

Nailcote Hall Hotel, Berkswell, Solihull

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1452
JULY 2014



*Working for
Warwickshire*

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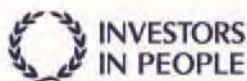
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SUMMARY

Archaeological trial trenches excavated in advance of the construction of a two-storey bedroom extension at the 16th-century Nailcote Hall Hotel revealed a post-medieval pebble surface and a single undated posthole. No significant archaeological remains were revealed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council for an extension to the time limit on a previously approved Listed Building consent planning application for the construction of a two-storey bedroom extension to the existing annexe building at Nailcote Hall Hotel, Berkswell, Solihull. WCC Planning Archaeologist Anna Stocks, in her capacity as advisor to the Planning Authority had determined that the proposed development lies within an area of archaeological potential.

1.2 It is therefore a condition of the planning permission that, before the development commences, the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been approved by the Planning Authority.

1.3 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake a field evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that had been approved by the Planning Authority in July 2014.

1.4 This report presents the results of the fieldwork which was undertaken in July 2014. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code SBN14.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 Nailcote Hall Hotel lies between Coventry and Balsall Common on the east side of Nailcote Lane (Fig 1). The development site covers an area of c.3.72ha. The underlying geology of the site is Tile Hill Mudstone Formation (British Geological Survey 1984).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The hall lies just to the south of the former medieval settlement of Nailcote (Solihull Historic Environment Record No. MSI 6406). The Dictionary of English place names takes 'Naylcote' as far back as 1288 and in Berkswell the name appears in the mid-14th century, when John de Naylcote and William de Naylcote feature on a list of inhabitants.

3.2 There are two areas of ridge and furrow identified on the HER, to the north (MSI 10901) and north-west (MSI 10902) of the hall which, if genuine, could be medieval in origin. However, the aerial photographs from which the 'ridge and furrow' was previously identified have been re-examined and it is thought that these are more likely to be marks of modern ploughing

3.3 Nailcote Hall (MSI 129) was constructed in the late 16th century, suggesting that the site has been utilised from at least the early post-medieval period. The building is timber-framed, with close-set studding, red brick and plaster infilling. There are 19th-century additions to the east and south (VCH 1947, 28). There is documented ownership history of the building back to the 1600s. The hall is a Grade II Listed Building (UID 218124).

3.4 There are two other historic buildings in the vicinity, one of which, West's Cottage, is a timber-framed Grade II Listed Building, of early 17th-century date (MSI 130). Nailcote Lodge (MSI 115) also dates to the early 17th century and was probably built as a wagon shed, but was converted to a cottage in the 19th century.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

4.1 The main aim of the evaluation was to determine if there were any significant archaeological remains in the area of development, to form an understanding of their value and their potential to shed light on the subsequent development of the Berkeswell area.

4.2 Secondary aims included placing the results in their wider local and regional contexts as appropriate.

4.3 The objective was to locate, record and analyse archaeological materials and deposits and to disseminate the results in an appropriate format.

4.4 A total of two 10m long trenches were opened up by a JCB type excavator using a 1.6m wide toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Topsoil and other plough soils were removed until either the top of archaeological remains or geological natural was reached. The location of the trenches was constrained by a live gas pipe trench (105) and a live electricity cable.

5 RESULTS

Trench 1

5.1 Trench 1 was aligned north-south and was positioned on the west side of the development area. Geological natural strong brown clay 104 was achieved c.0.30m below the existing surface. Overlying the natural was 0.2m of greyish brown clay loam (103) which seems likely to have represented a former occupation layer. At the north end of the trench a 0.15m thick pebble surface in a matrix of greyish brown clay loam was cut into layer 103. This surface contained post-medieval roof tile and a sherd of tin-glazed earthenware. It was sealed by modern car park hardcore 101 and tarmac 100.

Trench 2

5.2 Trench 2 was aligned NW/SE on the eastern side of the site. Geological natural 206 was identical to 104, other than a few patches of gravel. At the south-east end of the trench a small posthole 204 cut the natural. It was 0.3m square, with vertical sides and a flat base, and was filled with greyish brown clay loam. The posthole had an uncertain relationship with greyish brown layer 203, which was comparable to layer 102 in Trench 1. At the north-western end of the trench pebble surface 202 matched the surface in Trench 1. Modern car park make-up 201 and tarmac surface 200 had been removed prior to arrival on site.

