

Cider Mill House, Welford-on-Avon, Warwickshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



understanding heritage matters

Report No 1138
December 2011



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Cider Mill House, Welford-on-Avon

Commissioned by: Mr and Mrs A Clarke

Project Report No. 1138

Site Code: WC11

NGR: SP 1492 5179

Planning Reference: 11/00440/FUL

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Date: December 2011

Report reference: *Gethin, B. 2011 Cider Mill House, Welford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, Archaeological Watching Brief, Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1138*

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Summary

Archaeological recording during groundworks at Cider Mill House, High Street, Welford-on-Avon, recorded several layers and buried features associated with the house. To the rear of the house, on its west side, a layer of soil contained rubbish from the house including pottery dating from the 14th to the 19th century. A small north-south ditch, probably dating to the later 18th century, was also found. To the front (east side) of the house two pits, probably both dating to the 19th century, were exposed. A single sherd of Roman pottery found within one of these pits was residual but hints at some Roman occupation in the nearby area.

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the erection of an orangery and timber-framed garage, along new gates and landscaping works, at Cider Mill House, Welford-on-Avon, Warwickshire (Planning Ref. 11/00440/FUL). The house itself is a Grade II Listed Building. The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential and it was therefore a condition of planning permission that the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in conjunction with the development.

1.2 Because the nature of the potential archaeology within the development site was unknown, a field evaluation was commissioned from Archaeology Warwickshire and carried out in August 2011. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code WC11.

2. Location

2.1 The village of Welford-on-Avon lies within a broad loop of the River Avon and Cider Mill House is located on the west side of the High Street, at national grid reference SP 1492 5179. The site lies within the parish of Welford-on-Avon.

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Second River Terrace Gravels (British Geological Survey 1974).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area comes from a number of Neolithic or Early-Middle Bronze Age flints, recovered to the west of the existing village (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record Numbers MWA 4412, MWA 5312, MWA 5651; Fig 1). Similar densities of such finds have been recorded over much of the county. They do not represent evidence for early settlement but do indicate that this part of the Avon valley was frequented during this timeframe. A Bronze Age socketed axe (MWA 1846) recovered west of the Avon, to the west of the village, may have been dislodged from a burial site of this date.

3.2 Undated cropmarks, also to the west of the existing village may be from a trackway or field system of later prehistoric or more likely Romano-British date (MWA 1815). Finds from this general area also include Romano-British pottery (MWA 3750). What may have been a feature associated with this crop mark system was recorded during an archaeological observation at Welford-on-Avon Primary School (MWA 9833, Palmer and Coutts 2004, 5). Here a ditch with a V-shaped profile was recorded but no finds were recovered from it. An archaeological watching brief at Welford Bowls Club immediately west of the school did not record any archaeological features or finds, although the subsoil levels at which features are likely to survive were not penetrated (EWA 3384).

3.3 To the east of the present development site an assemblage of Romano-British finds including coins, jewellery, a bronze boar figurine, pottery, worked stone, flue tile from a hypocaust and tesserae paving indicate the presence of a Romano-British villa (MWA 1344, MWA 3999). A pipe trench dug across the north end of this site in 1958 revealed a feature which yielded 2nd- and 4th-century material, although its precise location is not recorded.

3.4 North of the Avon a further villa site is known at Luddington (MWA 1796) and west of the river loop a large cropmark complex in Temple Grafton has yielded Romano-British finds (MWA 5652) indicative of a high status settlement or villa which has been Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (Warwickshire Monument 155).

3.5 The earliest historical reference to Welford-on-Avon is in the Domesday Book of 1086 when it was part owned by the Abbey of St Denis in Paris (VCH 1949, 189-190). The medieval village (MWA 9022) developed to the south of a ford across the River Avon on the road from Binton Bridge to Long Marston (VCH 1949, 189). The parish church of St Peter (MWA 1805) still retains elements dating from the 12th to 15th century but was heavily restored in the 19th century (VCH 1949, 191). Remains of a medieval cross-base (MWA 1806) survive in the churchyard. A mill is mentioned at Welford in the 13th century and the most recent mill on the site was working until 1958 but has since been converted into a dwelling (MWA 1816). Archaeological work on two sites in the east part of the existing village did not record any archaeological features (MWA 8381, EWA 6951). Finds of medieval pottery have been recovered from the area immediately surrounding the medieval part of the village (MWA 1343, MWA 1803, MWA 2751, MWA 4042, MWA 5190, EWA 9155) and probably derive from manuring of the open fields during the period. The medieval village of Weston-on-Avon (MWA 9021), which lies to the east of Welford, was cited in Gloucestershire in the Domesday Book.

