) overlay the natural and probably equates with relic soil layer 113 in Trench 1.

### *Phase 2: Mid-1st – early 2nd Century*

5.13 At the south-west end of the trench gully 215 was up to 0.58m wide and 0.12m deep and had moderately steep sides and a slightly rounded base. It was filled by a dark grey silty loam (216) from which, a few sherds of Roman pottery were recovered.

5.14 Layer 211 was overlaid by greyish brown silty loam (207), up to 0.27m thick. This layer contained intrusive 4th century sherds which may have derived from modern service trench 217. It was overlain by a thin layer of black silty loam (206) comparable to 111 in Trench 1.

5.15 At the north-east end of the trench layer 206 was overlain by a surface, perhaps a floor or a yard composed of a few fragments of flat sandstone in a matrix of greyish brown silty loam (210). At the south-west end of the trench layer 207 was overlaid by a layer of flattish sandstone fragments mixed with some gravel (209), similar in character to layer 102 in Trench 1. Only visible in the centre of the trench, a very thin layer of mortar, 205, up to

0.02m in thick, seems likely to represent a surface, possibly a floor layer associated with a building. It was overlaid by up to 0.14m of mixed strong brown sand with about 20% gravel (204). These layers appeared to abut greyish brown sandy loam layer (208) to the east. These layers seem likely to have been associated with a building.

5.16 A pit 202, cut through layers 204 and 210, and may have contained a post. It was over 0.4m deep and was up to 0.94m in diameter, backfilled with reddish brown sandy loam and 30% gravel (203). A similar pit 212, was at least 0.84m in diameter and was filled with reddish brown sandy loam (214) with 60% gravel packing (213) a greyish brown sandy loam post-pipe (220).

### *Phase 3: Mid-2nd – late 2nd Century*

5.17 No deposits certainly of this phase were recorded.

### *Phase 4: 3rd – 4th Century*

5.18 No deposits certainly of this phase were recorded.

### *Phase 5: Assumed to be Roman and later than the 2nd century*

5.19 A greyish brown sandy loam cultivation soil 201 extended across the trench which may equate to Phase 5 deposits in other trenches.

### *Phase 6: Post-medieval – modern*

5.20 Service trench 217 was a steep sided feature seen in the base of the trench and filled with a mix of gravel and brown sandy loam soil (218).

5.21 The trench was sealed by the very dark greyish brown sandy loam modern topsoil (200).

## **Trench 3**

### *Phase 1: Natural Geology*

5.22 Geological natural was orange sand (317) similar to that found in Trenches 1 and 2.

5.23 A thin layer of grey silty sand (303), a maximum of 0.12m thick, remained undated but is considered likely to be the same as layers 113 and 211.

### *Phase 2: Mid-1st – early 2nd Century*

5.24 Gully 310 was aligned north-south, and had steeply sloping sides, was 0.6m wide and

a rounded base up to 0.15m deep. It contained grey silty clay with dark grey mottling (311) from which several sherds of Roman pottery and fragments of animal bone were recovered. At right angles, ditch 304 was just over 1m wide and a maximum of 0.23m deep. It was filled with dark grey silty clay with charcoal flecks (305) and the largest concentration of pottery on the site (109 sherds) which included the Iron Age and transitional (E fabric) sherds.

5.25 Ditch 304 was cut by the edge of another apparent post pit 308. This was 1.2m by 0.92m and filled with reddish brown silty clay and gravel packing (309) with a post pipe (306) containing greyish brown silty clay (307), and sandstone wedges for the former timber post.

### *Phase 3: Mid-2nd – late 2nd Century*

5.26 No deposits certainly of this phase were recorded.

### *Phase 4: 3rd – 4th Century*

5.27 No deposits certainly of this phase were recorded.

### *Phase 5: Assumed to be Roman and later than the 2nd century*

5.28 This phase includes two human burials and a possible wall of uncertain stratigraphy. The western end of a grave 315 was partially revealed and was seen to contain a well preserved skull (314), probably of a young adult. The grave was filled by a greyish brown silty clay (316) which also contained a few disarticulated fragments of human bone. Adjacent to this grave and possibly cut by it was another feature 312, apparently a pit. This may have been a small grave cut or pit for another burial. It certainly contained the remains of an infant skeleton of around 12 months in age; although there is a possibility that more than one infant burial was present. Neither of these features were fully excavated and all human remains were left *in situ*. A further possible grave 320, was only just visible in the excavated section of ditch 304.

5.29 At the north-east end of the trench stone wall 302 survived at some 0.25m below the present surface and consequently some stonework was dislodged by the machine. It consisted of up to 2 courses of Arden Sandstone, some of which bore traces of the sandy reddish mortar. It was made from medium sized, irregular sandstone rubble, with dressed faces, with a smaller rubble core, built in a construction trench 318, backfilled with grey silt with reddish brown flecks (319).

5.30 The Phase 2 deposits were sealed under a layer of dark grey silty loam (301) which despite containing pottery dating no later than the early 2nd century, is likely to be a 3rd or 4th century accumulation.

### *Phase 6: Post-medieval – modern*

5.31 Topsoil across the trench was dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (300), up to

0.48m thick.

## 6 Roman Pottery Assessment *Dr Jerry Evans and Dr Gladys Monteil*

6.1 Some 240 sherds were presented for examination. Two were post-medieval and the remainder Roman or late Iron Age.

### Chronology

6.2 The samian evidence from Alcester suggests that the town was founded in the early AD60s (Hartley *et al* 1994). The material from AL129 does not contradict this. Class E fabrics are generally absent from the site, as might be expected, and those that are present are handmade fabrics, rather than the standard wheel-made pre-Flavian class E wares.

6.3 Most of the dateable material recovered dates to the later first and second centuries. Some later material is present but its quantity is much less. This no doubt reflects the migration of the focus of the settlement to the defended area after cAD 200. The later first to second century emphasis of the material from AL129 is reflected in the large quantity of wheel-made greywares (45%) compared to just 36% Severn Valley wares, whereas in third to mid fourth century groups from Alcester, Severn Valley wares are dominant and greywares largely residual (Evans 1996). The samian ware consists of two South Gaulish sherds of Flavian-Trajanic date and eleven Central Gaulish sherds of Hadrianic-Antonine date.

### Fabric Supply

**Table 1: Fabric proportions of all recorded pottery by No of Sherds**

A01 Dressel 20, C1-3	1.3%
A00 Gallic?	0.9%
BB1	3.8%
C11 late shell tempered, LC3-C4	0.4%
E00 grog tempered	3.4%
F00	0.4%
F51 Oxford CC	0.4%
G12 MK pink grog, LC3-C4	0.4%
G44 Malvernian	1.3%
M21 Mancetter AD100-350	0.4%
O20 Severn Valley ware	29.9%
O21 Heavily organic tempered Severn Valley ware	6.4%
P00 Iron Age tradition fabrics	0.9%
Q00 White slipped wares, C1-2	1.3%
R00 Greywares	39.3%
R31 Handmade, organically tempered greyware	6.0%
S00 Samian ware	5.6%
W00 whitewares	0.4%
Total	240 sherds

6.4 Amphorae are relatively strongly represented at 2.2% (Nosh) something which might be expected given the urban location of this site, and Gallic material seems to be represented as well as Dressel 20, again a largely urban feature. BB1 is quite weakly represented at 3.8%. This would be consistent with the largely second century date of material from this assemblage, as BB1 seems to be much more strongly represented at Alcester in the third and fourth centuries (Evans 1996).