Deposit sequence

5.3 The deposit sequence in both trenches suggests that occupation activity around the hall had been removed when the car park was constructed. The remnant surface 102=202 could have formed a pathway of post-medieval date, which, given the small number of material finds, was laid down in an area of transit some distance from the foci of occupation. The posthole, although undated seems likely to be of post-medieval date given its square cut and fill type.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The evaluation has established that the proposed extension will impact on a pebble surface of post-medieval date. However, the paucity of finds in the two trenches suggests that the surface was laid some distance from the foci of activity.

6.2 No significant archaeological remains were revealed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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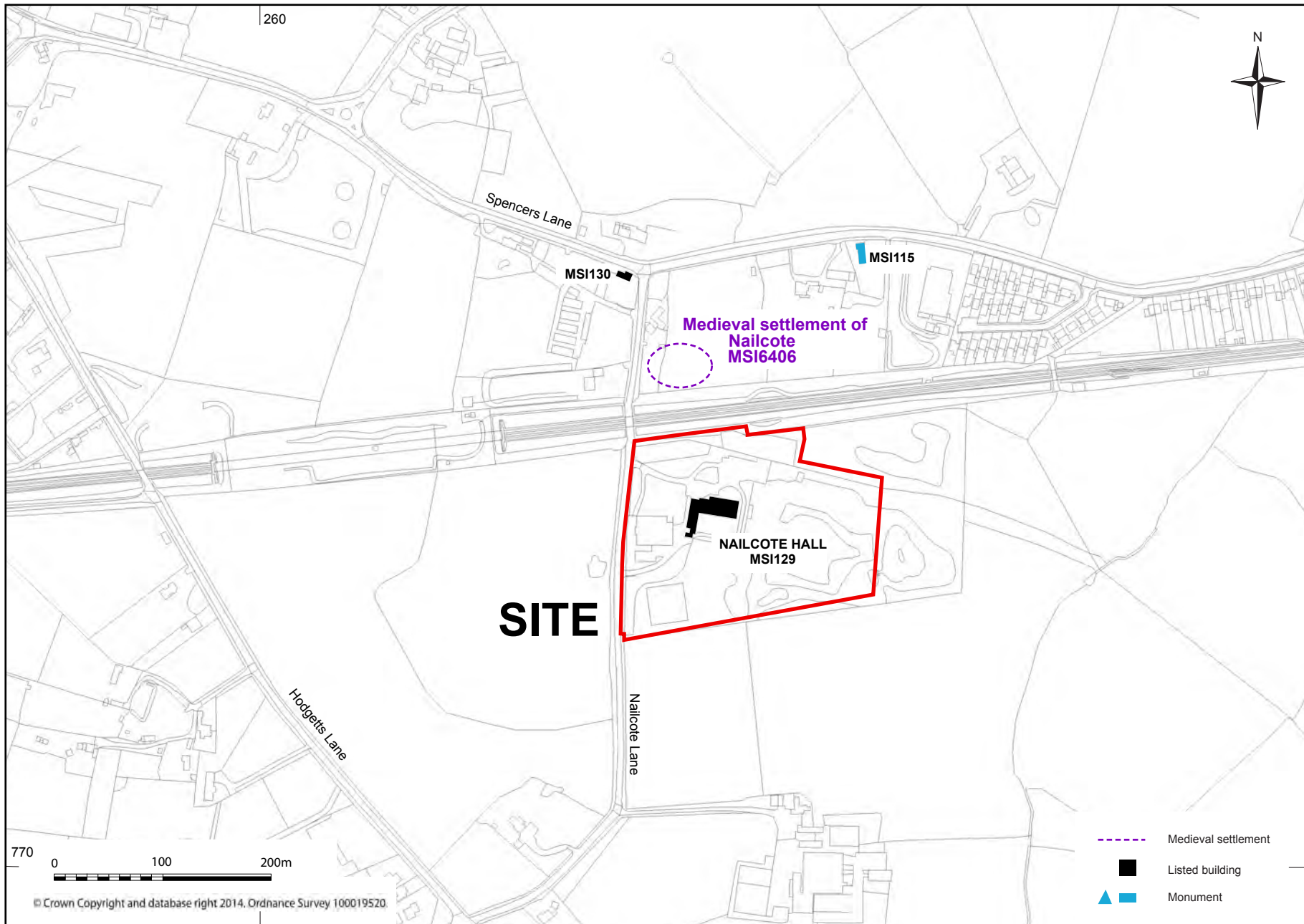


