

# Co-op Store, Warren Field, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire

## Archaeological Evaluation



*understanding heritage matters*

Report No 1126  
September 2011



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

**Project:** Co-op store, Adjacent 1 Warren Field, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Warwickshire

**Commissioned by:** C Newey, Heart of England Co-op

**Project Report No.** 1126

**Site Code:** RC11

**NGR:** SP 3844 7412

**Planning Reference:** R11/0260

**Staff:**

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**Fieldwork:** Kevin Wright and Rob Jones

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## Summary

**An archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 1 Warren Field, Ryton-on-Dunsmore, on behalf of the Heart of England Co-op, revealed no significant archaeological deposits or remains. The area of the proposed development was severely disturbed by modern services and included part of a backfilled pond known from 19th-century mapping. Several 19th/20th-century iron tools were recovered from the pond fill which seem likely to have derived from an adjacent smithy.**

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council for retail development on land adjacent to 1 Warren Field, Ryton-on-Dunsmore (Planning Ref. R11/0260). The site lies within an area of archaeological potential, within the medieval settlement of Ryton (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No MWA 9528). 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 ahead of the development.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of a programme of trial trenches and the removal of a recently laid temporary surface, in accordance with a Brief prepared by the Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority, was commissioned from Archaeology Warwickshire and carried out in September 2011. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be deposited with the Warwickshire Museum under the site code RC11.

## 2 Location

2.1 The site is located at national grid reference SP 3844 7412 to the west of the High Street on the south side of Warren Field (Fig 1). The development area is currently used as a car park by of the Heart of England Co-op.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Quaternary River Terrace Gravels over Mercia Mudstone (British Geological Survey 1984).

## 3 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Evidence for early prehistoric activity is not known from the immediate area of the site. However, during later prehistoric periods, the Bronze Age and Iron Age, the Dunsmore Plateau was an area of extensive activity. This has been identified through cropmarks visible on aerial photographs and archaeological excavation, particularly in advance of gravel extraction.

3.2 In 2005 an Iron Age site was excavated to the south-east of the present site prior to the construction of the new traffic island on the A45/A445 (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No MWA 4001; Jones and Palmer 1993, not on Fig 1). The site included features such as houses, storage pits, boundary gullies and postholes. A penannular (C-shaped) ditch

with an eastern entrance was also excavated. This seemed to have been more likely to have had a religious or ceremonial function rather than domestic (Palmer in prep). A middle to late Iron Age settlement site was excavated in 2008, following the demolition of the Ryton Peugeot Plant *c.*750m to the west (Mason forthcoming; not on plan).

3.3 Ryton was one of the villas given by Earl Leofric to Coventry Priory in 1043 (VCH 1951, 210). By the time of the Domesday Book in 1086 it was assessed at 3.5 hides and included woodland half a league by 2 furlongs and a mill worth 12 shillings (VCH 1904, 318). The village then contained 31 households as well as a priest. Large parts of the fabric of the Church of St Leonard (HER MWA 4275) date to the 11th century, the tower being added in the 15th century (VCH 1951, 211). By 1279 there were about 20 households in the village (*ibid*).

3.4 There is a range of evidence to indicate the extent of the medieval village. Long linear plots of land at right angles to the main street, typical of medieval settlement, can still be seen on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (Fig 2, HER MWA 9528). To the north-east of the church earthworks of former medieval settlement still remain (HER MWA 4293) and archaeological trial trenching conducted in 1993 uncovered evidence for medieval settlement to the south of the earthworks (HER MWA 7128). Areas of shrunken medieval settlement have also been identified in the south-east part of the village (HER MWA 4277 and MWA 12122). In 1997 medieval pits and gullies were identified during archaeological excavation (HER MWA 7951). However an evaluation just to the north of the site failed to identify any evidence for medieval activity (HER EWA 9423).

3.5 Post-medieval sites in the area include a former Wesleyan chapel to the north-east (HER MWA 4290) and a forge or smithy (HER MWA 4291) both shown on the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps of 1886 and 1905 (Figs 2 and 3). A local resident born in 1935 recalled helping out at the smithy as a boy and informed us that wheelwrighting was also carried out there.

## 4 Fieldwork

4.1 Two short evaluation trenches were machine-dug by a JCB-type excavator with a 1.60m wide, toothless ditching bucket and an area previously reduced for a temporary hard-standing was stripped to determine whether any archaeological remains survived (Fig 7).

4.2 Removal of the temporary hard-standing revealed natural geological sand and gravel. No significant archaeological remains were observed and no artefacts recovered from this area.

