

# Dog Lane, Napton-on-the Hill, Warwickshire

## Archaeological Evaluation



*understanding heritage matters*

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1350  
September 2013



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

**Project:** Dog Lane, Napton

**Commissioned by:** Court Residential

**Project Report No.** 1350

**Site Code:** ND13

**NGR:** SP 4672 6097

**Planning Reference:** 12/02693/FUL

**Staff:**

**Project Manager:** Stuart Palmer

**Fieldwork:** Caroline Rann, Kevin Wright

**Author:** Caroline Rann

**Illustrations:** Candy Stevens

**Report checked by:** Stuart Palmer

**Date:** 23/09/13

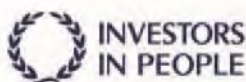
**Report reference:** Rann, C, 2013 *Dog Lane, Napton-on-the-Hill, Archaeological Evaluation*, Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1350

If you have any queries regarding this document please contact

Stuart Palmer  
Business Manager  
Archaeology Warwickshire  
Unit 9 Montague Road  
Warwick  
CV34 5LW

Tel: 01926 412278/412280

[fieldarchaeology@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fieldarchaeology@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archaeology](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archaeology)



## Contents

	Summary
1	Introduction
2	Location
3	Methodology
4	Archaeological and Historical Background
5	Evaluation
6	Conclusions
	Acknowledgements
	Bibliography

## Appendix

	List of Contexts
--	------------------

## Figures

1	Site location
2	Location of evaluation trenches
3	Location of site on First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887
4	Trench plans and sections
5	Trench 1
6	Trench 2

## Summary

The excavation of 20m of trial trenches at Dog Lane, Napton revealed no evidence for medieval occupation. The site appeared to have sloped significantly to the south-east until the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was partly levelled.

## Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford on Avon District Council for the construction of a pair of semi-detached properties and the creation of appropriate access and car parking facilities at Dog Lane, Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire. The site lies within the possible extent of the medieval settlement of Napton-on-the-Hill. A condition of planning permission required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out prior to development works commencing.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of the excavation of 20m of trial trench in accordance with a brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority (March 2013), was commissioned from Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire and carried out on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and this report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at Warwickshire Museum.

## Location

2.1 The development site is located at map reference SP 4672 6097, on the edge of the settlement of Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire, in the parish of the same name (Figure 1). The site was formerly covered by low-level vegetation and had been occasionally used for soil storage from building sites in the last 30 years.

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Charmouth Mudstone Formation (British Geological Survey Viewer <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/mapViewers/> accessed September 2013). Located on the south side of Napton hill the site topography slopes downwards to the south-east, away from the road.

## Methodology

3.1 The evaluation consisted of two 10m trial trenches c1.6m wide which were excavated using a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Trenches were planned, levelled to Ordnance Survey Datum and long sections drawn (Figs 2, 4).

3.2 The work undertaken also involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications. The results of this work are presented below:

## Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area is a Neolithic (c. 4000BC-2200BC) polished flint axe found on the fringes of the main village (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 4458), although this need not relate to settlement of this date. An archaeological evaluation on the western edge of the medieval settlement (EWA 7116) recorded a sherd of Roman pottery in a colluvial deposit indicating some Roman activity in the area (John Moore Heritage Services 2002).

4.2 At the time of Domesday Book (1086) Napton, then Neptone, had a population that can be estimated at 106 people (VCH 1904, 314). Napton also had its own priest in 1086, suggesting the presence of an early church in the village. The existing Church of St Lawrence (MWA 736) dates from the 12th century. Immediately to the south of the church is an area of earthworks (MWA 748). These remain undated but could be linked to the earthworks found slightly further to the south (MWA 8251), which represent a deserted part of the medieval village. An archaeological observation at School Hill identified another possible area of deserted settlement (Palmer 1999) in the form of a stone-lined well and wall foundations (MWA 8727).

4.3 The village of Napton-on-the-Hill is polyfocal and multi-nuclear. There are three areas of settlement and the presumed original core area located to the south of the Church of St Lawrence and outlying settlements at Butt Hill and Chapel Green. The properties east and west of Vicarage Road, including the development site, are likely to represent sprawling development emanating from the original core.