3.6 A number of timber-framed buildings, including Cider Mill House, survive in the Welford-on-Avon but none appear to be earlier than 17th-century in date (VCH 1949, 189). A fine, three-bay threshing barn with extensive, decorative, vent-work lies in the western part of the village; the building, Pygthle Barn, is shown on a map of c.1800 and appears to be 18th-century in date (MWA 8892). The 1834 Ordnance Survey does show the site as part of a narrow strip of cottages on the west side of the High Street. The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey of 1884 (Fig 2) shows the property with outbuildings to the rear and an adjacent well. A further small building is marked to the north of the house, in a small plot of land extending to the High Street. The 2nd Edition of 1901 (Fig 3) shows a similar picture but the rear garden of the house is shown as being an orchard. The 1923 Ordnance Survey shows a largely similar picture but by the time of the 1938 the village hall has been built within the small plot of land to the north of the house and the outbuilding has been demolished.

4. Observation

Orangery

4.1 Foundation trenches were excavated along two sides of the new orangery and the area within was stripped of approximately 0.25m of soil (Fig. 4). The trenches were cut down to a depth of 1.1m. Geological natural brownish yellow clay (104) was reached at between 0.45 and 0.6m below the existing ground surface. At the eastern end of the area the natural clay (104) was cut by a small ditch (102) running in an approximately north-south direction. This had moderately steeply sloping sides and a rounded base. It was 1.4m wide and up to 0.5m deep and had two different fills. The lowest was a brown sandy loam (106) mixed with fragments of lime mortar, making up about 60% of the fill. Above this was a layer of black sandy clay loam (103) which contained frequent charcoal flecks. Pottery dating from between mid 17th to the later 18th century was recovered from this fill. To the west of this ditch a layer of brownish clay loam (101) lay on top of the natural clay (104) and was also visible in section. This layer only existed at the western end of the site and was not entirely stripped off during the ground reduction. In section it could be seen to vary in depth to between 0.25 and 0.35m. This was overlain by 0.2m of dark greyish brown clay loam topsoil (100). At the eastern end a brick foundation (105) was visible in a foundation trench (120) that cut both the geological natural (104) and ditch fill 103. This foundation was part of a low wall that helped support a concrete slab path (121) removed during the work (not on plan). A narrow service trench was also partially observed. This was up to 0.4m wide and 0.65m deep and reached the natural clay (104) at a depth of 0.5m.

Car port

4.2 Foundations for a car port, along with soil stripping within its footprint, were observed outside the front (east side) of the house seen covering an area 9.7m by 6m. The area was stripped of 0.35m of brown clay loam topsoil (107) down to geological natural brownish yellow clay (119). Trenches were 0.8m wide and 0.8m deep. Two pits could be seen cut into natural clay (Fig. 4). Pit 108 was a small sub round feature, 1.3m in diameter and up to 0.12m deep. Its fill (109) contained finds of 18th-century date. To the west of this was a longer pit (110) which extended partially beyond the limits of the stripped area. It was over 2.7m long and up to 0.66m deep and contained eight different fills (111-118). The pit was dated to the late 18th or early 19th century by pottery found within fill 113, although single sherds of medieval and Roman pottery were also found within it. A small amount of soil stripping for the new driveway was observed at the same time as the car port. This was between 0.15 and 0.2m in depth and only disturbed topsoil (107) and the existing gravel drive surface. No further stripping of the driveway was observed.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The occupation layer (101) at north-east end of the house contained an interesting selection of pottery, including five sherds of 14th- to 15th-century pottery, and 29 sherds with a date range from the mid 16th century to the mid 18th century. A clay pipe bowl with the makers stamp IP may have been made by John Partridge, a pipe maker recorded between 1660 and 1680 at Broseley, near Ironbridge. Broseley was a major Midlands centre of tobacco pipe making. The small ditch (102) must have been filled in by the mid 19th century.