4.3 The trial trenches were repositioned slightly from their proposed positions because of the presence of manholes, service runs, the access ramp to the present building and an 11kv electric supply to the building, identified by using a CAT scanner.

4.4 Trench 1 was placed at the north-easterly end of the proposal area and aligned N-S. A toothed bucket was used to break through the uppermost 0.07m of tarmac (100), then a 1.6m wide toothless bucket was used to reduce the remainder of the trench. Geological natural was not reached in this trench due to the presence of drains and a lead water pipe (103). At 0.17m deep the lowest layer in Trench 1 was very dark greyish brown sandy loam (102) that

contained two sherds of 17th-century slipware pottery and clay pipe fragments as well as a small rotary sharpening stone.

4.5 Trench 2 was positioned to avoid the electricity supply, the drains and the service entrance on the north-west side of the building. It was aligned NE-SW and was 4.82m long. Geological natural sand and gravel (204) was reached at 1.47m below ground level. It was sealed by a 1.29m thick layer of very mottled dark greyish brown/yellowish brown sandy loam (202) which contained 18th- to early 20th-century pottery, glass, asbestos and ironwork, and appeared to be the back-fill of a pond. This was cut by a modern electrical cable (203) and sealed by 0.10m of modern surface bedding.

## 5 Conclusions

5.1 The archaeological evaluation revealed no significant archaeological deposits or finds. A small assemblage of 18th- to early 20th-century pottery was recovered from the back-fill of a pond depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map which also contained ironwork possibly derived from the adjacent smithy and wheelwright's workshop.

5.2 Despite the difficulties in excavating the trenches, it is clear that there is very little chance that any significant archaeological deposits survive in the area of the proposed extension.

## Acknowledgements

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr Chris Newey of the Heart of England Co-op for commissioning the work.

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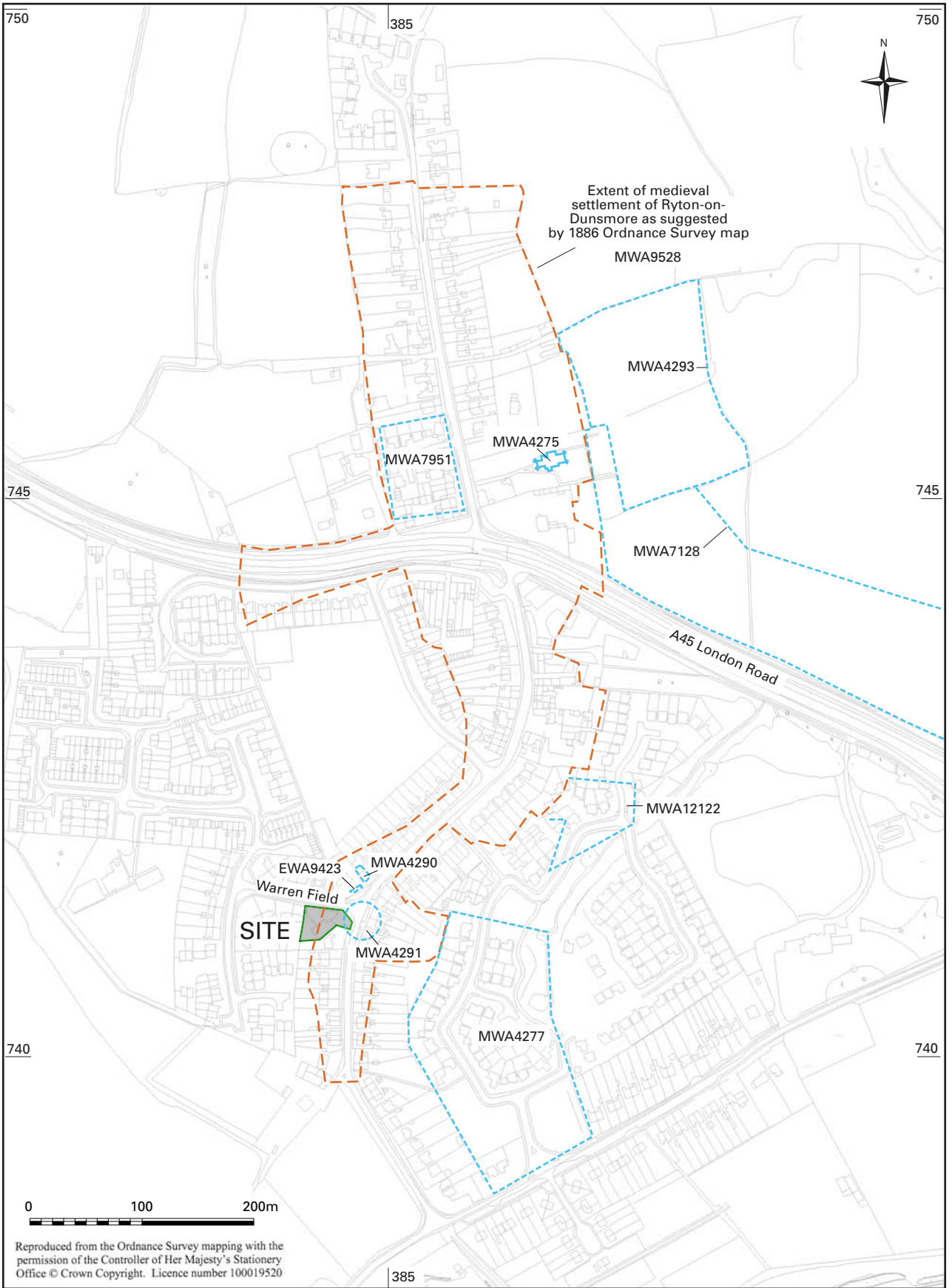
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## Appendix A: List of Finds