4.4 An archaeological observation to the rear of Hollyberry House (Jones 1994) recovered 13th/14th-century pottery sherds but no archaeological features (MWA 7606). To the north along Howcombe Lane archaeological works (Meek 1995) identified a large pit containing some post-medieval pottery (MWA 7605). Three burials (MWA 6213) unearthed 50m to the west of Hollyberry House along New Street, are believed to be medieval in date. These could either have been plague burials or perhaps associated with a supposed chapel in that area. Other archaeological observations carried out along New Street (MWA 7915 and MWA 7389) did not record any archaeological finds or features. Archaeological observation at Hollyberry House, New Street revealed a post-medieval occupation layer and a single residual sherd of medieval pottery (Rann 2006).

4.5 The probable extent of the medieval settlement at Napton-on-the-Hill has been mapped from the extent of settlement earthworks shown on air photos and the topography of property boundaries on the first edition Ordnance Survey maps of 1884 and 1886 (MWA 9060), with the present development site falling within this boundary. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 shows the site as part of fields on the edge of the village bounded by Dog Lane and a smaller lane or bridleway to the south (Figure 2). The site is similar by the second edition map (Ordnance Survey 1905) as it is still shown opposite the buildings of Dog Lane Farm.

## Evaluation

### Trench 1

5.1 Geological natural, yellowish brown clay (4) was reached at a depth of c.0.46m below the current ground level (Figure 4). A significant amount of root disturbance was evident; this was expected due to the vegetation which was present on the site until recently.

5.2 Overlying the geological natural was up to 0.27m of dark greyish brown clay loam (2). A significant amount of 20<sup>th</sup> century material was noted in this layer and a large quantity of limestone fragments. No finds were collected. A 0.05m deposit of pale yellowish-brown sand (3) was noted overlying this layer in the centre of the trench and probably represented the base of a tree or bush.

5.3 Very dark, greyish-brown, clay loam topsoil (1), to a depth of 0.25m, covered layer 2.

### Trench 2

5.4 Geological natural (4) was reached at a depth of c0.4m across the majority of the trench (Figure 4).

5.5 Overlying the natural was a deposit of late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century material in a very dark greyish brown clay loam matrix (5). This appeared to be a levelling layer and indicated that the site was on a significant natural slope.

5.6 Two further layers of modern rubble deposits were recorded overlying layer 5. The first was a 0.09m deep layer of tile and brick fragments in a dark yellowish-brown clay loam matrix (7). Overlying layer 7 was a layer of dark grey clay loam (6). This 0.12m deep layer contained a large amount of modern mortar fragments. These deposits seem to be consistent with the machine driver's account of having used the site previously to store material from building sites.

5.7 Topsoil to a depth of c0.3m covered the trench.

## Conclusions

6.1 No archaeological finds or features relating to the medieval settlement of Napton-on-the-Hill were uncovered during the evaluation. The results of the evaluation suggest that the site was sloped significantly to the south-east until it was raised in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is consistent with the surrounding topography and could explain the lack of medieval occupation.

## Acknowledgements

Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire would like to thank Mark Hayward of Court Warwickshire Ltd for commissioning the work and the Planning Archaeologist for preparing the brief.

## Bibliography

British Geological Survey 1974 *Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), Solid and Drift Geology*, Warwick Sheet 184.

John Moore Heritage Services 2002 *An Archaeological Evaluation at The Allotment Site, Poplar Road, Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire*.

Jones, R, 1994 Napton-on-the-Hill, Pillory Green, New St, *West Midlands Archaeology* 37, 89.

Meek, J, 1995 Napton-on-the-Hill, Pillory Green, Off Howcombe Lane, *West Midlands Archaeology* 38, 99.

Ordnance Survey 1834 *First Edition one inch to one mile map*, Sheet 52, Daventry

Ordnance Survey 1886 *First Edition 1:10560 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 41 NW

Ordnance Survey 1905 *Second Edition 1:2500 map*, Warwickshire Sheet 41.5

Ordnance Survey 1927 1:10560, Warwickshire Sheet 41 NW

Palmer, N, 1999 Napton-on-the-Hill, Oakwood Cottage, School Hill, *West Midlands Archaeology* 42, 121.

