

**2 Westham Lane,
Barford,
Warwickshire**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1496

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SUMMARY

An archaeological trial trench excavated as a condition of planning permission for a new dwelling to the rear of 2 Westham Lane on behalf of Steven Peters did not reveal any deposits or finds associated with the adjacent cropmark complexes.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Warwick District Council for the construction of a new dwelling, new access and associated works, at land to the rear of 2 Westham Lane, Barford, Warwickshire. WCC Planning Archaeologist Anna Stocks, in her capacity as advisor to the Planning Authority has determined that the proposed development lies within an area of archaeological potential.

1.2 A condition of the planning permission required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work approved by the Planning Authority.

1.3 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved in October 2014.

1.4 This report presents the results of the fieldwork which was undertaken in October/November 2014. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the temporary accession number T/1346.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The site lies to the rear of 2 Westham Lane, Barford in a part of the garden that is surrounded by high mature hedges (Fig 1).

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is river terrace deposits of sand and gravel (BGS 2014).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

3.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area comes from find spots of flint scatters of Neolithic and Bronze Age date from west of the village (Warwickshire Historic Environment Records MWA 7308 and MWA 7288). Cropmarks associated with probable

later prehistoric (MWA 4621) and Romano-British (MWA 701) settlements have been identified in the same general area, just above the flood plain (Warwickshire Museum 1996).

Roman

3.2 Romano-British archaeological features were uncovered to the south-west of the site during the construction of the Barford Bypass. It is likely that they were related to the known settlement to the immediate west of the site.

Medieval

3.3 The village of Barford (MWA 9134) is mentioned in the Domesday book (1086) as *Bereforde*, when the majority of land was held by Hugh (from Osborne, son of Richard), with a small area held by William (son of Corbucion). The village contained a mill (MWA 702) and had a population that can be estimated at 111 people (VCH 1904, 334, 338). The church (MWA 708) is first mentioned in 1205 though the only surviving medieval element of the existing structure is the 14th-century tower, the remainder having been rebuilt in 1844.

3.4 There was also a possible medieval grange (MWA 3686). This had been owned by Thelsford priory in the early 13th century but passed subsequently to the Trinitarian Friars, by 1332 the largest tax payers in the parish (VCH 1949, 11-12). The grange is thought to have occupied the same site as a later large timber mansion house (MWA 5481) with a projecting porch and Tudor doorway (Ward 1830, 167), built off what is now Church Street.

3.5 The medieval village lay mainly to the east of the line of Bridge Street and Wellesbourne Road (MWA 9134). Vestiges of a series of typical medieval strip properties are visible on early maps, extending back to the south and probably to the north of Church Street (WRO CR 1886/M18; Ordnance Survey 1887). There was a bridge over the Avon at Barford in medieval times but the existing stone structure is a post-medieval replacement built in 1785 (MWA 707).

3.6 The village did not expand to any great degree from the medieval period onwards and even the creation of the turnpike road from Warwick to Paddle Brook (MWA 4820), in the late 18th century, did little to stimulate development.

Archaeological work

3.7 Little archaeological work has been carried out in the village of Barford itself.

However, work undertaken prior to the creation of the bypass to the west of the village in 2005-7 recorded considerable evidence of prehistoric activity towards the edge of the flood plain (Palmer 2010).

3.8 Other work has included a watching brief at Wilkins Close (EWA 9733) and on the High Street in 2010 which did not reveal any evidence of the medieval settlement. Other watching briefs (EWA 6707, EWA 7365, EWA 9295) and an evaluation (EWA 7364, MWA 8716, MWA 9725) on small scale developments have merely recorded a few sherds of medieval pottery and evidence for limited post-medieval activity.

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 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 single trial trench was opened up by a 3 tonne 360° excavator. Topsoil and other plough soils were removed under archaeological supervision. In the first instance a false horizon of pale sandy gravel was achieved instead of the geological natural. This was the former plough horizon. The trench was subsequently re-machined until the geological natural was reached across the trench.

5 RESULTS

5.1 The trial trench was 12m long by 1.6m wide and was aligned WNW/ESE within the proposed new footprint. Geological natural reddish brown sand with gravel (3) was achieved throughout the trench between c.0.97m and 1.2m below current ground level. It was overlain by a 0.54m to 0.8m thick layer of reddish-brown sandy loam. Dark brown sandy loam topsoil covering the trench was 0.28m deep.

