

The Barn House Stretton on Fosse Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1984
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*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Watching Brief at The Barn House
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Site Code: SOF18
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SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during the reduction of levels across part of the existing garden to form a car port and the excavation of two gate-posts at the Barn House, Stretton on Fosse. The excavations were carried out within a Scheduled Ancient Monument; a Romano-British cemetery and settlement site (National heritage List for England No. 1003725) and more broadly within the medieval settlement of Stretton on Fosse.

Despite the high potential for significant Roman remains, only remains of a former boundary and farm building were uncovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent (S00191907) was granted for alterations to the current garden and driveway at The Barn House, Stretton on Fosse, GL56 9SA. The site lies within an area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument described as 'the site of a Roman settlement to the west of Cherry Orchard Farm' (NHLE 1003725). The site also lies within an area of archaeological potential within the medieval settlement of Stretton on Fosse.
- 1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire (AW hereon) were commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief in conjunction with the groundworks phase of the proposed development in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by Historic England as part of the Consent.
- 1.3 This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code SOF18. The work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidelines (2014).

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The application site is centred on National Grid Reference SP 2213 3828 in the village of Stretton on Fosse, in the parish of the same name. The site is located on the western edge of the village and within the Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The underlying bedrock geology of the site is Charmouth Mudstone Formation overlain by gravels of the Paxford Gravel Member (British Geological Survey 2019).
- 2.3 The site itself is positioned on a low hill, which rises steeply to the west and shallowly to the north and east of the site. Ground conditions on site, varied from garden, to demolished material and a potential yard surface. Beyond the property boundary to the west was a deeply cut track and immediately to the west of this more agricultural land, which may have historically been an orchard.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

- 3.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area is Mesolithic or Neolithic flints found in a pit during excavations to the east (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No. MWA 6056). These and a Bronze Age axe (MWA 3014) found by chance approximately 300m to the south of the site indicate activity, although not necessarily settlement in the area. In 1949 a series of about twenty burials were excavated to the north-west which included Iron Age metalwork (MWA 3004; EWA 2950). Sherds of shell-tempered pottery, probably of pre-Roman date, have also been found in the area to the west (MWA 5508).

Roman

- 3.2 A large volume of evidence indicates that there was extensive Roman activity in the area. The Fosse Way, a major Roman road from which the village and parish take their name, lies to the east of the site (MWA 4759) and just outside the search area.
- 3.3 The site lies within an area of settlement and burials designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (MWA 5360). A group of ditches in which was found a single inhumation (MWA 1849) lie immediately to the west of the Scheduled area. A site of Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon settlement (MWA 4752) is located c.500m to the south-west and possibly Roman burials (MWA 3005) were excavated in 1949. Two further burial areas, believed in the early 1970s to be late Roman (MWA 1833) lie to the west of the Scheduled area.
- 3.4 Other probable Roman features including ditches and pits, were excavated prior to quarrying works to the south of the Stretton on Fosse (MWA 1839) but archaeological work within the Scheduled site in recent years has not uncovered any further evidence of Roman remains (EWA 6942/ 9061/ 9556).

Anglo-Saxon and medieval

- 3.5 Excavations to the west of Stretton on Fosse have produced a large number of burials of early Saxon date (MWA 1832; EWA 2895). A total of 45 skeletons were revealed, while a small number is thought to have been destroyed by sand extraction. Anglo-Saxon pottery dating from the Migration or Early Medieval period was found in the same area (MWA 3002).

- 3.6 Stretton on Fosse is recorded on the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Stratone* with a population that can be estimated at about 90 people (VCH 1904). Stretton means 'settlement on Roman road' from the Old English 'stræt'. The site lies within the possible extent of the medieval settlement (MWA 8944). The parish also had a priest at this time, suggesting the existence of a church, although the present church of St Peter's was first recorded in the 12th century (MWA 5361).
- 3.7 The remains of an earthwork, probably a medieval hollow way, are recorded to the west (MWA 3010). It has been suggested that this is associated with an area of the village which was occupied during the medieval period but has since shrunken (MWA 3001; EWA 2949/ 6268). Lying directly on the natural bedrock was a worn cobbled surface with associated fragments of 12th-15th century pottery. A medieval coin of Henry VI (MWA 3009) and a silver coin (MWA 3009) were found within the search area. The vestiges of medieval ridge and furrow can be seen on aerial photographs and LIDAR imagery across the open fields surrounding the village (MWA 8832).