It doesn't appear as a feature on any of the available maps and appears never to have been a major boundary. It might perhaps have been used for drainage.

5.2 One of the pits (110) found to the west of the house was dated to the 19th century by pottery within its fill. The other small pit (108) was probably of 18th-century date. It is uncertain what either pit was dug for. The single sherds of medieval and Roman pottery found within pit 110 must be residual finds but the Roman sherd does give a tantalising hint of a site of that date in the vicinity.

Acknowledgements

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr and Mrs A Clarke for commissioning the work. Thanks must also go to Stepahnie Ratkai for confirming the identification of the Roman pottery sherd. The project was managed by Catherine Coutts and the work on site was carried out by Bryn Gethin and Rob Jones. This report was written by Bryn Gethin with illustrations by Candy Stevens. It was edited by Catherine Coutts.

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Appendix A: List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Topsoil
101	Layer
102	Ditch
103	Ditch fill (of 103)
104	Geological natural clay
105	Brick wall foundation
106	Ditch fill (of 103)
107	Topsoil
108	Pit
109	Pit fill (of 108)
110	Pit
111	Pit fill (of 110)
112	Pit fill (of 110)
113	Pit fill (of 110)
114	Pit fill (of 110)
115	Pit fill (of 110)
116	Pit fill (of 110)
117	Pit fill (of 110)
118	Pit fill (of 110)
119	Geological natural clay
120	Cut for foundation 105
121	Concrete slab path

Appendix B: List of Finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Date</i>	
101	Pottery	Medieval	5	13th-14th century	
101	Clay pipe	Bowl	1	1660-1680	John Partridge?
101	Pottery	Midlands yellow ware	2	1550-1720	MY01
101	Pottery	Manganese mottled ware	4	1680-1740	MANG
101	Pottery	Slipware	1	1640-1740	SLPW04
101	Pottery	Westerwald stoneware	1	17th/18th century	STG05
101	Pottery	Midlands black ware	5	1540-1720	MB01
101	Pottery	Coarseware	6	17th/18th century	CW01
101	Pottery	Plain pearlware	2	1775-1840	PLW01
101	Pottery	Slipware	1	1640-1700	SLPW02
101	Pottery	Stoneware	1	undiagnostic	
101	Handle	Antler	1	Post-medieval	
103	Clay pipe	Stem	2	18th/19th century	
103	Glass	Window	1	Post-medieval	
103	Pottery	Creamware	4	1740-1790	CRW
103	Pottery	Blue feather-edge pearlware	1	1780-1840	PLW02
103	Pottery	Midlands black ware	3	1540-1700	MB01
103	Pottery	Trailed slipware	1	1640-1700	SLPW02
109	Pottery	Manganese mottled ware	2	1680-1740	MANG
109	Pottery	Midlands black ware	1	1540-1700	MB01
109	Pottery	Creamware	17	1740-1790	CRW
109	Pottery	Slipware	1	1640-1700	SLPW02
109	Clay pipe	Stem	2		
109	Wire loop	Copper alloy	1	18th-century	
109	Nail	Iron	1		
113	Pottery	Roman	1	2nd-3rd century	Nene Valley Ware
113	Pottery	Medieval	1	13th/14th century	
113	Pottery	Blue-shell-edged pearlware	1	1780-1840	PLW02
113	Pottery	Plain pearlware	11	1775-1840	PLW01
113	Pottery	Midlands black ware	5	1600-1800	MB02
113	Pottery	Midlands black ware	4	1540-1700	MB01
113	Pottery	Manganese mottled ware	2	1680-1740	MANG
113	Glass	Bottle	2	18th century	
113	Glass	Vessel	1	18th century	opaline
113	Glass	Window	22		
113	Buckle	Iron	1	18th century	
113	Object	Iron	1	18th century	
113	Clay pipe	Stem	5		
113	Tile	Roof	1	18th century	
113	Pottery	Manganese mottled ware	2	1680-1740	MANG

118	Button	Copper Alloy	1	18th century
118	Clay pipe	Stem	2	
118	Glass	Window	3	

Appendix C: Listed Building citation

Name: CIDER MILL HOUSE AND CIDER MILL

List entry Number: 1382842

UID: 483228

WELFORD-ON-AVON

SP1451 HIGH STREET 1931-1/8/151 (West side) 05/04/67 Cider Mill House and Cider Mill (Formerly Listed as: WELFORD ON AVON MAIN STREET (West side) Cider Mill Cottage)

