

Prologis Park Ryton-on-Dunsmore Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND RECORDING



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1626

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

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SUMMARY

Archaeological observation and recording was undertaken on the site of the former Ryton car plant in 2014 and 2015. Ground reduction was observed across large parts of the site within designated areas of potential. The initial phases of ground reduction were relatively shallow and no significant remains were encountered. Later phases involved reduction to development formation levels which revealed extensive modern disturbance. A possible former ploughsoil was sporadically recorded across the observed areas, but no significant archaeological remains were evident. Much of the site had been scoured in the recent past which may have impacted on the survival of archaeological remains.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council for the redevelopment of the former car plant at Ryton and the construction of warehouse or office buildings with associated car parking and landscaping at Oxford Road, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire (R12/0600 and R14/0217). The site lies within an area of potential prehistoric and Roman remains some of which were identified during previous work and it was therefore possible that other archaeological remains might be disturbed during the development. Work was undertaken in response to two separate conditions: Condition 10 of planning permission R12/0600 and Condition 16 of planning permission R14/0217, which required the applicant to secure the implementation of programmes of archaeological work and these were to be carried out in conjunction with the development.

1.2 Two separate phases of fieldwork were undertaken in line with Written Schemes of Investigation prepared by CgMs Limited (February 2014 and July 2015) to accord with planning conditions 10 and 16; and advice provided by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority. The written schemes detailed two programmes of the archaeological observation and recording of ground reduction during construction works. Two phases of watching brief were commissioned from Archaeology Warwickshire and carried out in March 2014 and between September 2015 and December 2015. This report presents the results of both phases of work implemented to comply with the requirements of Conditions 10 and 16 of the relevant planning permission granted for the site. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code RP15.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The development site, now Prologis Park, is located on the north side of Oxford Road and the northern limit of the site is bounded by London Road in Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire (Fig 1). It is located some 700m to the north-west of the village of Ryton-on-Dunsmore, within the parish of that name. The areas of investigation included two parcels of land, Land Parcel A (Plot DC6) and Land Parcel B (Area A/B), which were centred around National Grid Reference SP 3768 7469.

2.2 The geology in the area of Ryton-on-Dunsmore is Mercia Mudstone, overlain by River Terrace deposits (British Geological Survey 1984).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The archaeological and historical background has previously been described in the desk-based assessment prepared by CGMS Consulting (CGMS 2007a), and is summarised below. The site of the former car assembly plant has been significantly affected by the construction of the factory and opencast quarrying.

Prehistoric and Roman

3.2 Evidence for prehistoric activity from the site is limited to poorly-located chance finds of a Neolithic macehead or hammerstone and a Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead, possibly from the south of the site (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 4279 and 4456), with some undiagnostic flint flakes probably from the north of the site (MWA 4286). Archaeological work in 2007-2009 recorded the remains of two enclosures of Roman date. The surrounding area includes settlement sites and field systems known from aerial photographs and archaeological investigations.

Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

3.3 There are no records of Anglo-Saxon or early medieval remains on the site. There is documentary evidence for a settlement at Ryton by the 11th century but the present site would have been part of the open field system before the enclosures of the 16th century.

Post-medieval and modern

3.4 The site appears to have largely remained in agricultural use until the 20th century. It was first developed for an aero-engine factory in the 1930s which, after World War II, was

converted to car production (MWA 12126). Most of the southern part of the site has been quarried for gravel. There was a World War II anti-aircraft battery at the southern extremity of the site (MWA 9642).

4 AIMS AND METHODS

4.1 The main aim of the work was to identify and record any archaeological remains disturbed by development in areas of perceived archaeological potential identified in both consented areas of the site, to collate the records in an archaeological archive and present the significant aspects of the archive in a report for dissemination.

4.2 The specific aims of the fieldwork were to establish whether any archaeological/palaeo-environmental remains were present and to record them so that they may be related to other archaeological remains within the area. The secondary aim was to form an understanding of the remains recorded in terms of their character and date, and to place the evidence in its local and regional context.