Rann, C, 2006 *Archaeological Observation at Hollyberry House, New Street, Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire*, Warwickshire Museum Report 0620.

VCH 1904 *Victoria County History of Warwickshire*, Vol. I, London

## Appendix

### List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	Very dark greyish brown clay loam	Topsoil
2	Dark greyish-brown, clay loam	Layer
3	Pale yellowish-brown, sandy loam	Deposit
4	Yellowish-brown clay	Geological Natural
5	Very dark, greyish-brown clay loam	Layer
6	Dark grey clay loam, mortar fragments	Layer
7	Dark yellowish brown clay loam, brick and tile	Layer



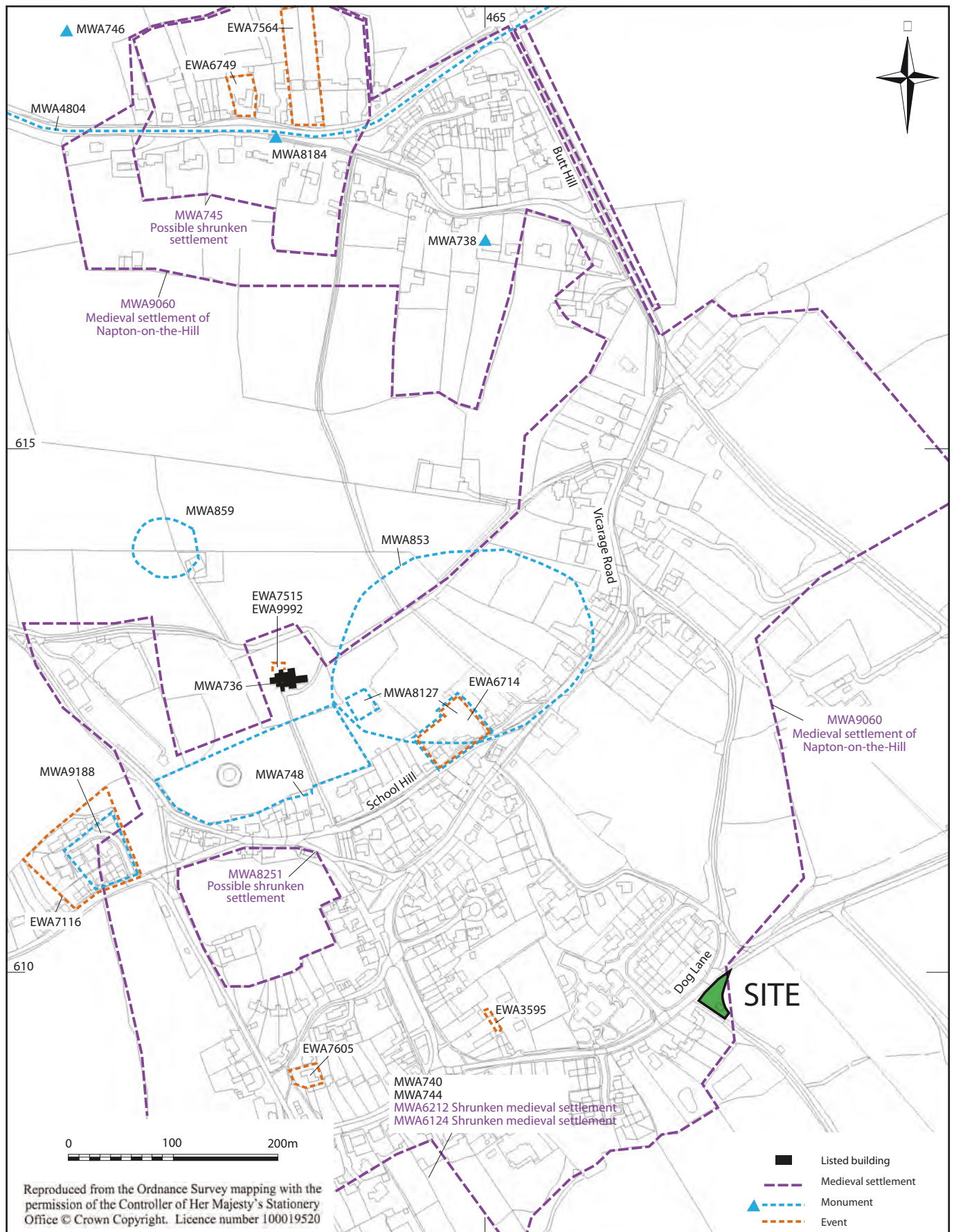