6.5 Late Roman shell-tempered ware is present, but in a minute quantity, reflecting the weak fourth century representation here and the lack of clear evidence of the latest fourth century occupation here. Similarly class E fabrics are poorly represented, reflecting the absence of pre-Neronian activity on the site.

6.6 Despite the date range of most of the material colour-coated finewares are very poorly represented, with a single sherd in an oxidized colour-coated ware and later first to mid second century date and a single sherd of Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (in total 0.8% Nosh for class F). Mortaria are also not strongly represented, with a single Mancetter vessels date cAD200-220.

6.7 As usual Severn Valley wares represent most of the oxidized wares, 36.3% (Nosh) and within that 6.4% are the heavily organically tempered fabric O21 of chiefly first to second century date. White slipped fabrics are relatively reasonably represented at 1.3%, which may reflect the date range of the site.

6.8 Reduced wares, as noted above, are the commonest fabric class, at 45.3% (Nosh), reflecting the predominantly later first to second century date range of the assemblage. Numbers of the sherds have rusticated decoration, more than have acute burnished lattice decoration, suggesting an earlier emphasis in that date range, and similarly a number of the greyware jars seem to be of rustic ware form.

6.9 Samian ware is reasonably represented at 5.6% (Nosh), a level higher than might be expected on basic level rural sites, although probably at the lower end of the urban range from other sites in Alcester, but comparable to those from Tiddington (Booth 1991). Three of the nine samian ware sherds identifiable to form seem to be from decorated vessels.

6.10 Whitewares are poorly represented at 0.4% (Nosh). Overall information on supply is similar to that from much better evidenced sites elsewhere in Alcester.

## Functional analysis

6.11 Table 2 shows a functional analysis of the rimsherds from the assemblage by minimum numbers of rims. The assemblage is considerably dominated by jars, some 69.4%, and tablewares are scarce at 19.4%. Drinking vessels are also unusually scarce, both for an urban site, and for a rural site in the Severn valley region (cf Evans 1999).

**Table 2: Functional analysis of vessels (by min no of rims)**

Constricted-necked jars	Wide-mouthed jars	Other jars	Storage jars	Tankards	Bowls	Dishes	Mortaria	Lids	N
2.8%	11.1%	50.0%	8.3%	2.8%	5.5%	13.9%	2.8%	2.8%	36 rims

6.12 There can be little doubt that the function figures from AL129 fall within the general rural site range. This presumably reflects this being a relatively peripheral and low-status site, similar to Worcester Magistrates Court (Evans forthcoming).

## Discussion

6.13 The assemblage from AL129 is small, but there is just about enough material to obtain some basic diagnostics for the site. Most of the pottery seems to be of later first to second century date, and of the second century material it seems probable that more of this relates to the first half of the second century. The functional analysis suggests that the site was of low status and more analogous to a basic level rural site than a typical urban site. Other indicators contrast somewhat, with a reasonable representation of amphorae and an urban level of samian ware (5.6% Nosh) and overall finewares 6.4% (Nosh). However, if Booth's (1991) measure of fine and specialist wares is used, this amounts to just 10.3% (Nosh), below his figure of c15% for Alcester and Tripontium and just a little above his level of about 7% for the village at Tiddington. Clearly this would appear to have been a marginal and low-status site.

## 7 Conclusions

### Deposit Sequence

7.1 The evaluation has established that complex layers of Roman remains survive on the site, in places only 0.25m below the modern ground surface. These deposits include an undated layer apparent in all the trenches directly overlying the natural geology, perhaps a relic soil that pre-dates the occupation of the area. Intensive Roman period occupation began in the Flavian period (AD 69-96) with a hint that some activity preceded this implied by residual pottery sherds of pre-conquest and transitional types. An ill-defined succession of layers in Trenches 1 and 2 allude to significant activity in Phase 2 associated with an ashy occupation or perhaps demolition layer.

7.2 Also in Phase 2, a sequence of cardinally aligned gullies evident in Trenches 2 and 3 suggest the presence of a complex of enclosures or paddocks. These appear to have been succeeded in Trenches 1 and 2 by gravel and stone surfaces, possibly even a street. Several large postholes cutting these layers could relate to large wooden buildings either side of the street.

7.3 An undated stone wall in Trench 3 lay parallel to the purported street and coincidentally on the same alignment as walls excavated in 1975 to the west of the present site. Its relationship to the cluster of inhumations remains uncertain but a parallel gully in Trench 1 dating to at least the 3rd century, implies that some semblance of the former alignments remained in the later Roman period.

7.4 The uppermost archaeological level in all three trenches included a possible cultivation soil which will have mixed in finds from the underlying layers.

7.5 Acorn House (Listing in Appendix C) was apparently built c.1800 and at least two drainage features could be related to its use. The complete absence of medieval finds from the site would suggest that it lies outside the core of the medieval town.

7.6 The pottery evidence seems to relate to a low status rural settlement with a hint that the site lay close to a burgeoning urban centre. The low levels of later Roman pottery would seem to suggest a hiatus of activity concomitant with a wide-scale move to the defended area in the early 3rd century. This is corroborated by the presence of the burials which would not have been allowed within the confines of the town. The possibility that they may have been Christianised (east/west aligned) burials, and therefore of 4th century date, is not though consistent with burial in only partially silted gullies of 2nd century date.

### **Deposit Vulnerability**

7.7 The deposit sequence across the site is relatively uncomplicated. The geological natural is covered in a dense Roman deposit which includes surfaces, ditches, walls and burials. The Roman deposits are protected under a thin lens of modern topsoil.

**Table 3: Trench 1 significant levels**

	Height above Ordnance Datum
The existing ground surface	42.1m
Top of Roman layers	41.6m
Geological natural	41.1m

**Table 4: Trench 2 significant levels**

	Height above Ordnance Datum
The existing ground surface	42m
Top of Roman layers	41.85m
Geological natural	41.15m

**Table 5: Trench 3 significant levels**

	Height above Ordnance Datum
The existing ground surface	41.99m – 42.08m
Top of Roman layers	41.5
Geological natural	41m

### **Acknowledgements**

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WRO DR 360/170 Photograph of part of map at Ragley, now lost.