| <i>Context</i> | <i>Material</i> | <i>Quantity</i> | <i>Date/Comments</i>  |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| 102            | Pottery         | 2               | 17th-century trailed slipware   |
| 102            | Clay pipe       | 1               | stem  |
| 102            | Stone           | 1               | rotary sharpening stone   |
| 202            | Pottery         | 11              | 18th- to early 20th-century, including 4 black-glazed coarseware, 2 transfer-blue decorated, 2 white ware, 1 Nottingham stoneware, 1 stoneware container, 1 teapot fragment |
| 202            | Glass           | 1               | bottle base   |
| 202            | Fe objects      | 3               | one chain of 17 links and clasp, 2 blacksmith's tools   |

## Appendix B: List of Contexts

| <i>Context</i> | <i>Description</i>                       | <i>Depth</i>        |
|----------------|--|---------------------|
| 100            | Tarmac                                   | 0.07m               |
| 101            | Tarmac make-up/bedding                   | 0.10m               |
| 102            | Very dark greyish brown sandy loam layer | Not fully excavated |
| 103            | Water pipe (supply for Co-op)            | Currently in use    |
| 200            | Tarmac                                   | 0.08m               |
| 201            | Tarmac make-up/bedding                   | 0.10m               |
| 202            | Mixed, sandy loam back-fill of pond      | 1.29m               |
| 203            | Modern electricity cable                 | Not excavated       |
| 204            | Geological sand and gravel               | Not excavated       |