4.3 An experienced archaeologist was made available for each day of ground disturbance (related to Planning References R12/0600 and R14/0217).

5 RESULTS

5.1 The successive watching brief programmes were undertaken on Parcels A/B in Areas of Archaeological Potential identified in conjunction with several phases of construction activity and in response to requests for attendance from groundworks contractors or on occasions or dates previously agreed with contractor management in line with Written Schemes of Investigation approved for Condition 10 of planning permission R12/0600 and Condition 16 of planning permission R14/0217. The areas of archaeological potential were identified in the two land parcels (Fig 1) and the watching brief was undertaken in relation to ground reduction.

Land Parcel A (Plot DC6) – Planning reference R12/0600

5.2 The watching brief was undertaken in March 2014 in the two areas identified in the written scheme of investigation located within the western part of the site (CgMs 2014). These included an area to the west of the site where archaeological remains might survive beneath made ground and an area of potential low previous impact (Fig 2).

5.3 Trenches observed in the central area revealed a layer of brown sand or sand and gravel (102). This natural geological layer was recorded at between 0.45 and 0.55m below ground surface and contained no archaeological remains.

5.4 The natural sand was overlain by a make-up layer, which contained building debris, including fragments of brick and stone as well as Tarmac and concrete (100). This was recorded within trenches and across the central area (Photo 2).

5.5 Towards the north-western end of the site a similar geological natural layer of sand and gravel (102) was revealed at a depth of between 0.6m and 0.75m below ground surface. No archaeological remains were identified as either cut into or lying directly above the natural deposits.

5.6 An extensive layer of demolition material (101), which included ceramic building material fragments as well as fragments of concrete and Tarmac, was recorded. This make-up or levelling deposit varied between 0.6m to 1m thick or in places in excess of this (see Table 1).

5.7 Evidence of previous disturbance of the site was recorded, including concrete intrusions and drain cuts. The deposit sequence recorded at the northern edge of site revealed extensive depths of make-up deposits with no evidence of geological natural exposed.

Table 1 Deposit sequence encountered during observed ground reduction in 2014

<i>Deposit type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>		
		context	context	
Modern overburden and dump layers	Dark grey sandy clay with brick, tarmac etc	100	101	Demolition and levelling deposits containing building or industrial debris
Natural deposit	Brown sand or sand and gravel	102		Geological natural

5.8 No archaeological remains were revealed during the watching brief conducted in the designated areas for observation. The surviving deposit sequence, including the extent of

modern overburden and intrusive features clearly showed that there had been considerable impact on the survival of any potential archaeological remains across the observed areas.

Land Parcel B (Area A/B) – Planning Reference R14/0217

5.9 The watching brief was undertaken during the latter part of 2015 in the two areas identified in the written scheme of investigation (CGMS 2015). These areas were located on the southern and northern parts of the site and beyond those parts of the site subject to previous mitigation or truncation (Fig 3).

Initial topsoil stripping

5.10 Topsoil or overburden stripping was observed across an area totalling 300m long and 200m wide, including areas close to the London Road and Oxford Road boundaries. The depth of reduction required for the initial construction formation level across these areas was 0.15m to 0.2m. A brown sandy loam layer (103) was recorded with mixed density and distribution of modern building demolition debris. No archaeological finds or archaeological remains were revealed during the initial phase of work.

Ground investigation pits/areas

5.11 In early October 2015 three areas were investigated as part of further stripping or for ground investigation pits. An area (Area 1) close to the London Road boundary was reduced to establish the deposit sequence down to possible development formation levels and to identify any potential archaeological remains. The area was approximately 9m long and 6m wide and the excavations revealed an area of natural sandy clay. A simple sequence of extensive deposits (Table 2) and several modern intrusions were exposed (Fig 4).