Post-medieval and modern

- 3.8 A large number of houses in the present village date from the 17th century or earlier. Pleasure gardens (MWA 8601) marked on the Ordnance Survey map of 1886-7 are situated to the south-east of the church at Stretton on Fosse.

Undated

- 3.9 An undated cemetery lies c.150m to the south of the development site (MWA 3006). Two isolated, undated, graves were located approximately 500m to the west of site (MWA 3003). Unstratified and undated human bone was also found south-west of the village (MWA 8754).
- 3.10 An undated standing stone (MWA 4608) is situated south-west of Stretton on Fosse. A small pebbled area was recorded during a watching brief at Elmdean, Campden Road (MWA 9881). A copper alloy thimble was also found during the archaeological observation (MWA 9882). They probably date to the post-medieval period.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any significant archaeological deposits revealed or disturbed by the development, to collate the fieldwork records into an archaeological archive and present the results of the fieldwork in this report for dissemination.
- 4.2 This report will describe and discuss the extent, character and dates of all archaeological remains exposed and place the results in their local context.
- 4.3 Two areas were monitored; a small carport was reduced by machine and two postholes which were excavated by hand.
- 4.4 An experienced archaeologist was present for each period of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with the WSI. Where potential archaeological deposits were encountered, the supervising archaeologist assessed and recorded them before they were disturbed.

5 RESULTS

Geological Natural

- 5.1 The geological natural (3), where it was encountered, was a firm, malleable, orange brown clay with profuse patches of gravel.

Deposit Sequence

- 5.2 Where not disturbed, in the carport area the clay substrate was overlain by topsoil (2), but part of the area was overlain by modern made ground (6) (see Appendix 3).



1: View: South southwest showing natural in the area of the new carport

Post-medieval and modern

- 5.3 The southernmost posthole (Posthole 1) contained a large piece of stone (4), likely Cotswold limestone, at a depth of 0.12m below current ground level. The block was larger than the posthole area, which made assessing the size and character of the stone impossible. Tooling marks were present on the stone and it was finished with a flat face, which had a 90 degree flange at a depth of c. 0.18m; perhaps this formed a foot or base of some sort. This flange, made it impossible to ascertain the overall depth of the stone.
- 5.4 The northernmost posthole (Posthole 2) contained a cracked slab of limestone (5), c.0.07m thick, but again the slab extended beyond the edges of the posthole so its

full size was unknown. There was no evidence for any bonding material present on either stone.



2: View: South-southwest of posthole 1 showing stone slab



3: View: west showing in situ stone slabs

5.5 No finds were recovered from any of the areas monitored.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The programme of archaeological work established that no remains relating to the Scheduled Ancient Monument (NHLE 1003725) were impacted by the development.
- 6.2 The area of the carport yielded no significant archaeological deposits as it was covered with a very thin topsoil suggestive of previous ground reduction, possibly that associated with an access track recorded during earlier an archaeological evaluation of the site (EWA9556). It is not known if any archaeological deposits were impacted by this activity.
- 6.3 Both postholes contained large stone blocks. The Ordnance Survey 1st edition map depicts a boundary crossing these locations, extending from the corner of the building to the road (Fig 2). The boundary also formed the back wall of an open fronted building, possibly a small animal shelter or cart shed, which had been demolished by the early 1920s. The stones may well have derived from such a building presumably of post-medieval or early modern date.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Archaeological Events in the search area

HER no.	Name
EWA3342	Watching Brief at Rose Cottage
EWA6674	Site visit to Stretton House by J Lovie c 1996
EWA6675	Site visit to Stretton on the Fosse Rectory c1996
EWA6856	Archaeological Observation at 'Meadowcroft'
EWA6942	W/brief at Manor Farm Cottages
EWA6943	Watching brief, Stable Cottage
EWA7443	Watching Brief at Elmdean, Campden Road
EWA7464	Land West of Belcony Lane
EWA9061	Archaeological Observation at Cherry Orchard Farm
EWA9556	Archaeological Evaluation
EWA10211	Magnetometer survey, Harold's Orchard
EWA10216	Watching Brief at Toad Hall, Belcony
EWA10775	Evaluation at Harold's Orchard
EWA10776	Watching Brief at The Cider House