Fig 1: Site location

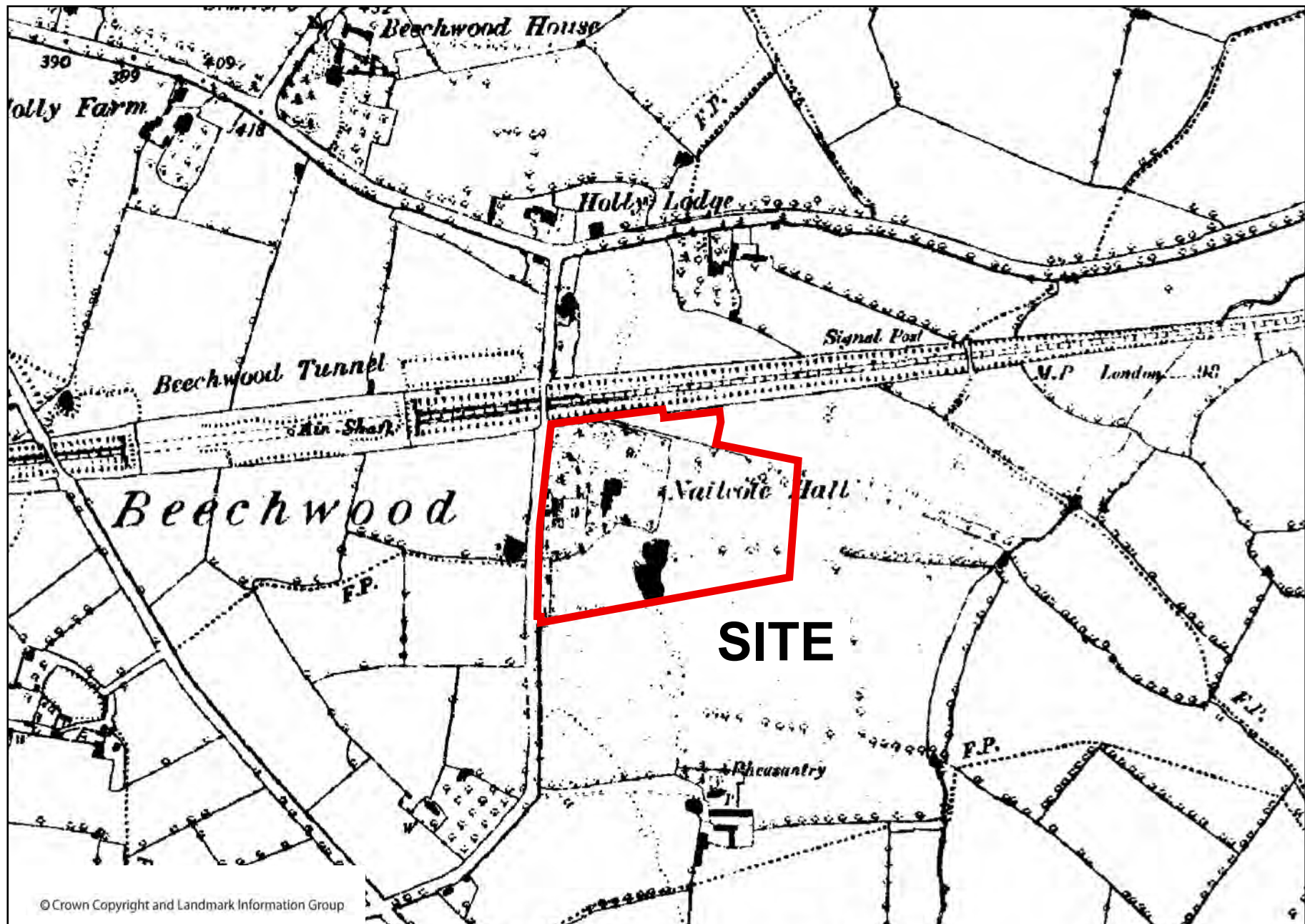


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887-88

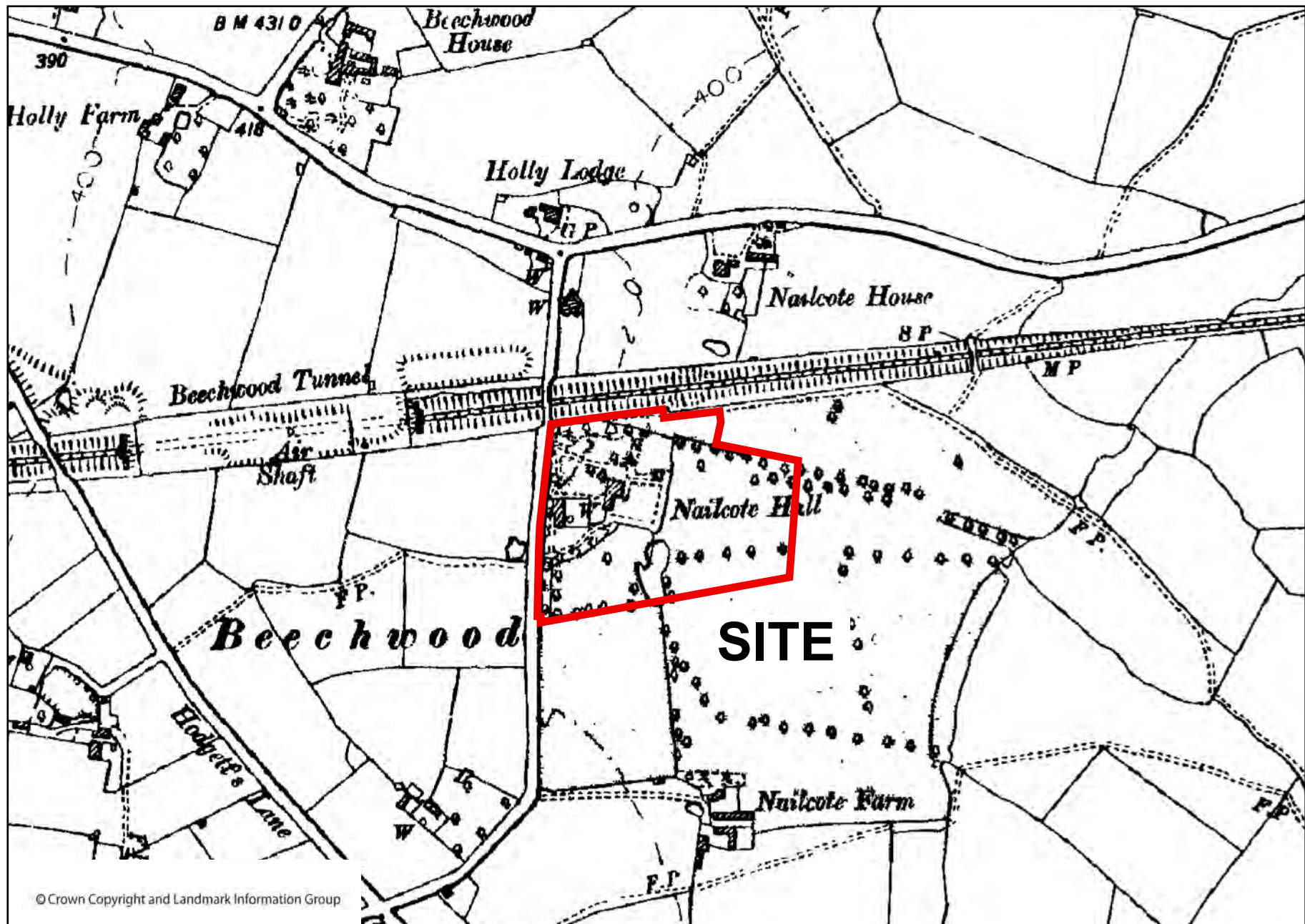