## Appendix A: List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>
100	Topsoil layer	
101	Layer	Roman
102	Pebble and stone surface	Roman
103	Gravel surface	Roman
104	Drain	Early 19th c ?
105	Drain fill (of 104)	Early 19th c ?
106	Gully	Undated
107	Gully fill (of 106)	3rdC
108	Posthole	
109	Posthole fill (of 108)	
110	Post setting (stone)	Roman
111	Layer, thin and black	Roman
112	Greyish brown layer	Roman
113	Grey layer	Early, Roman?
114	Geological Natural	
115	Stone drain capping (of 104)	Early 19th c?
116	Brick drain wall (of 104)	Early 19th c?
117	Posthole	
118	Posthole fill (of 117)	
119	Posthole setting (of 117)	
200	Topsoil	
201	Layer	
202	Pit	Prob Roman
203	Pit Fill (of 202)	Prob roman
204	Pinkish layer	Roman
205	Layer with mortar	Roman
206	Black layer	Roman
207	Greyish brown layer	Roman
208	Greyish brown layer	Roman
209	Pebble and stone surface	Roman
210	Layer, with some sandstone frags	Roman
211	Grey layer	Roman
212	Pit	Roman
213	Pit fill (of 220)	Roman
214	Pit fill	Roman
215	Gully	Roman
216	Gully fill (of 215)	
217	Modern feature	19th/20th c?
218	Modern feature fill (of 217)	19th/20th c?
219	Geological Natural	
220	Post pipe	Roman

300	Topsoil	
301	Layer	
302	Stone wall	Roman
303	Grey layer (over 317)	Roman
304	Ditch	
305	Ditch fill (of 304)	
306	Posthole	
307	Posthole fill	
308	Pit (post pit)	
309	Pit (post pit) fill (of 308)	
310	Gully	
311	Gully fill	
312	Grave (pit)	
313	Grave (pit) fill	
314	Human skeleton (in 315)	
315	Grave cut	
316	Grave fill (of 315)	
317	Geological natural	
318	Construction cut (for wall 302)	
319	Construction cut fill (of 318)	
320	Possible pit (in section 1/7)	
321	Possible pit fill (in section 1/7)	

## Appendix B List of Finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
101	Pottery	50	Roman
101	A.Bone	12	
101	Painted plast	1	Roman
101	Stone tile	1	
101	Fe Nail	3	
105	Pottery	4	2 Roman, 2-18thC 1 roof, 1 flue 17th century
105	Tile	2	
105	Clay Pipe	1	
105	Fe Nail	1	
107	Pottery	9	Roman 3rdC
107	A.Bone	6	Roman
111	Pottery	4	Roman Flavian-early 2ndC
112	Pottery	6	Roman Flavian-early 2ndC
201	Pottery	11	Roman Late 3rd-4thC
201	Whetstone	1	
204	Pottery	1	Roman Early 2ndC or later
206	Pottery	3	Roman Mid 1stC-early 2ndC
207	Pottery	5	Roman probably 4thC
209	Pottery	3	Roman possible 1st or 2ndC
210	Pottery	2	Roman probably 1st or 2ndC
214	Pottery	1	Roman 1st-early 2ndC
215	Pottery	1	Roman 2ndC
216	Pottery	4	Roman 1st-early 2ndC or later
216	A.Bone	2	

## Appendix C      Listed Building Record

**Name:** ACORN HOUSE, ATTACHED COACH HOUSE AND WALLS  
**List entry Number:** 1024643

### Location

ACORN HOUSE, ATTACHED COACH HOUSE AND WALLS, EVESHAM STREET

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

<b>County</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>District Type</b>	<b>Parish</b>
Warwickshire	Stratford-on-Avon	District Authority	Alcester

**Grade:** II

**Date first listed:** 01-Feb-1967

**Date of most recent amendment:** 21-Jun-1985

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

**Legacy System:** LBS

**UID:** 305205

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

## Summary of Building

### Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

### History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

### Details

ALCESTER EVESHAM STREET SP0857 (North side) 4/47 Acorn House, attached coach house and walls (Formerly listed as house 105 yds. SW of Rose and Crown Inn)

House. c.1800. Red brick with wood cornice and paired shaped eaves brackets. Slate hipped roof; brick stacks. Central staircase plan. Neoclassical style. 3 storeys; 3-window range. Central double-leaf flat 6-panelled doors, and fanlight with decorative glazing. Good wooden doorcase: Greek Doric three-quarter columns with dossierets and triglyphs and broken pediment with dentils. Sashes. Ground floor has tripartite windows with raised pediments above central sash, moulded architraves and sills. Door and windows recessed within round arches. Upper floors have gauged brick flat arches and stucco sills. Central windows have moulded wood architraves, on first floor with cornice and dentils; second floor has centre-hung sash. Left return side has large 2-storey canted bay. Interior not inspected. On right, single storey link to coach house has flat 6-panelled door and trellis porch. Coach house in similar style and materials. 2 storeys; 2-window range. Doors and windows recessed within 2 unequal giant round arches. On left original coach doors under shallow segmental brick arch, with 16-pane sash above. Wider opening on right, altered; and window above blocked. Hipped roof with small louvred lantern and weathervane. Attached brick walls with stone acorn finials.

Listing NGR: SP0866357212

## Appendix D      Pottery Spot Dating

### **Context 101**

Two Dressel 20 bodysherds, first to third century.

A bodysherd and joining handle in a buff amphora fabric, probably Gallic, perhaps first to second century.

Fourteen Severn valley ware bodysherds.

A Severn Valley ware simple jar base.

Three Severn Valley ware bodysherds (fabric O21).

A Severn Valley ware constricted necked jar with everted, outcurving rim, cf Webster (1977) no 1, Roman.

A Severn Valley ware wide-mouthed jar with a hooked rim, cf Webster (1977) nos 27/28, later third to fourth century.

An oxidized bodysherd with vertical combing.

Two BB1 jar base sherds, Hadrianic or later.

A BB1 dish/bowl base, Hadrianic or later.

A BB1 bodysherd with an obtuse lattice, AD 200+

A BB1 jar with an everted rim, Antonine(?).

A Mancetter hammed head mortarium rim with cordons at top and bottom of flange, AD 200-220.

Five greyware bodysherds.

A storage jar bodysherd in fabric R31.

A greyware bodysherd with vertical rusticated decoration, later first to mid second century.

A greyware jar base with beaded base.

A greyware jar base with beaded base.

A greyware jar rim with everted, rising, squared rim, of rustic ware type, later first to mid second century.

A reduced handmade bodysherd, first to second century.

Two joining sherds from a gritty greyware jar rim with everted, rising rim, Roman, possibly a third century BB copy.

A CG samian bead rimmed Dr 37 or 38 rim, probably Dr 37. AD 120-200

A CG samian bead rimmed Dr 37/38 rim. AD 120-200

Two joining CG samian dish rimsherds, Dr 18/31. AD 120-180

A CG samian bodysherd, Dr 33. AD 120-200

A CG samian bodysherd, exterior excoriated, interior has deeply incised graffito 'X', probably an illiterate mark of ownership. AD 120-200

### **Context 105 eighteenth century or later**

Two glazed sherds,

A Severn Valley ware bodysherd.