Appendix 2: Listed buildings

NHLE no.	Name	Grade
1024080	Church of St Peter	II
1024081	Church of St Peter Group of 4 chest tombs approximately 4m west of tower	II
1024082	Peter's Cottage	II
1024083	Tea Cosy Cottage	II
1024084	Town Farmhouse	II
1024085	Home Farmhouse and Attached Outbuilding	II
1185608	Church of St Peter Group of 2 chest tombs approximately 5m north of tower	II
1185611	Corner Cottage	II
1185628	Thatched Cottage	II
1185631	The Manor House and Attached Wall	II
1185645	The Rectory, Barn and stretch of walling adjoining to north	II
1185653	Toad Hall	II
1185658	Sunrise Cottage	II
1299587	Manor cottages	II
1355624	Cherry Orchard Farmhouse and Attached Shop	II
1355625	Court House	II
1355626	Stretton House	II
1355627	The Rectory	II*

Appendix 3: Context list

Context	<i>Description</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thickness (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	Modern builders sand			0.11	Modern builders sand overlies topsoil in carport area
2	Mid-dark brown silty clay			0.28	Topsoil
3	Mid orange/brown clay with gravels				Geological natural
4	Large faced block of stone with flange				Stone foundation
5	Fragments of stone slab				Stone foundation/flooring
6	Grey-red-brown silty sand imported crush				Modern levelling layer