Fig 3: Detail from Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1904

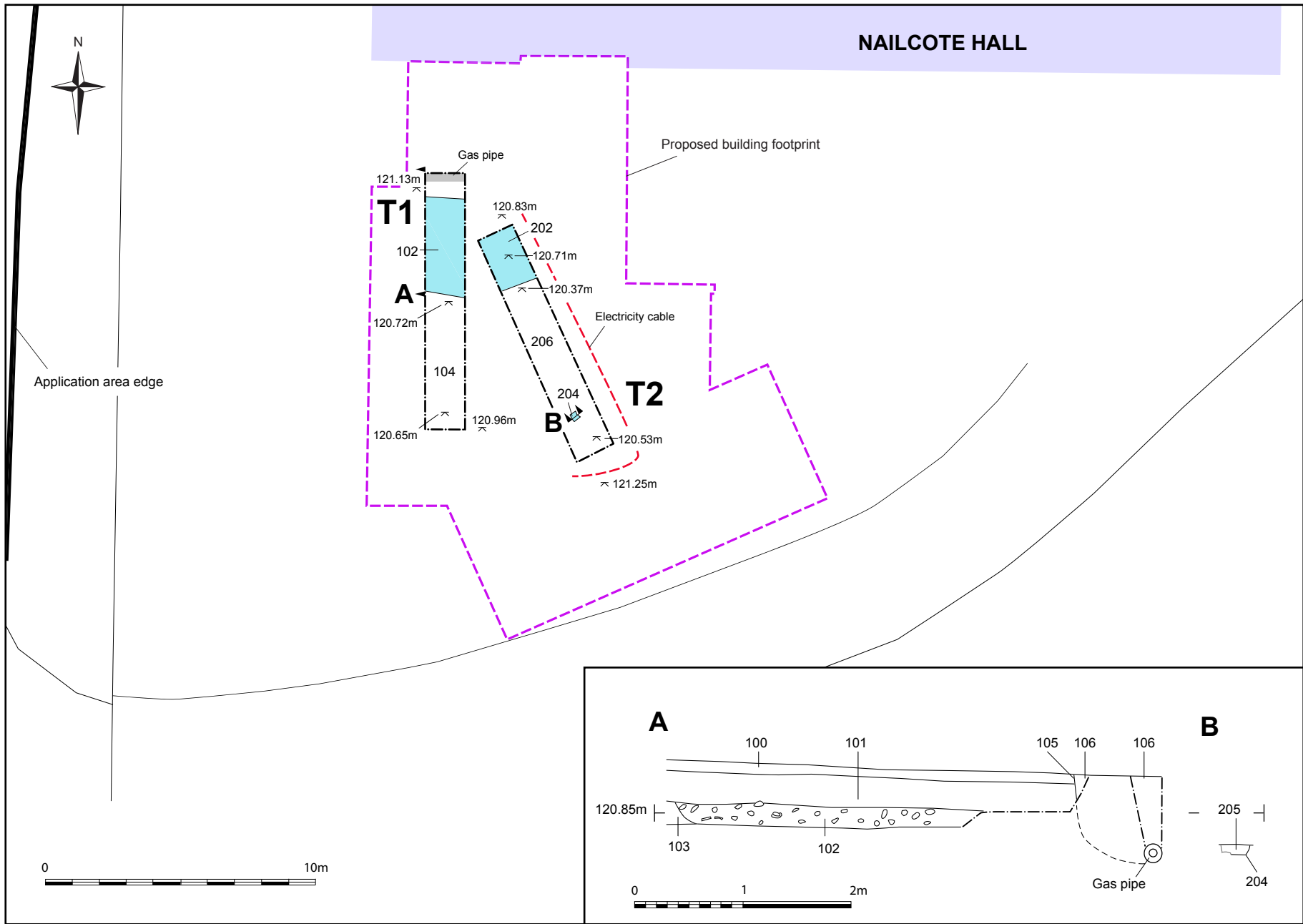


Fig 4: Location of trenches excavated and sections A and B



Fig 5. Trenching in progress



Fig 6. Trenching completed



Fig 7. Layer 102 in section



Fig 8. Posthole 204