5.12 Areas 2 and 3 were approximately 6m long and 2m wide and excavated to a depth of between 0.85m and 1.5m deep. In both cases a simple deposit sequence was revealed (Photo 6), which consisted largely of modern deposits relating to previous construction, demolition or levelling (see Table 2). Several concrete or modern intrusions were exposed (Fig 4).

5.13 No significant archaeological remains or finds were revealed in the areas excavated for ground investigation.

Areas of ground reduction including borrow pits

5.14 Several areas were identified for reduction either for the proposed car parking areas

or landscaping on the western side of the proposed buildings or for a borrow pit. An initial area measuring 31m x 10m was defined. A simple sequence of deposits was revealed during ground reduction undertaken by '360°' mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket which stripped extensive layers off in shallow spits under the supervision of the attending archaeologist.

Table 2 Deposit sequence encountered in investigation pits/areas in 2015

<i>Deposit type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Context numbers</i>			<i>Interpretation</i>
		Area1	Area2	Area3	
Modern overburden and dump layers	Dark grey brown sandy clay	12, 13, 14	7, 8, 9	1, 5	Demolition and levelling deposits containing building debris
Layer	Greyish brown silty clay	15	-	-	Possible former ploughsoil
Natural layer	Reddish brown sand and gravel	16	6	6	Geological natural

5.15 A natural geological deposit of orange sand and gravel (22) was revealed at the lower limit of the sequence. Overlying the natural was a layer of grey brown sandy silt (21) that varied in extent and survival. The layer varied in thickness between 0.01m to 0.08m in this area, although the layer was not always present.

5.16 This silt layer was overlaid by a deposit of coal slag or waste (20), which ranged in thickness between 0.4m and 0.5m. This layer was reduced in spits and produced no finds. A further dump layer of brownish grey silty sand (19) with a few inclusions of pebbles and crushed building material was recorded. This crushed building material overlaid the coal waste deposit and this modern layer varied in thickness between 0.3m to 0.5m across the area of investigation and produced no significant remains or finds (Table 3).

5.17 Further areas to the north-west, measuring 18m x 16m and 47m x 10m, were reduced using the same methodology. This revealed the same sequence of deposits (see Table 3).

5.18 A modern concrete raft foundation for a wall (29) extended west to east across the area. This was at least 10m long and 0.3m wide. A small red brick foundation (30) was also revealed in this area. The structure was 5m long and 4m wide and may have originally been an out-building used as a toilet block or storage shed prior to demolition for site clearance.

Table 3 Deposit sequence encountered during extensive ground reduction in 2015

<i>Deposit type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Context numbers</i>			<i>Interpretation</i>
		Areas 2a, b, c	Area 2d	Area 2f	
Modern overburden and dump layers	Dark grey brown sandy clay	19, 23, 26	31	37	Demolition and levelling deposits containing building or industrial debris
	Black coal slag and clinker	20, 24	27	32, 38	
Layer	Greyish brown silty sand clay	21	25, 28	33, 39	Possible former ploughsoil
Natural deposit	Reddish brown sand and gravel	22			Geological natural

5.19 The ground reduction was decreased in depth and extent at the northern limits of these areas due to the requirements of construction formation levels and aspects of the site topography. Beyond this point the construction required either no further reduction or the raising of development levels and the deposition of materials.

5.20 A borrow pit was excavated in the south-eastern part of the watching brief area (Fig 3) and ground reduction was undertaken in spits. The area measured c.35m long and 32m wide and revealed a concrete wall foundation (35) and a cast iron service pipe. The area of reduction was amended to avoid the service pipe and further substantial concrete foundations were revealed (Photo 8).

5.21 A number of substantial concrete blocks were also encountered, which were located to the west of a concrete structure (Fig 3). The concrete tank or base (34) was 24m long, 15m wide and 4m deep. The concrete walls were 0.3m thick and it originally had a roof or cover. The structure had been in filled with crushed concrete. The rungs of an iron access ladder were located in the south-east corner.