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Fig 1: Site location



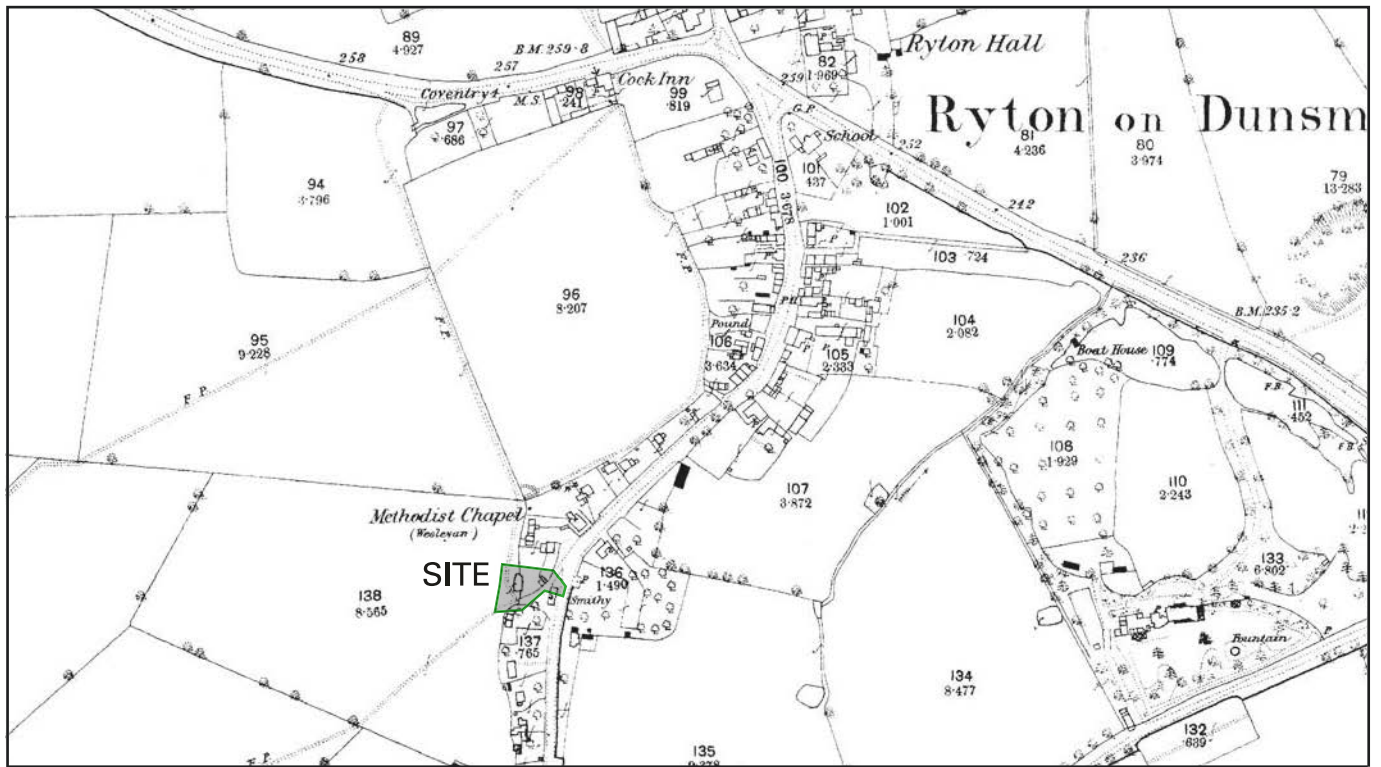


Fig 2: Detail from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1886

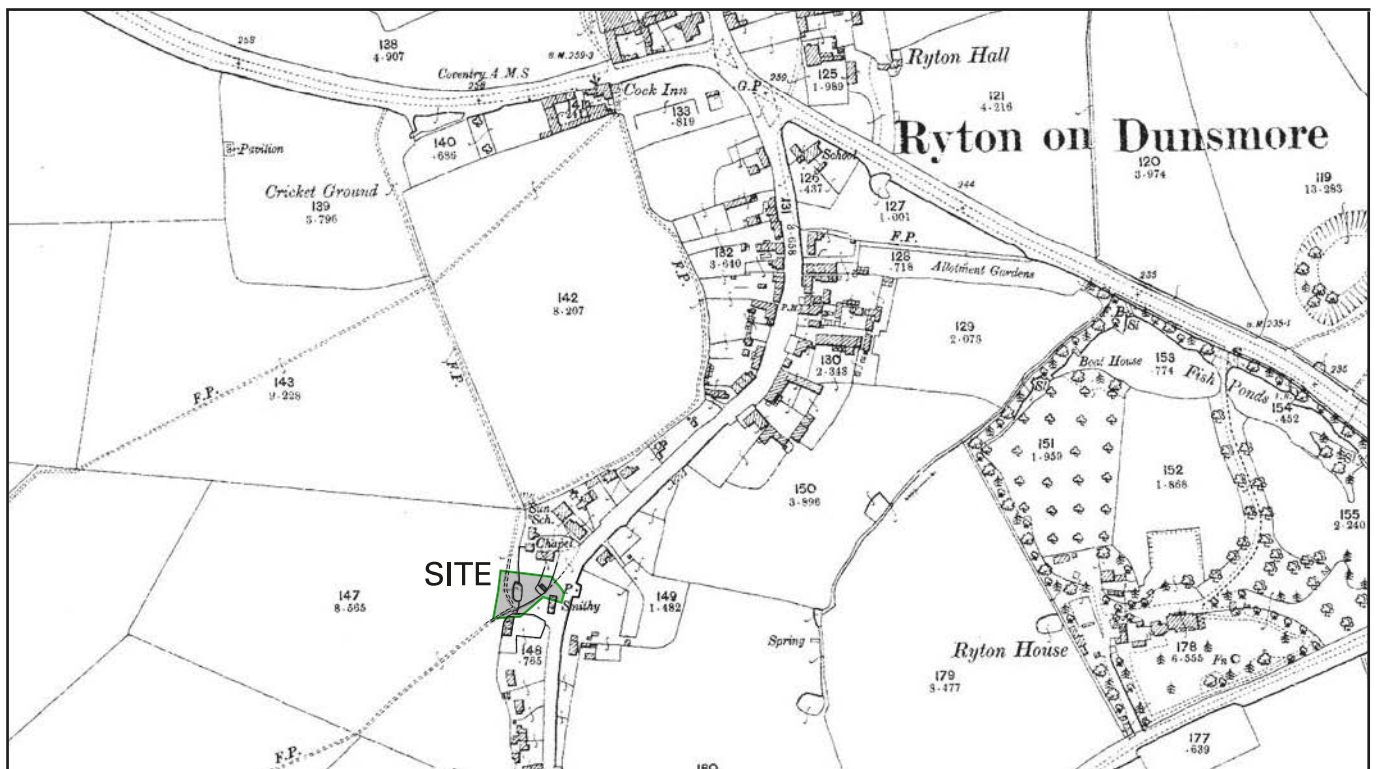


Fig 3: Detail from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1905