A greyware jar rim with an everted rising, thickened rim, Roman.

### **Context 107 probably third century**

Five Severn Valley ware bodysherds.

A Severn Valley ware wide-mouthed jar with a hooked rim, cf Webster (1977) nos 23-25, second to third century.

A greyware bodysherd.



A greyware jar rim fragment with an everted rising rim, probably later first century to second century.

A BB1 bodysherd with obtuse lattice decoration, AD200+

### **Context 111 Flavian to early second century**

A Severn Valley ware bodysherd (fabric O36).

Two greyware bodysherds.

A storage jar with an everted rising rim, fabric O21, first to early second century.

### **Context 112 Flavian to early second century**

Two storage jar bodysherds in fabric R31.

A Severn Valley ware bodysherd (fabric O36?).

A sandy greyware jar base, exterior sooted.

A handmade bodysherd with large grog temper.

### **Context 201**

An Oxfordshire colour-coated ware bodysherd (F51), AD 240+

A CG samian dish/bowl samian bodysherd. AD 120-200

A Central Gaulish samian chip. AD 120-200

A storage jar bodysherd in R31.

Two sandy greyware bodysherds.

Two greyware bodysherds with vertical strip rustic decoration, later first to mid second century.

Two Severn Valley ware bodysherds in fabric O21.

A Severn Valley ware tankards base.

A Severn Valley ware wide-mouthed jar with hooked rim, cf Webster (1977) no 28, later third to fourth century.

### **Context 204 Hadrianic or later**

A BB1 bodysherd

### **Context 206 perhaps mid first to early second century**

A white-slipped reduced sherd, probably mid first to second century.

A greyware simple lid rim, perhaps mid first to second century.

A greyware necked jar rim with a straight, everted thickening rim, with parallel horizontal burnished lines on the neck, possibly a rustic ware vessel, probably mid first to mid second century.

### **Context 207 later third century or later, probably fourth century**

A bodysherd in fabric G12, Milton Keynes Pink Grog tempered ware, later third to fourth century.

A jar base in wheelmade shell-tempered ware (C11), fourth century?

A Severn Valley ware tankard rim, cf Webster (1976) no 43, LC2-C3.

A greyware jar with a triangularly-sectioned lid-seated rim, perhaps a channel rim jar copy, perhaps second century.

A necked jar with an everted rising rim in a sandy oxidized (?) fabric. Roman

#### **Context 209 possibly first or second century**

A sandy greyware bodysherd.

A white-slipped sandy oxidized ware bodysherd, perhaps first or second century.

#### **Context 210 probably first or second century**

A Severn Valley ware bodysherd.

A white-slipped oxidized ware bodysherd.

#### **Context 214 first to early second century**

A reduced handmade storage jar bodysherd in R31.

#### **Context 215 Hadrianic-Antonine**

A sandy reduced greyware bodysherd with an acute burnished lattice.

#### **Context 216 first to early second century or later**

Three bodysherd in a handmade reduced fabric with large grog temper, Perhaps AD 1-50

A BB1 simple rimmed dish rim, Hadrianic or later.

#### **Context 301 mid first to mid second**

Four reduced sandy black bodysherds.

Two greyware bodysherds, sandy, with rusticated decoration, later first to mid second century.

A storage jar bodysherd in fabric R31.

An oxidized Severn Valley ware storage jar (fabric O21) with an everted, rising, outcurving rim, first to mid second century.

A globular jar with an everted, rising rim, in Severn Valley ware, cf Webster (1977) nos 19-20, first to mid second century.

#### **Context 305 Trajanic-Hadrianic**

A Dressel 20 bodysherd, first-third century.

Two Malvernian bodysherds, (fabric G44).

A BB1 bodysherd, AD120+

Samian – A CG samian Dr18/31. AD 120-180

A La Graufesenque Dr 15/17R or 18R large platter. AD 50-110

A CG samian Dr 37 decorated bodysherd with single bordered ovolo and beaded line, nothing else. The single bordered ovolo could perhaps be B74. Here they are well-spaced and the beaded line would favour Cinnamus instead of Quintilianus. AD 135-180

A CG samian Dr 18/31 dish bodysherd. AD 120-180

A La Graufesenque Dr 27 bodysherd. AD 50-110

A fineware bodysherd with a black colour-coat, Flavian to mid second century.  
 Six storage jar bodysherds in fabric R31  
 Twenty six greyware bodysherds.  
 A greyware jar base.  
 A greyware jar base.  
 Two greyware bodysherds with acute burnished lattice decoration, Hadrianic-Antonine (+).  
 Four greyware bodysherds (fabric R32).  
 A greyware jar base.  
 Five rusticated decorated greyware bodysherds, later first to mid second century.  
 A necked greyware jar with an everted beaded rim, later first to mid second century.  
 A necked greyware globular jar with an everted rising rim, later first to second century.  
 A greyware gritty simple rimmed dish rim, Roman.  
 A greyware jar with an everted, outcurving rim, later first to second century (fabric R32).  
 A necked jar in sandy greyware with an everted rising rim, Roman.  
 A jar with a beaded rising rim, probably a rustic ware form, later first to mid second century.  
 Thirty-two Severn Valley ware oxidized bodysherds.  
 A Severn Valley ware jar/tankard base.  
 A Severn Valley ware curving walled dish rim, cf Webster (1977) No 73, first century.  
 A Severn Valley ware hooked wide-mouthed jar rim fragment, second to third century.  
 A jar with an everted, rising, outcurving small jar rim in Severn Valley ware.  
 A jar base with a footring in Severn Valley ware (O36?).  
 Six Severn Valley ware bodysherds (fabric O21).  
 A simple jar base in Severn Valley ware (fabric O21).  
 A simple jar base in Severn Valley ware (fabric O21).  
 Two bodysherds handmade, reduced, with quartz and organic temper. Iron Age tradition, class P.  
 A handmade oxidized bodysherd with common grog temper, class E.  
 A necked storage jar with a beaded rim in a handmade oxidized fabric with common grog temper, first to early second century.

### **Context 307 later first to early second century**

Three greyware bodysherds.  
 A greyware bodysherd in fabric R32.  
 Two joining jar base sherds, exterior burnished.  
 A greyware sherd with rusticated decoration, later first to early second century.  
 A greyware jar rim with squared rim.

### **Context 311 probably mid first to mid second century**

A bodysherd in Malvernian ware (fabric G44).  
 A handmade reduced bodysherd with common grog temper, probably first century.  
 Two Severn Valley ware bodysherds.  
 A whiteware bodysherd.  
 Two storage jar bodysherds (fabric R31).  
 Two greyware bodysherds, one apparently handmade.  
 A greyware jar rimsherd with a straight everted rim, possibly a rustic ware vessel, possibly later first to mid second century.  
 A blackware jar rim with a stubby everted rim, first to second century.