5.22 A second similar concrete foundation was partially uncovered during initial topsoil stripping at the south-western limit of the area of potential archaeology. This also had an intact concrete roof. This was not uncovered in its entirety as further ground reduction for development formation levels was not required.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The areas of 'potential archaeology' monitored across both consented development areas (for applications R12/0600 and R14/0217) revealed a similar sequence of modern truncation (scouring) and deposition resulting from demolition and levelling of the site. This seems most likely to have occurred in recent history probably during the construction and demolition phases of the car plant.

6.2 Localised evidence for extensive concrete foundations or structures was identified at the southern limit of site. These relate to 20th century activity and clearly caused the truncation of the deposit sequence.

6.3 Whilst sporadic evidence of a possible former ploughsoil was recorded, the vast majority of the areas revealed evidence for modern disturbance or truncation to geological levels. The deposit sequence clearly showed that there had been considerable impact on the survival of any potential archaeological remains across the observed areas. No significant archaeological remains were encountered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank of Steven Weaver at CgMs Limited for commissioning the work.

REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 1984 *1:50,000 Series, England and Wales, Sheet 184 Warwick, Solid and Drift Geology.*

CGMS 2007 *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment, Former Peugeot Citroen Ryton Plant, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire*, CGMS Consulting unpublished report.

CgMs 2014 *Written Scheme of Investigation: Former Peugeot Plant, Ryton-On – Dunsmore, Warwickshire, Land Parcel A (Plot DC6).*

CgMs 2015 *Written Scheme of Investigation: Prologis Park, Area A/B, Oxford Road, Ryton-on-Dunsmore.*

Warwickshire Museum 2007 *Archaeological Evaluation at the former Peugeot Citroen Ryton Plant, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire, Report 0724.*

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment/details</i>
2014		
100	Layer	Demolition /levelling
101	Layer	
102	Layer	Sand or sand and gravel
2015		
103	Layer	Extensive demolition layer
1	Layer	
2	Drain cut fill	
3	Drainage cut	
4	Layer	
5	Layer	
6	Layer	
7	Layer	
8	Layer	
9	Layer	Modern
10	?cut	
11	Fill of 10	
12	Layer	
13	Layer	
14	Layer	Modern
15	Layer	
16	Layer	
17	Layer	
18	Layer	
19	Layer	Mixed silt and sand interleaving.
20	Layer	Coal waste.
21	Layer	Grey brown silty sand

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment/details</i>
2015		
22	Natural	Geological deposit, natural orange sand.
23	Layer	Mixed silt and sand interleaving.
24	Layer	Coal waste.
25	Layer	Grey brown silty sand
26	Layer	Mixed silt and sand interleaving.
27	Layer	Coal waste.
28	Layer	Grey brown silty sand
29	Foundation	Concrete raft foundation (Modern).
30	Foundation	Small out building (Modern)
31	Layer	Mixed silt and sand interleaving
32	Layer	Coal waste
33	Layer	Grey brown silty sand
34	Building/Basement	Concrete construction.
35	Foundation	Concrete raft foundation
36	Layer	Sand and gravel with pebbles.
37	Layer	Mixed silt and sand interleaving
38	Layer	Coal waste
39	Layer	Same as 25