GV II

House and attached cider mill and converted barn, now house. Early C18 with C20 alterations. Timber-frame with painted plaster infill to left; brick laid to Flemish bond to right, all on rubble plinth; steeply pitched thatched roof with brick cross-axial stack with diagonal shafts. EXTERIOR: single-storey plus attic; 3- plus 2-window range. Garage entrance to left end; segmental-headed entrance to right of centre has C20 glazed door. Ground floor has 4 square windows to left of centre, and 2 segmental-headed windows, flanking entrance, to right of centre, all with 2-light and 3-light C20 small-paned casements; similar 3-light casements to 5 raking dormer windows. Left return of coursed rubble has hipped dormer. Rear has C20 additions. Cider mill to right end, now detached, has timber beam and post with stone trough and wheel. INTERIOR: not inspected

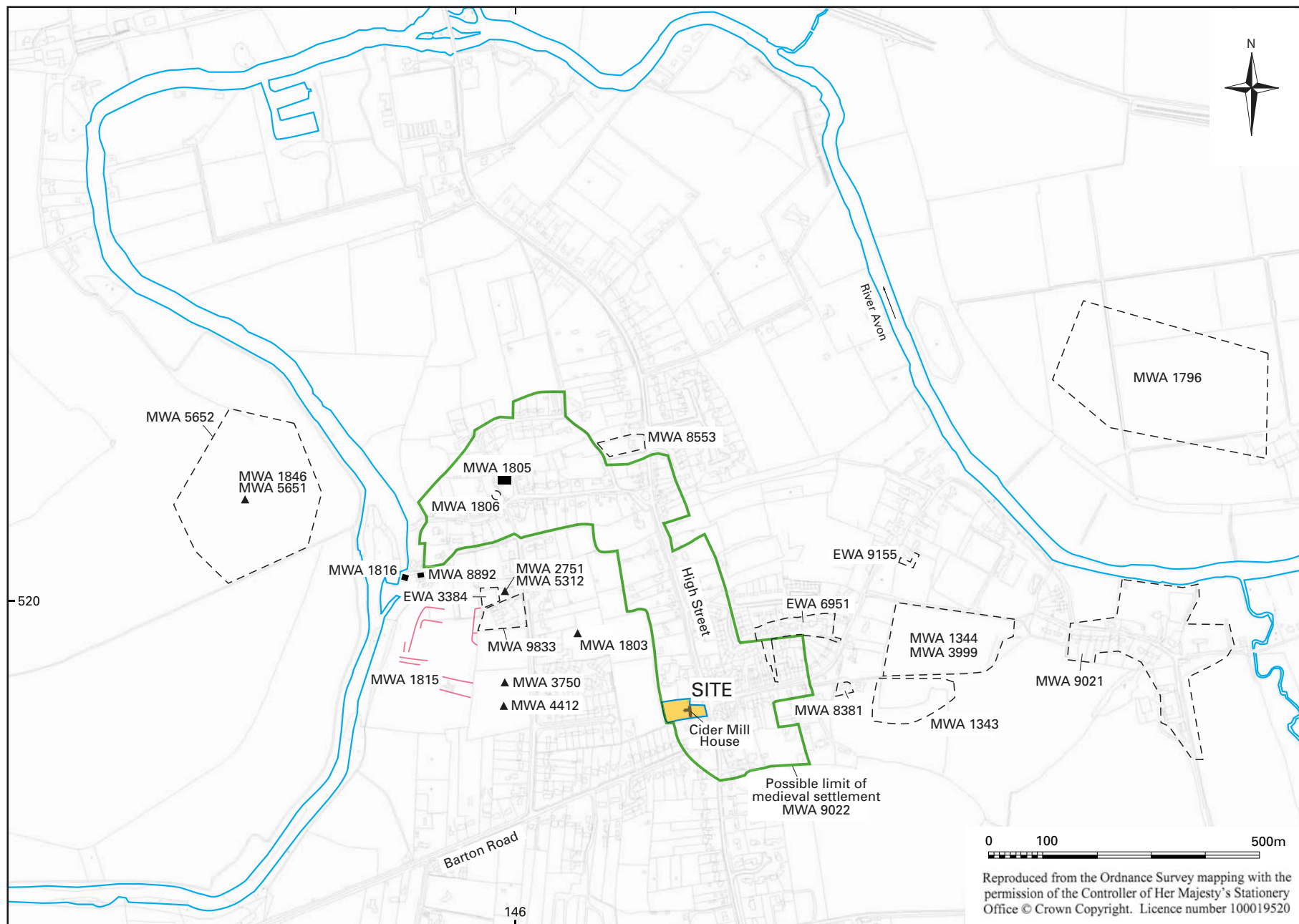


Fig. 1: Site location

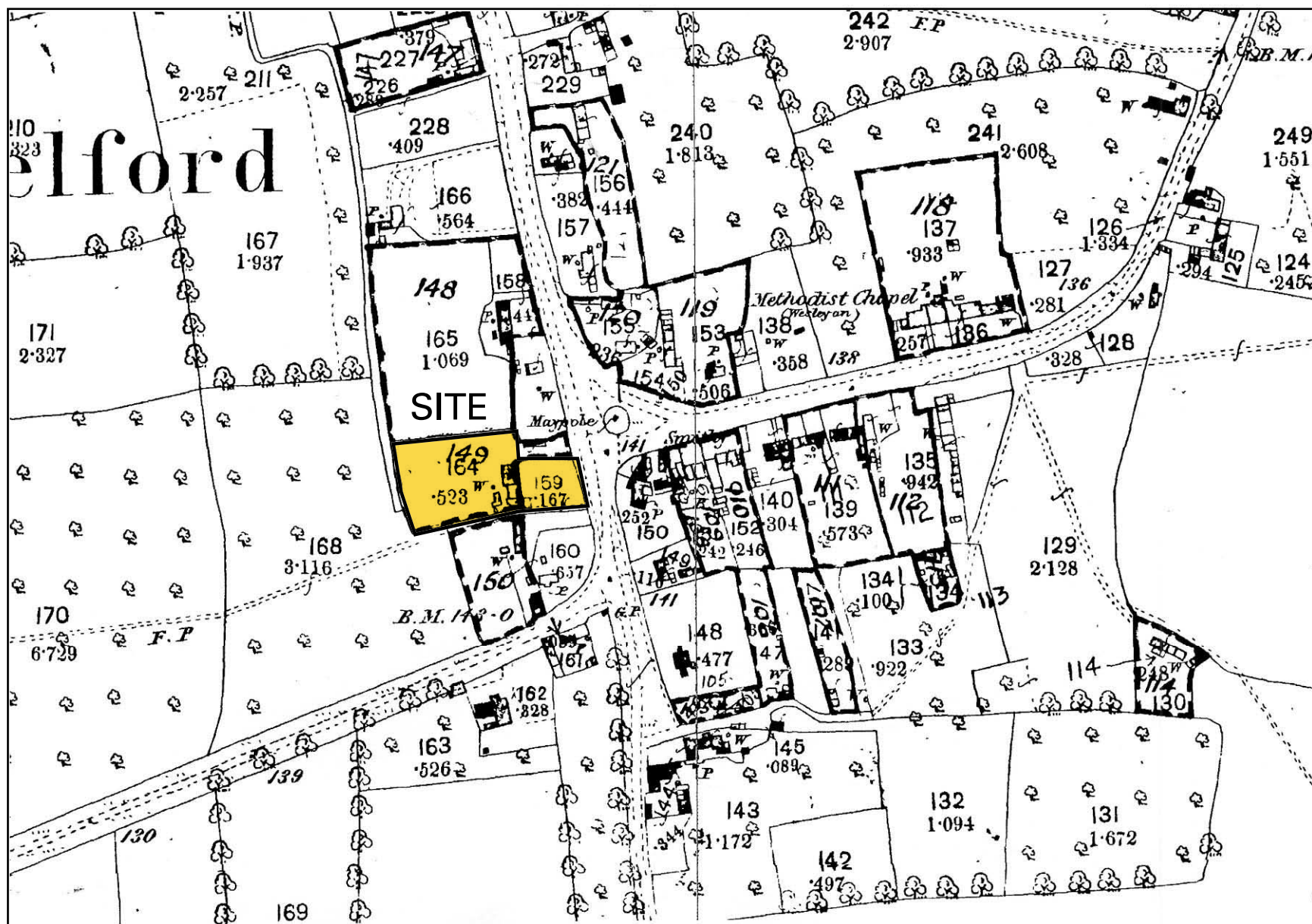


Fig 2: Detail of First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1884