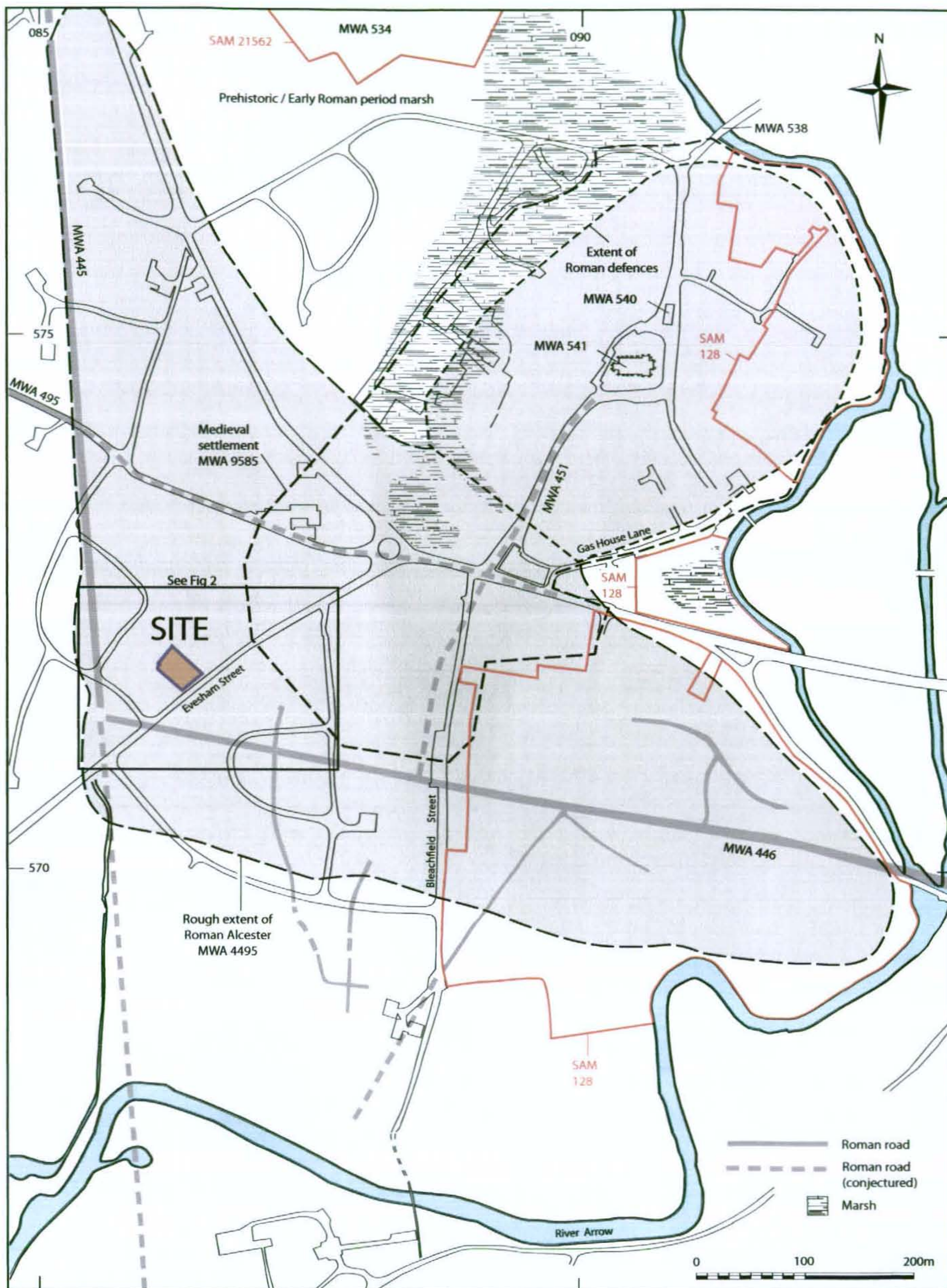


Fig 1: Alcester: location of main Roman sites



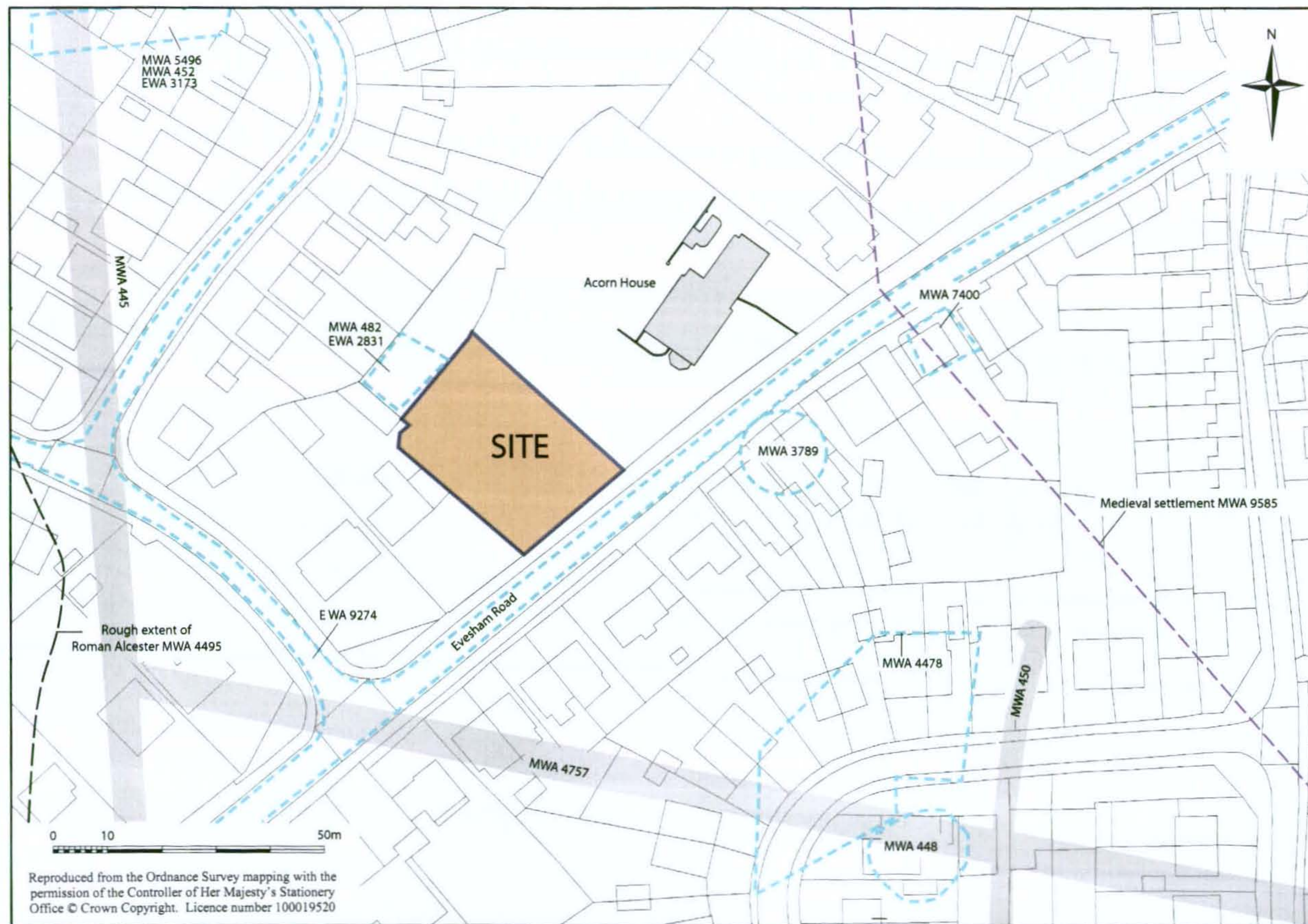


Fig 2: Site location showing local HER sites



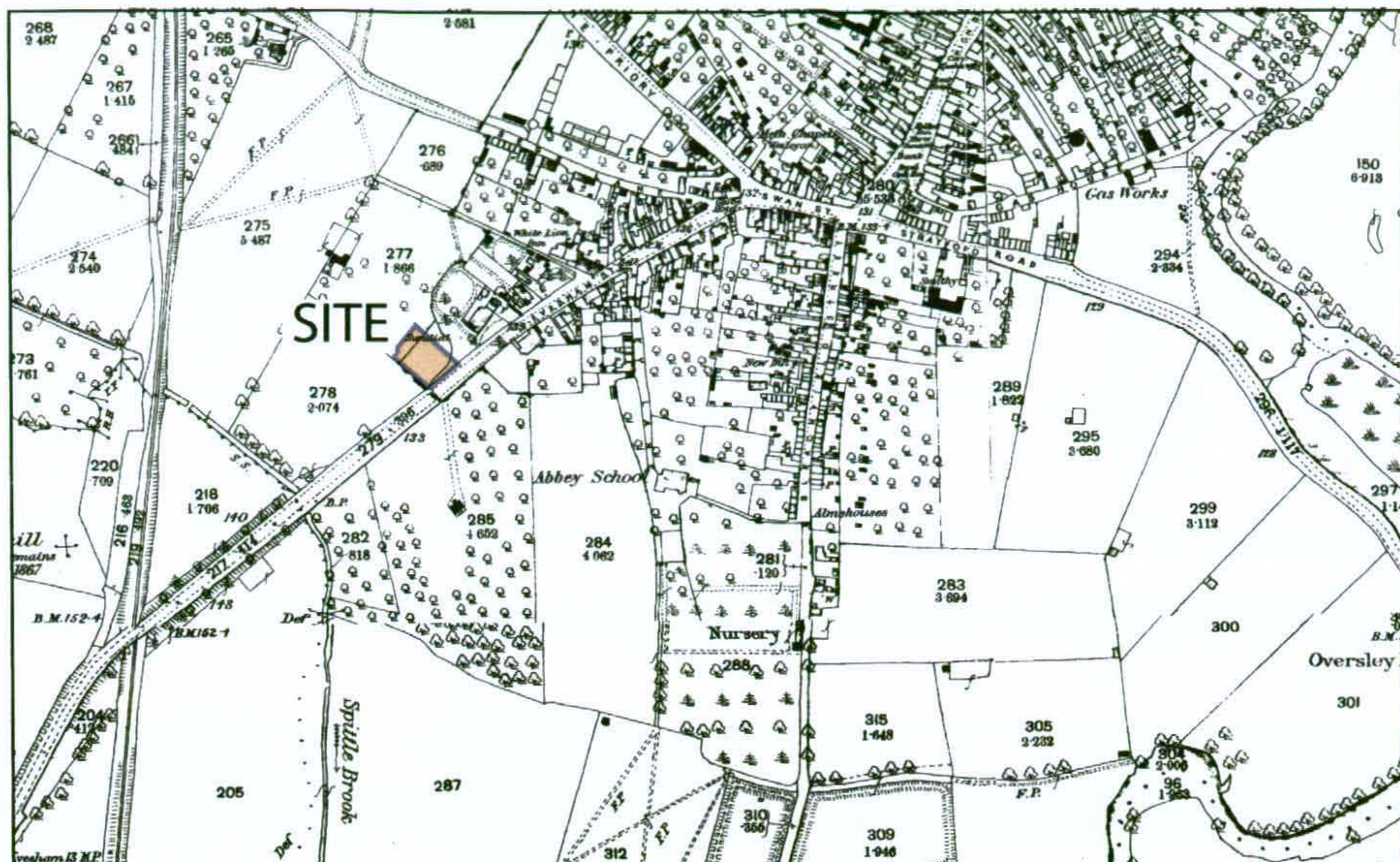