1. Initial ground reduction in 2014



2. Ground reduction showing intrusive concrete and drainage cuts in 2014



3. Revealed natural and deposit sequence in 2014



4. Contexts 19 and 20 looking north-east



5. Ground reduction showing extensive modern redeposition



6. Section showing deposit sequence in Area 2



7. Ground reduction looking south-east



8. View north-west showing extensive truncation



9. Area reduction looking north-west

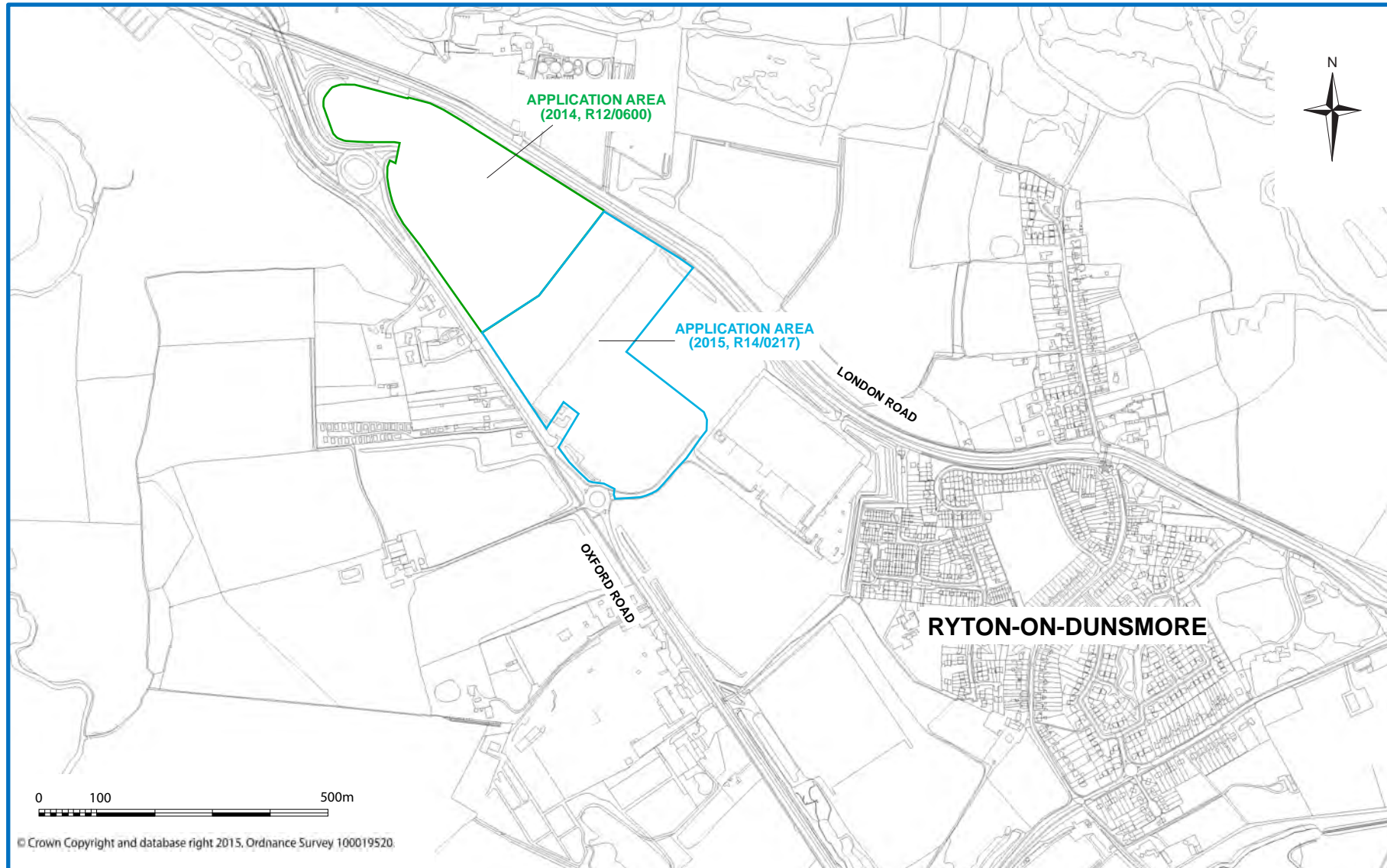


Fig 1: Location of both application areas

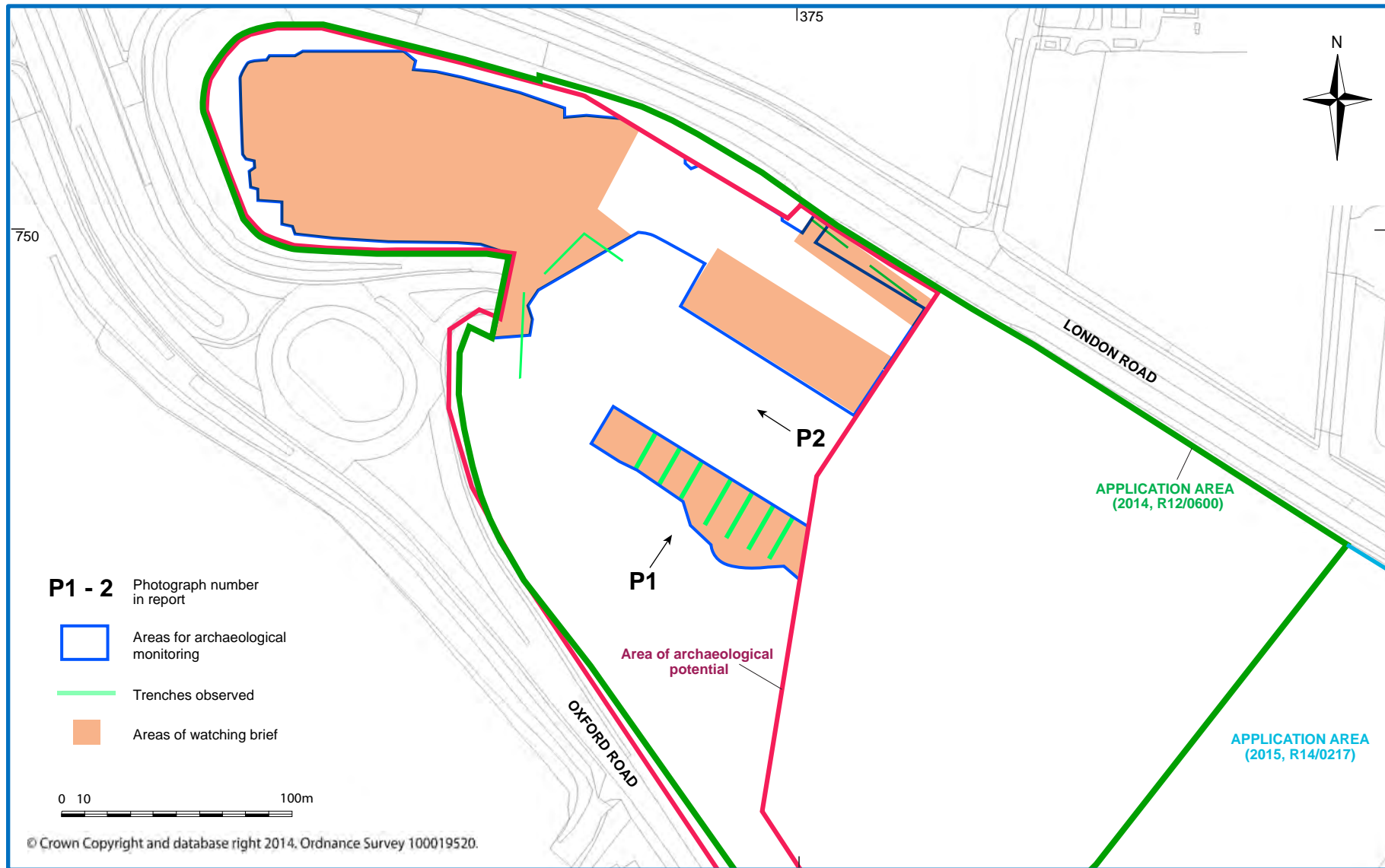


Fig 2: Location of areas of complete watching brief (2014, R12/0600)