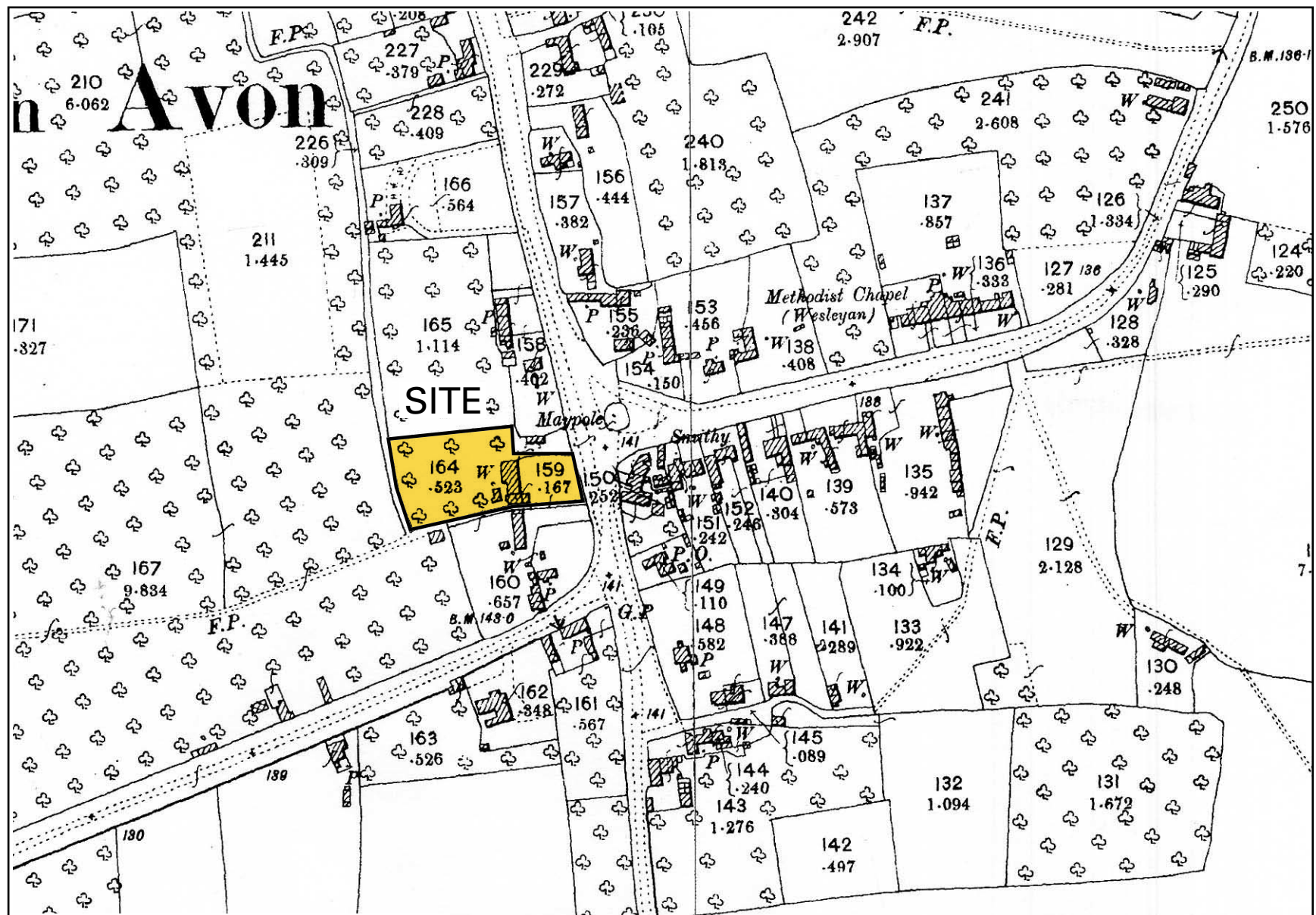


Fig 3: Detail of Second Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1901

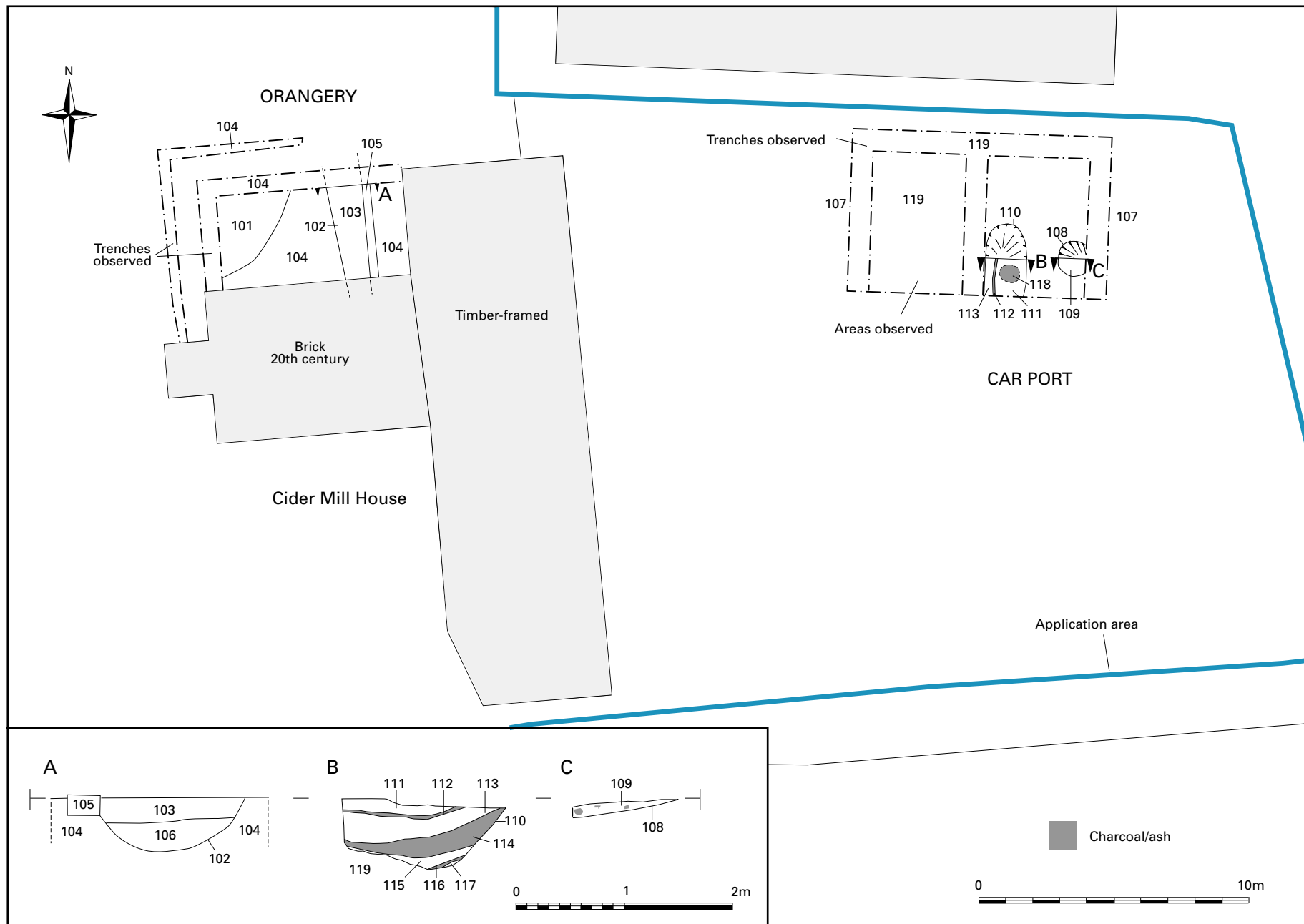


Fig 4: Areas observed



Fig 5: The area of the new orangery at the rear of the house



Fig 6: Ditch 102



Fig 7: The car port area and the front of the house



Fig 8: Pit 108



Fig 9: Pit 110