Fig 3: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886-1887

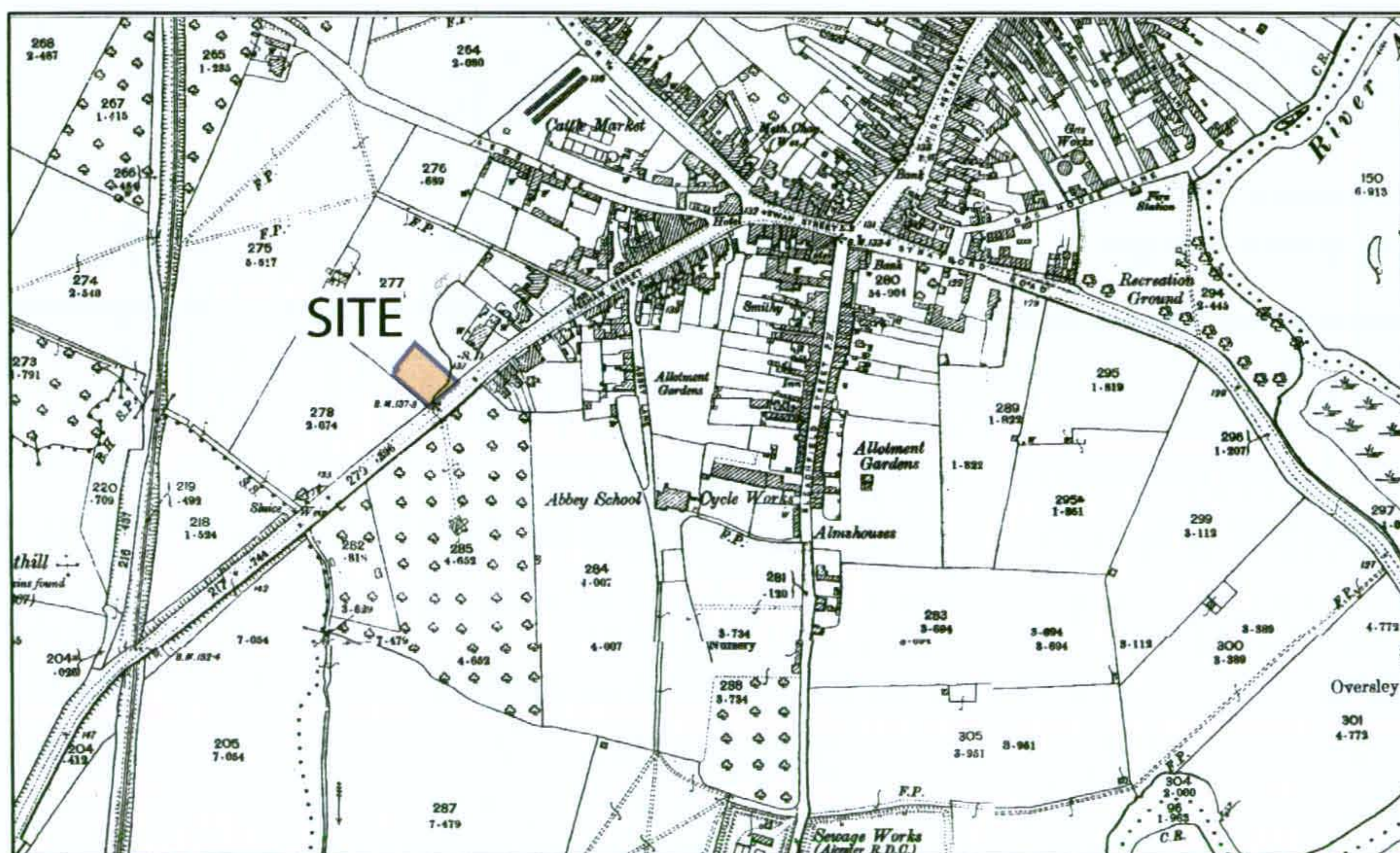


Fig 4: Detail from Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1905



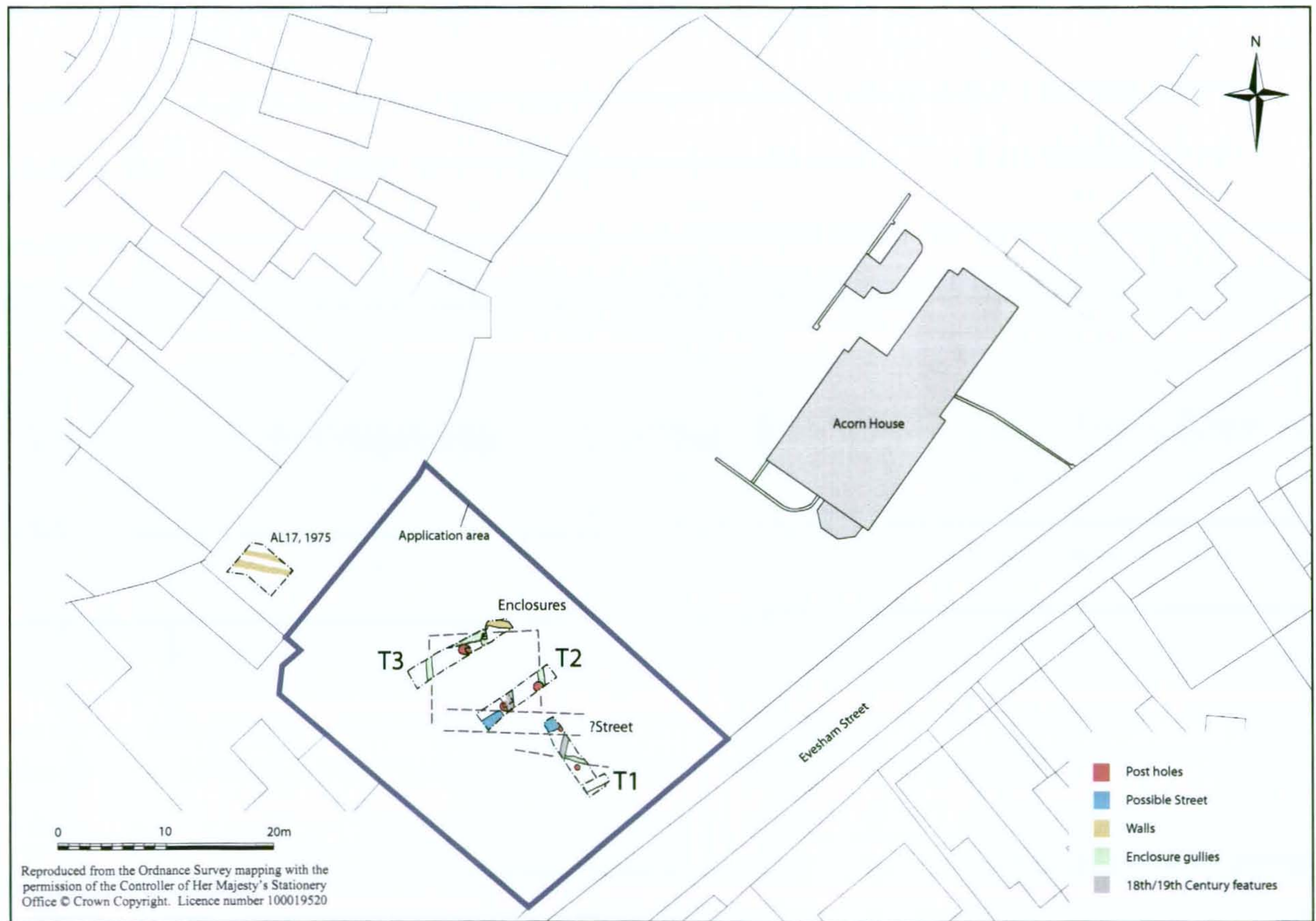