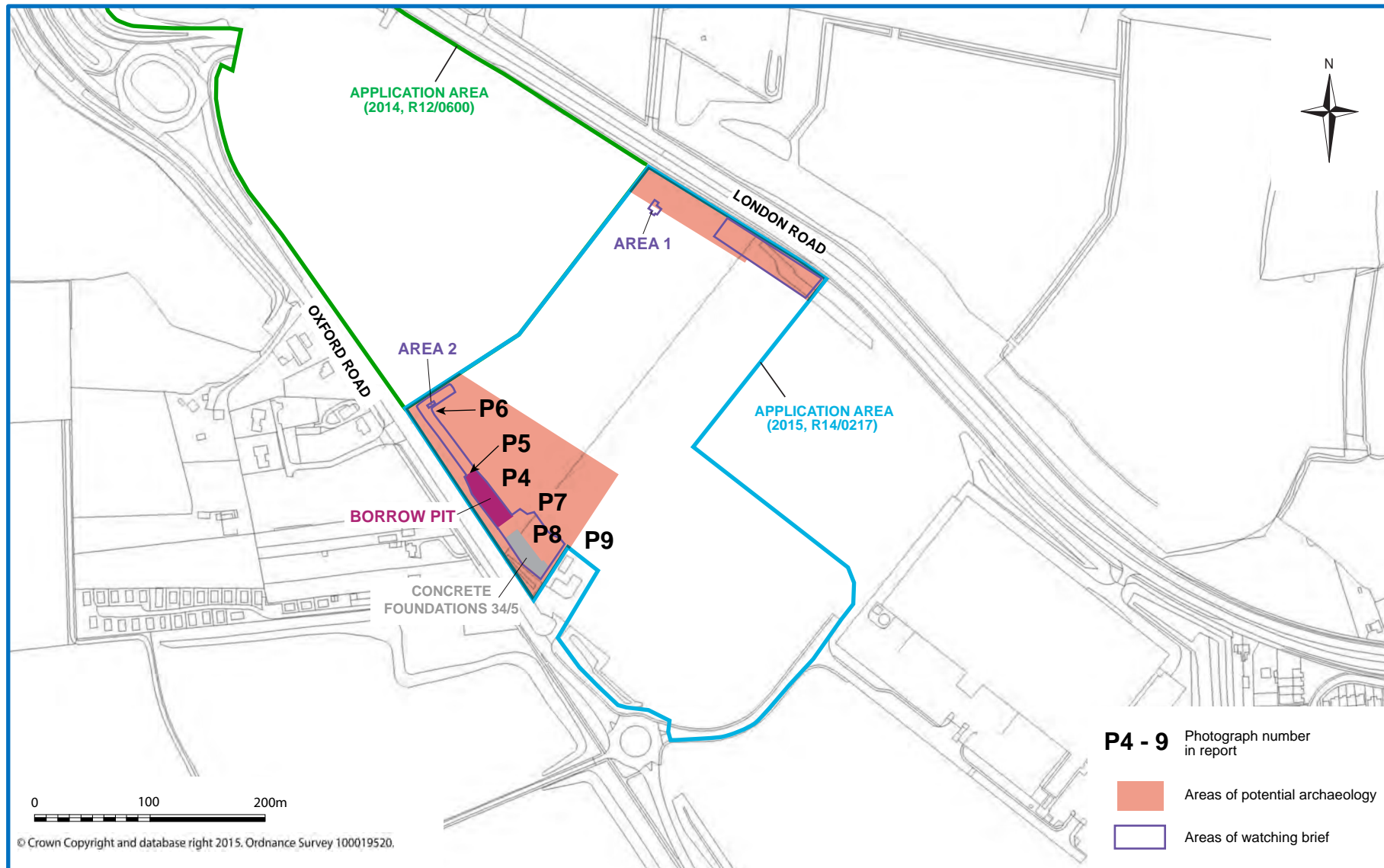


Fig 3: Location of areas of completed watching brief (2015, R14/0217)