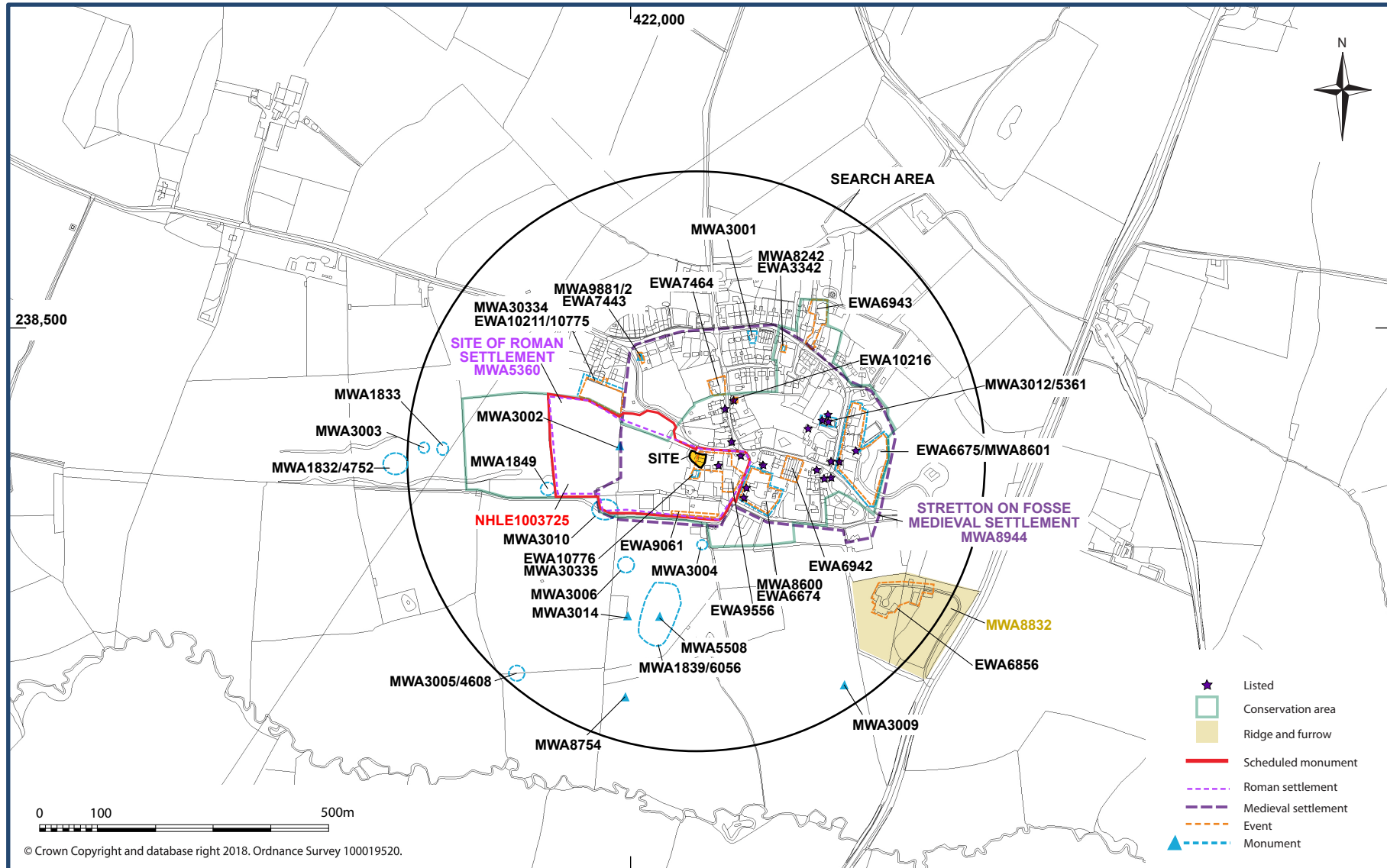


Fig 1: Location of site and Historic Environment information

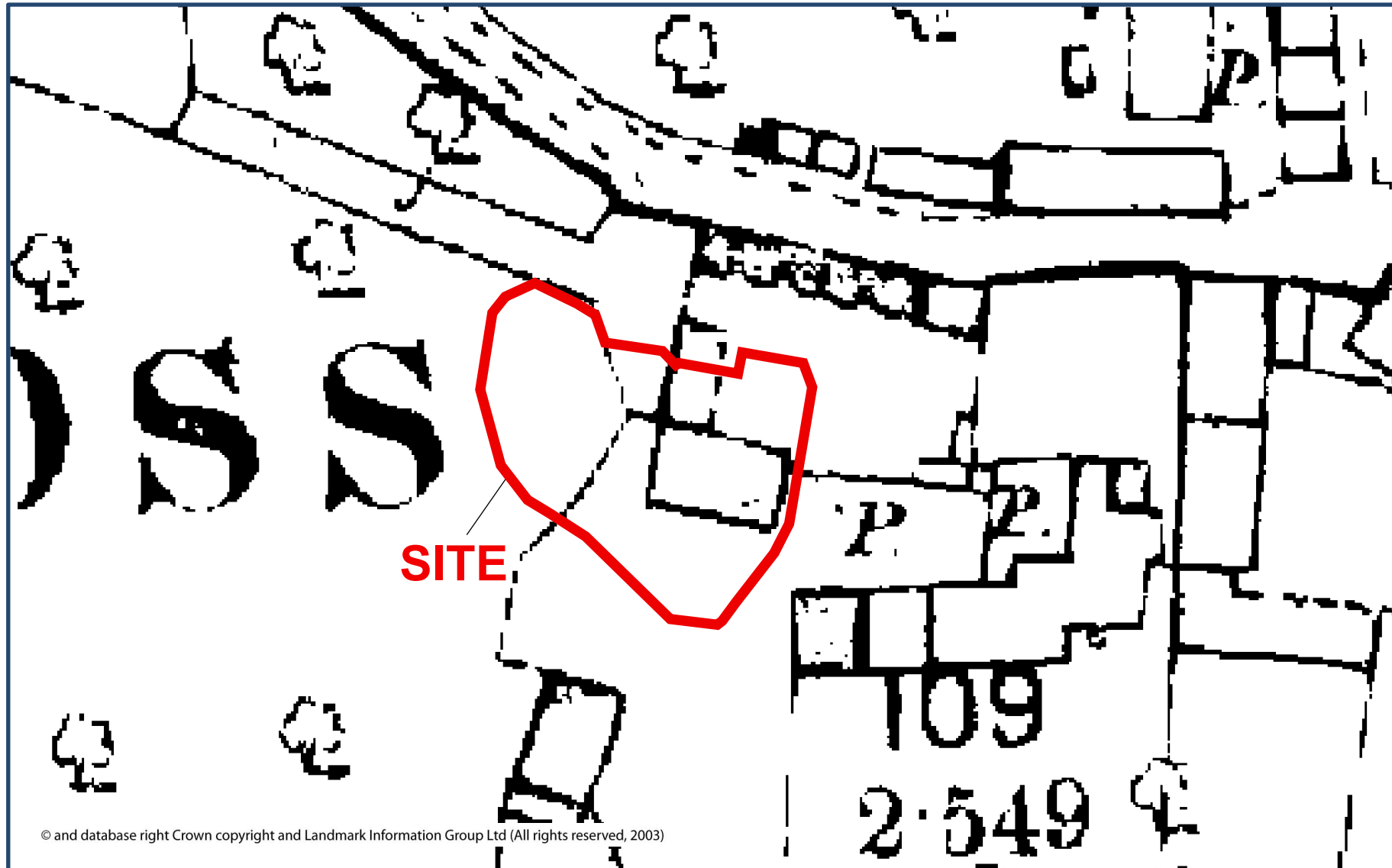