Fig 5: Location of trenches, major features and 1975 excavation



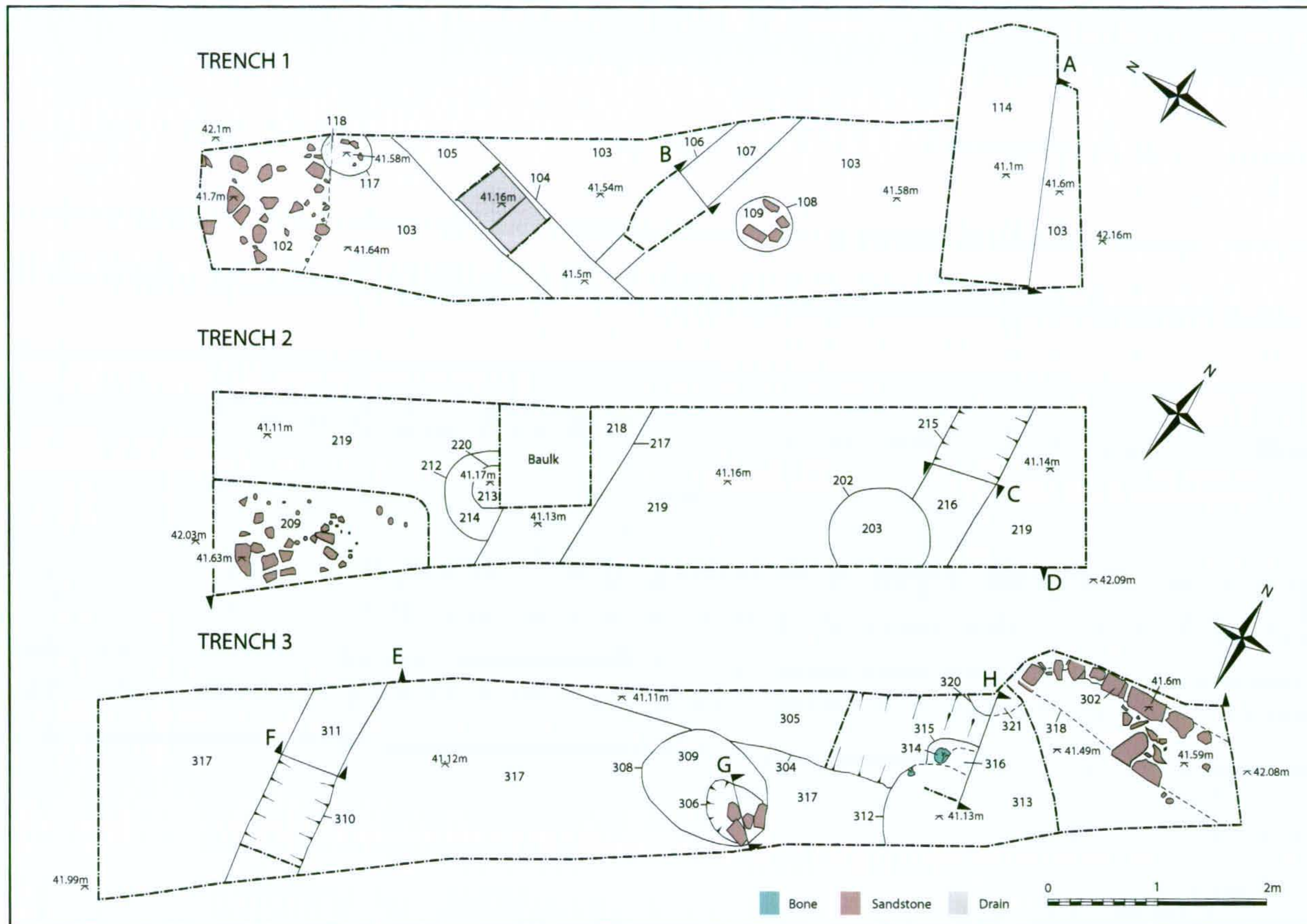


Fig 6: Trenches 1-3



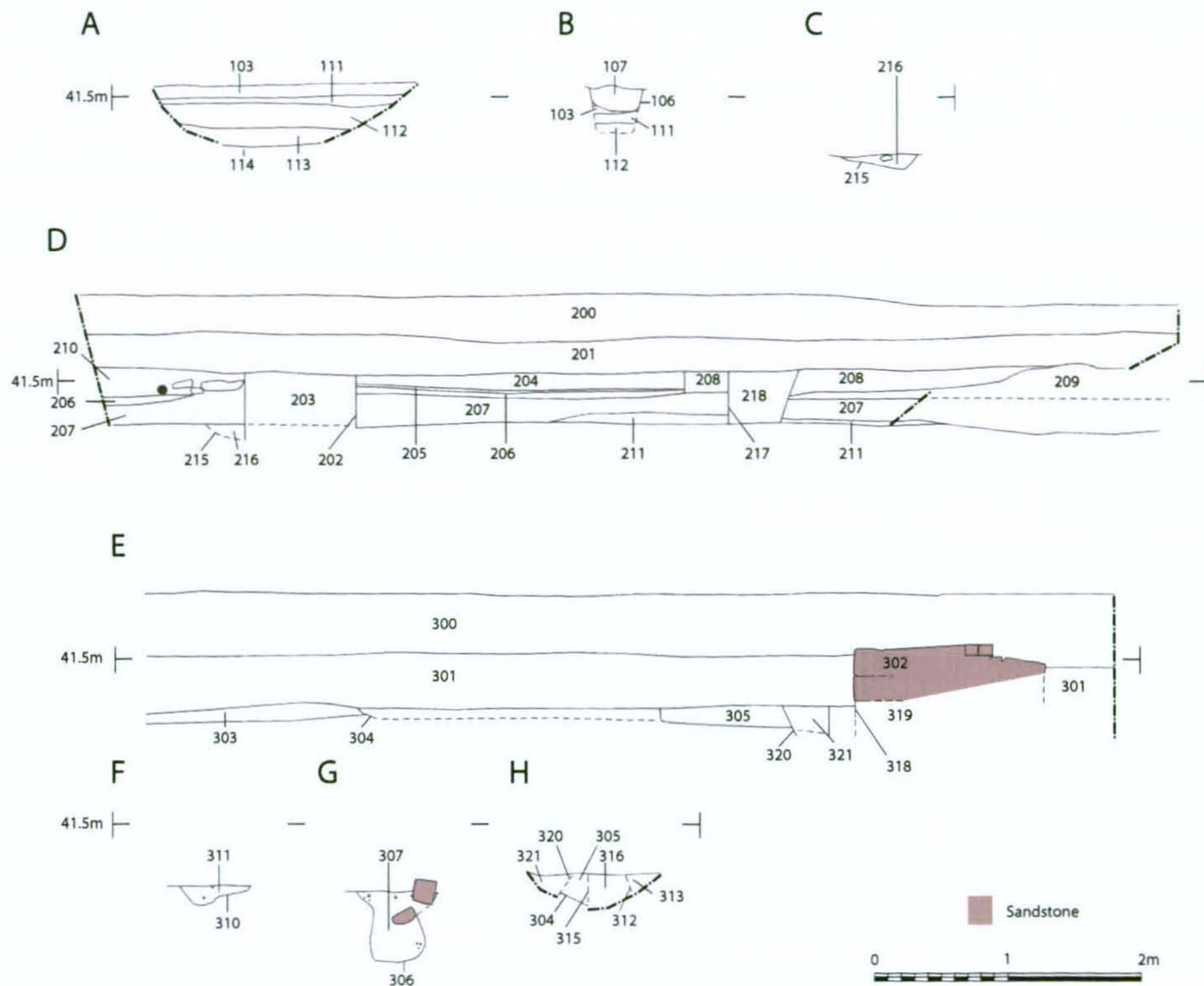


Fig 7: Sections A-H





Fig 8: Trench 1 viewed from the NW





Fig 9: Trench 2 (NE) viewed from the SW



Fig 10: Trench 2 (SW) viewed from the SW





Fig 11: Trench 3 viewed from the NE



Fig 12: Gully 310 viewed from the south



Fig 13: Posthole 308 (306) viewed from the SW