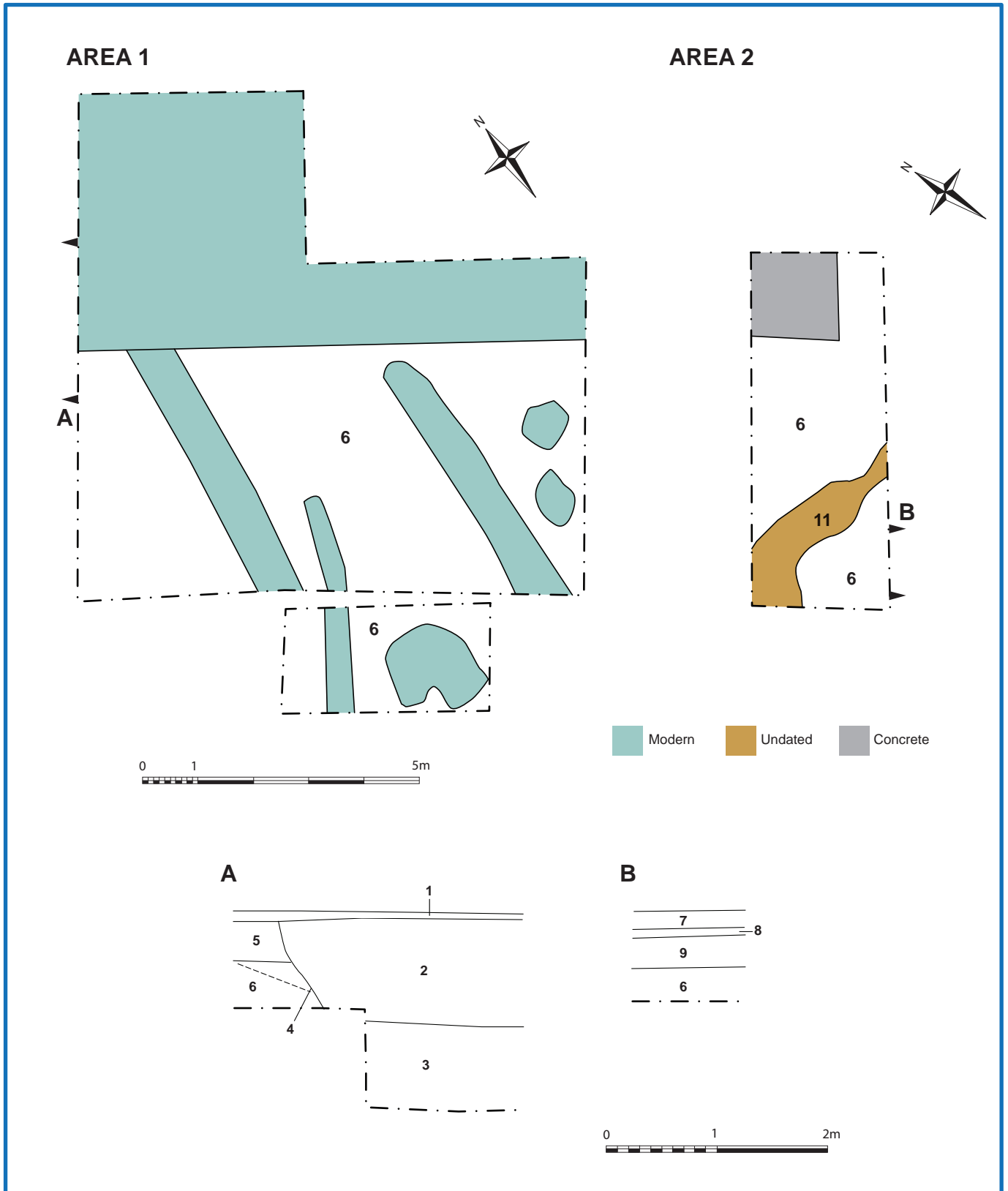


Fig 4: Detail of Areas 1 and 2 with sections A and B (2015, R14/0217)