Deposit sequence

5.2 The deposit sequence is consistent with that of an agricultural site being river terrace gravels overlain by post-Roman plough soils.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The evaluation has established that the proposed new dwelling is highly unlikely to impact on anything of archaeological significance. The absence of any finds or deposits associated with the adjacent cropmark complexes seems likely to suggest that the focus of that activity lies some distance apart.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr Steven Peters for commissioning the work and Anna Stocks for approving the scheme.

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WRO CR 1886/M18 Inclosure map of Barford, 1760 by G Salmon, Warwickshire County Record Office

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APPENDICES

A List of contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	Topsoil	Dark brown sandy loam with occasional pebbles, several concrete rainwater gullies
2	Former plough soil	Reddish brown sandy loam with frequent small pebbles
3	Natural	Reddish brown sand (and gravel)

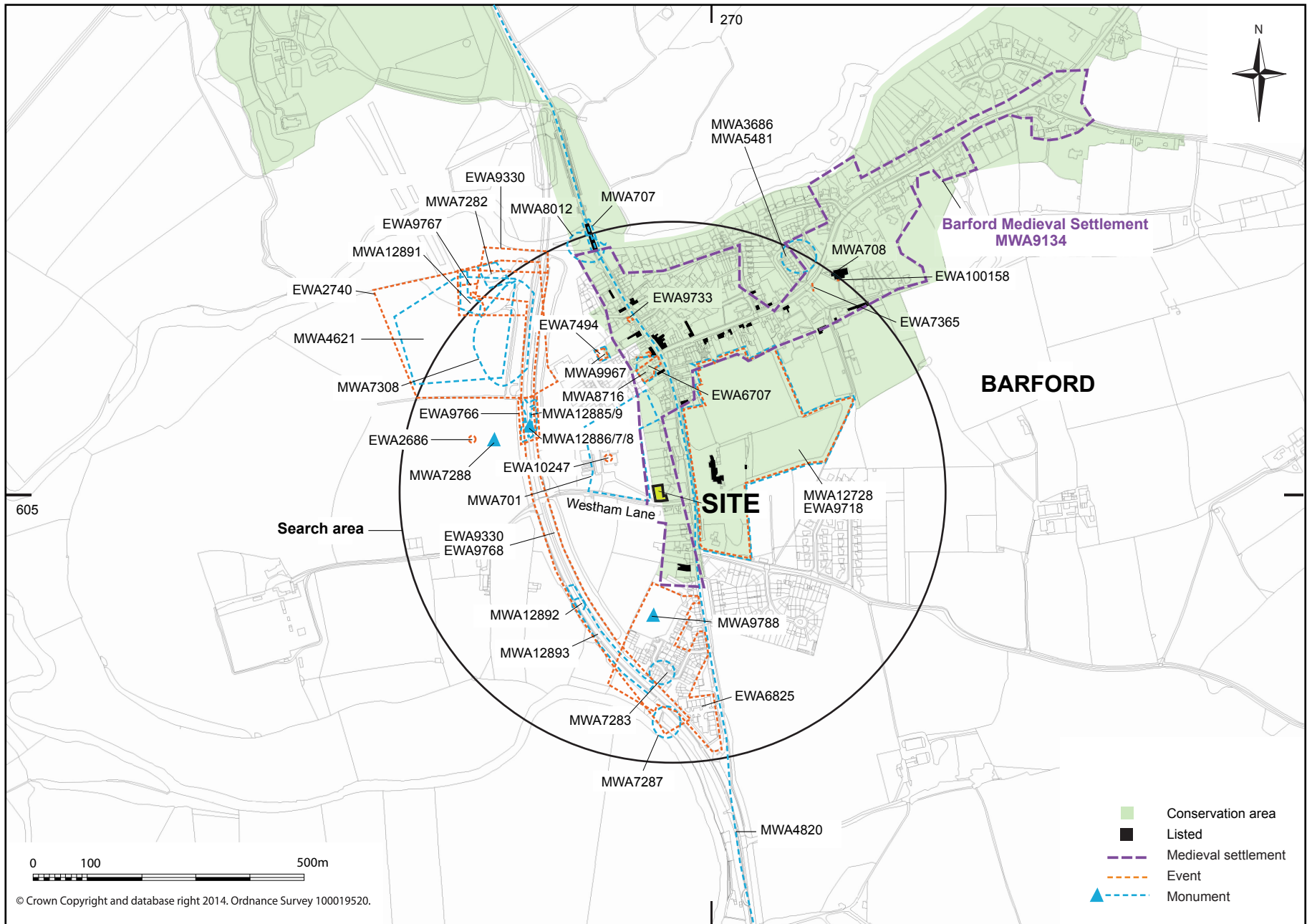


Fig 1: Site location

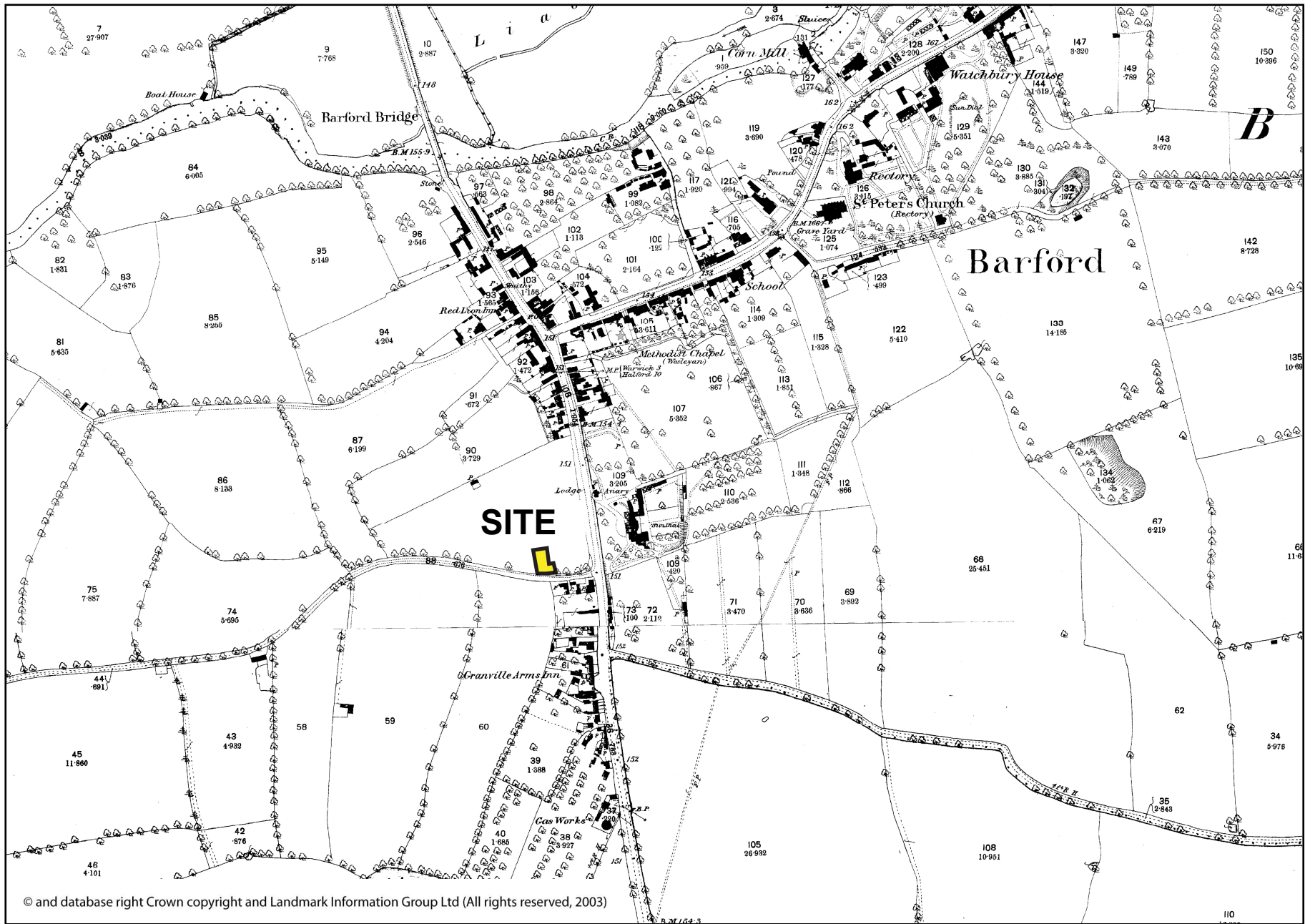


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

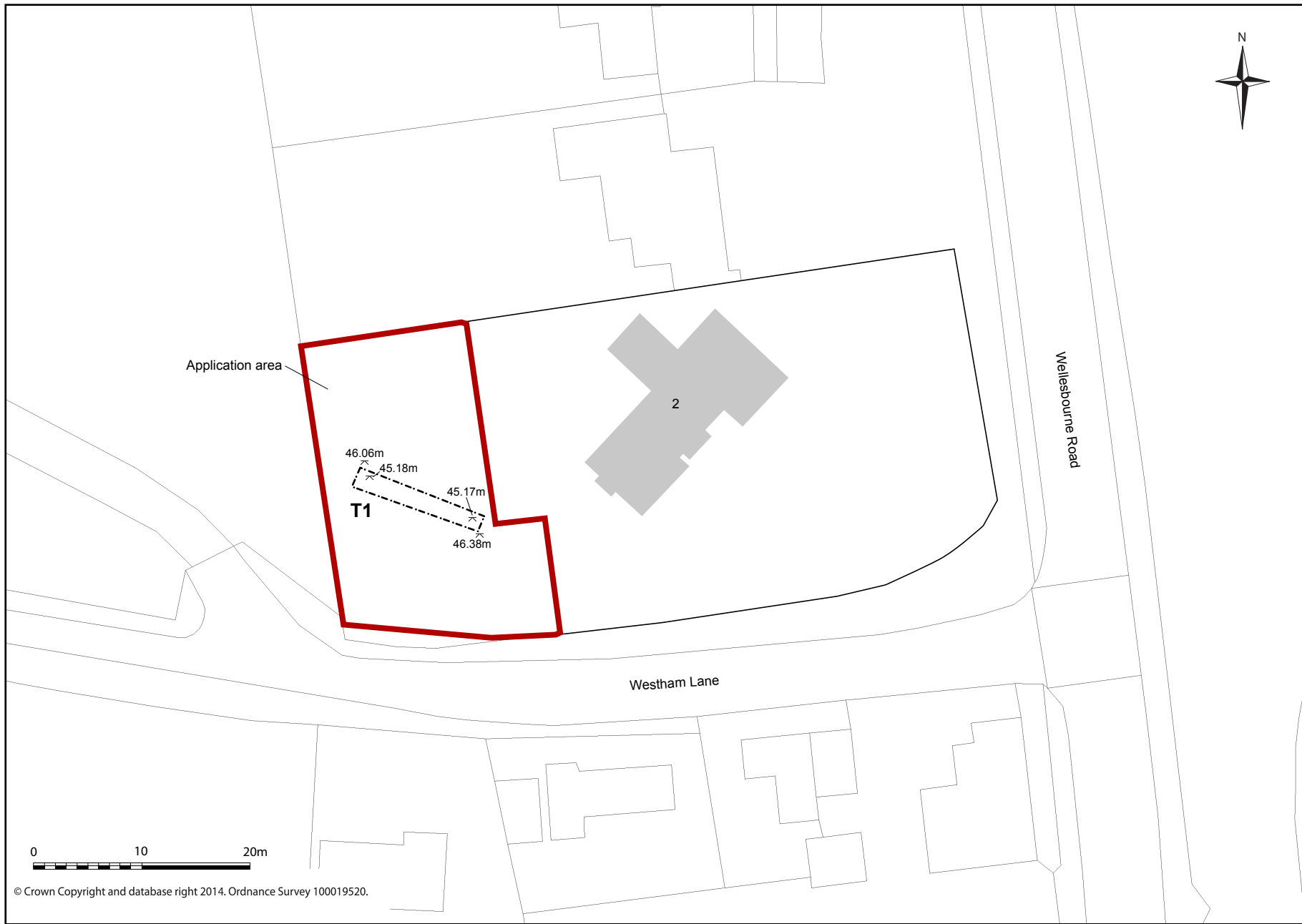


Fig 3: Location of trench excavated



Fig 4. Topsoil removal



Fig 5. Trench excavated to natural looking south-east