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

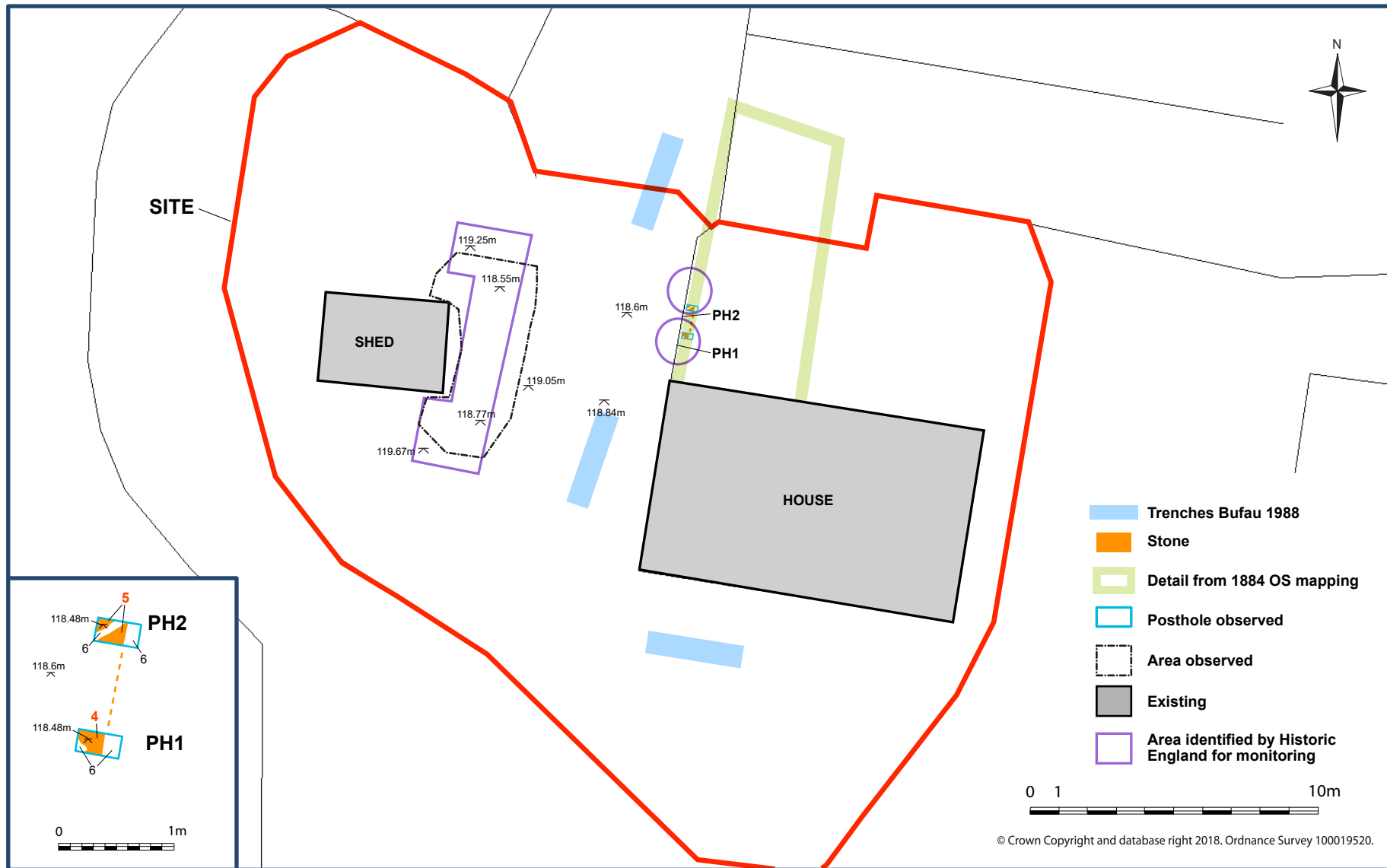


Fig 3: Locations of area and postholes observed with detail of postholes