Fig 1: Site location



Fig 2: Location of evaluation trenches

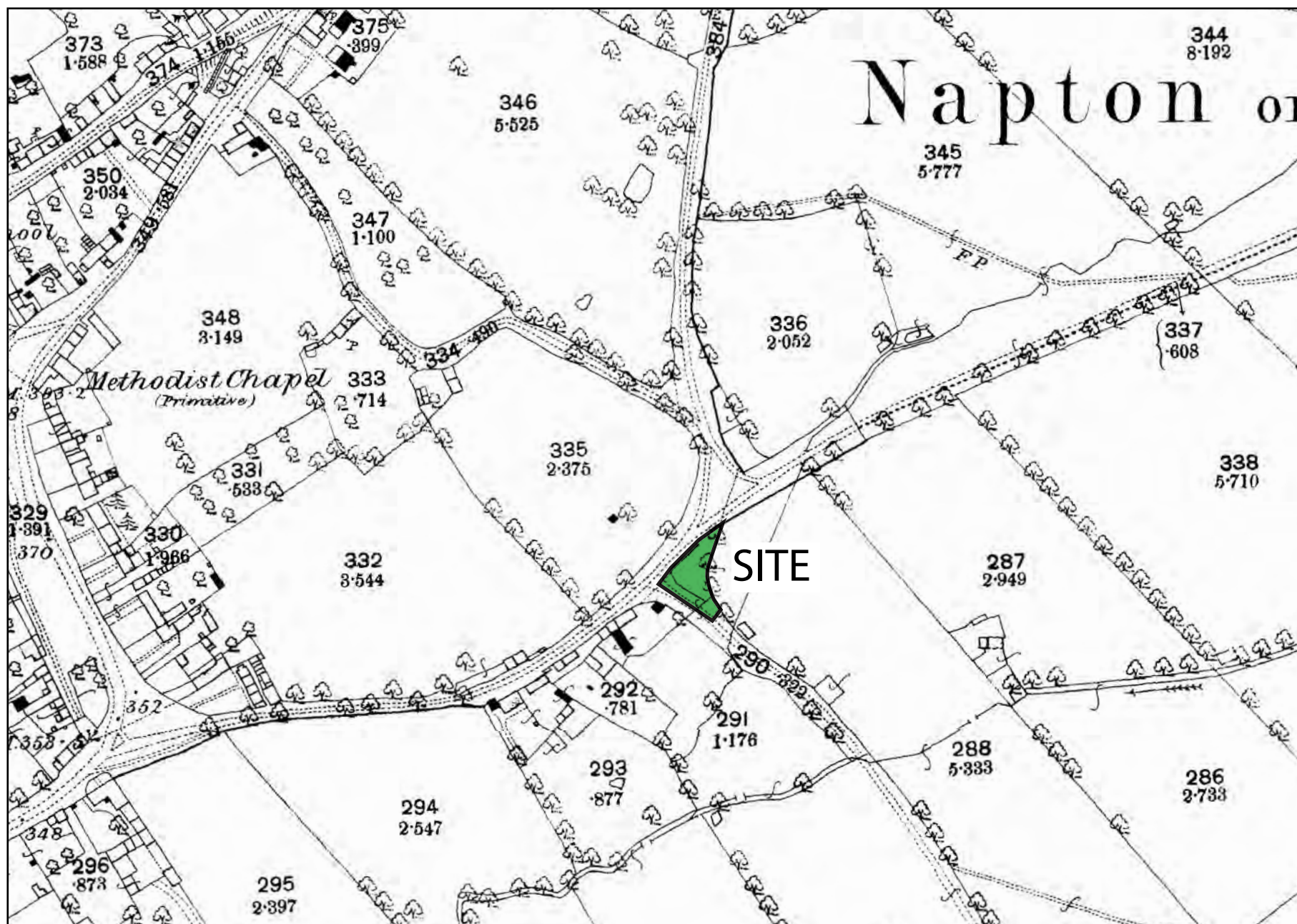


Fig 3: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1887

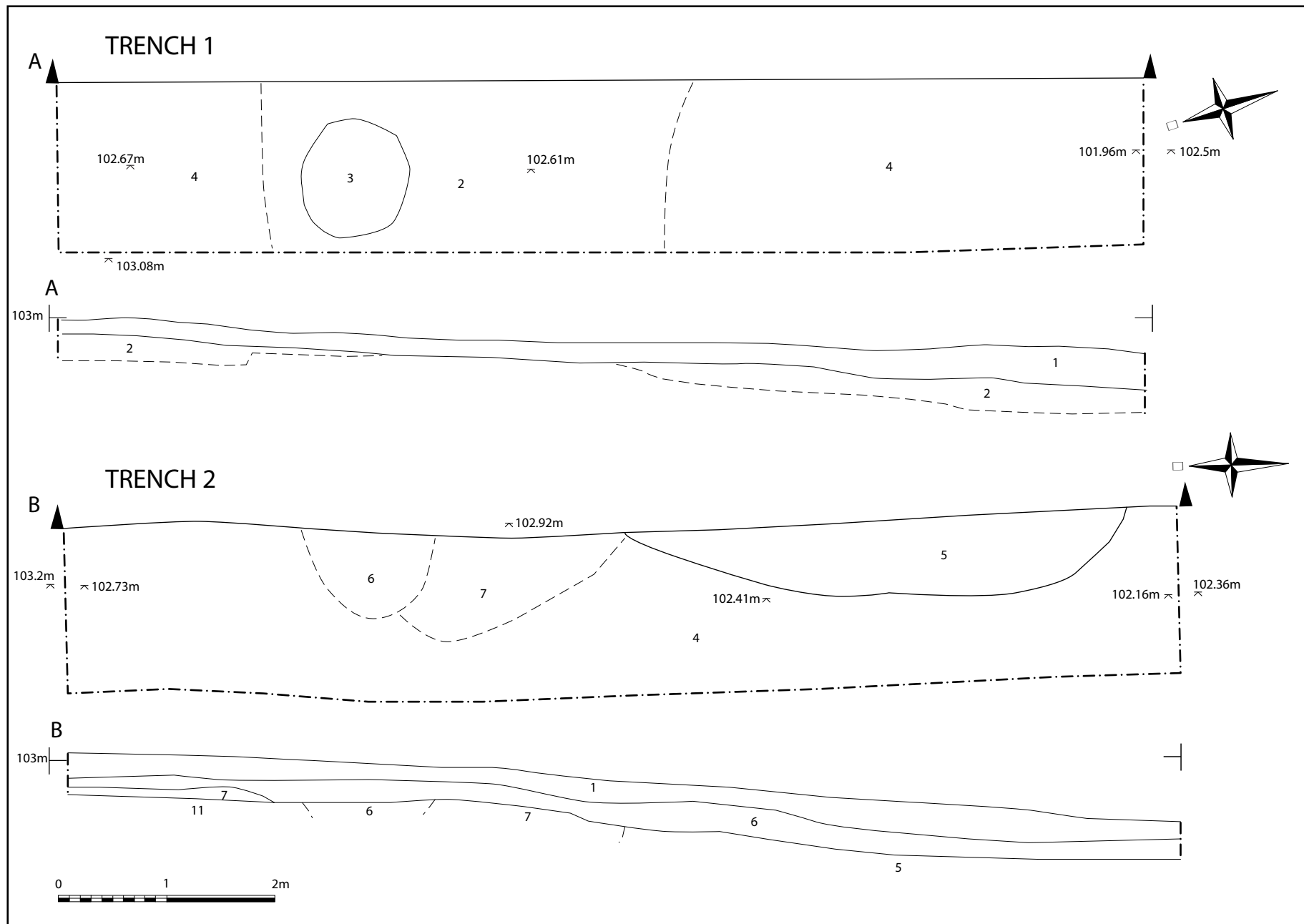


Fig 4: Trench plans and sections





Fig 5: Trench 1, looking NNE



Fig 6: Trench 2, looking south