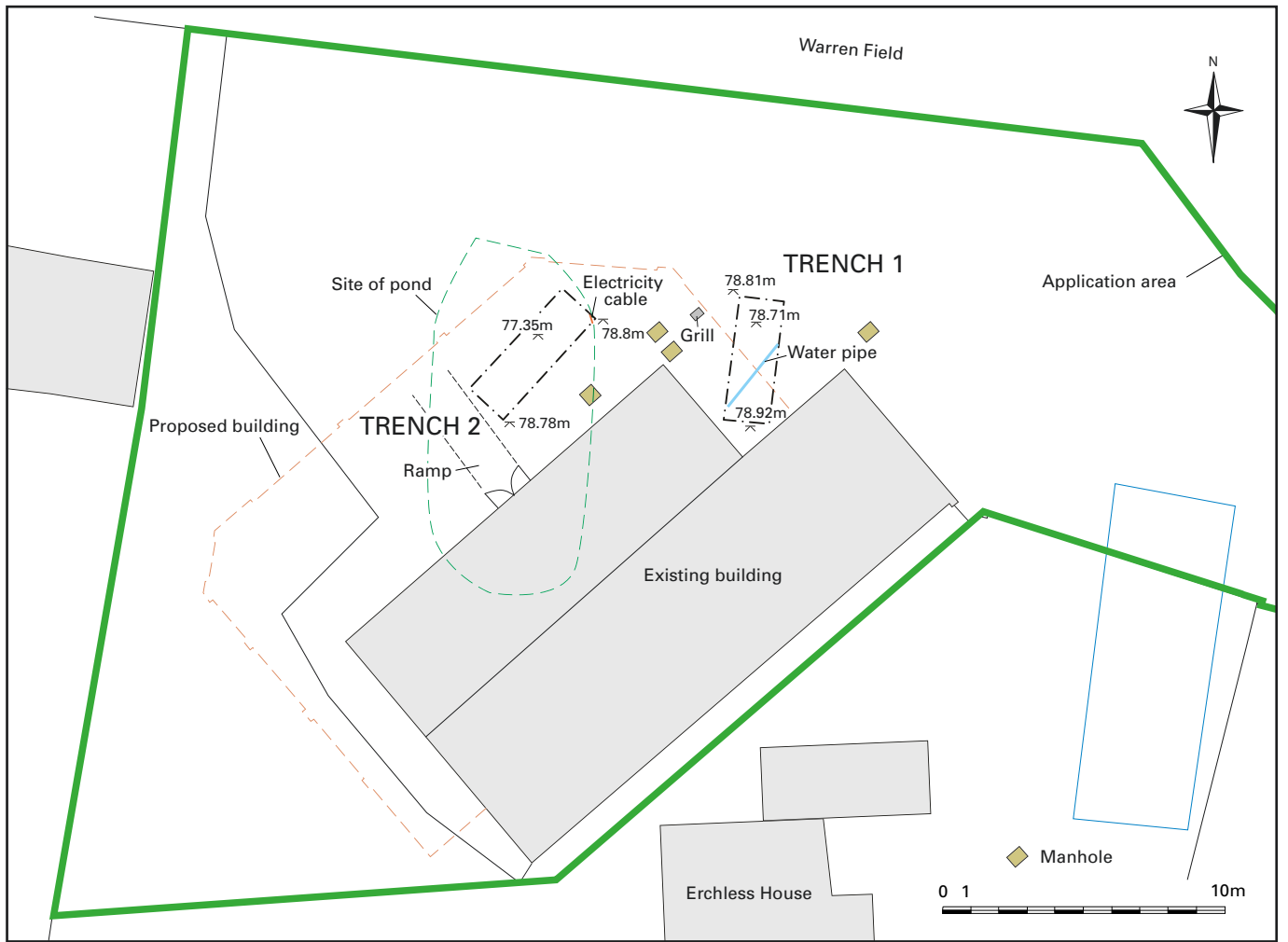


Fig 4: Location of trenches and services





Fig 5: Removal of temporary hard-standing in progress



Fig 6: Trench 1 showing location of broken lead water pipe viewed from the north



Fig 7: Trench 2 viewed from the NNE