

# 13 Stratford Road, Warwick

## Archaeological Evaluation



*understanding heritage matters*

Report No 1247  
December 2012



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

**Project:** 13 Stratford Road

**Commissioned by:** Paul Nieduszynski

**Project Report No.** 1247

**Site Code:** WR12

**NGR:** SP 2781 6426

**Planning Reference:** 11/0131

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## Summary

**Archaeological evaluation at 13 Stratford Road Warwick, close by the site of the medieval church of St Lawrence, revealed at least 10 undated inhumations, which can reasonably be asserted to have been part of the medieval cemetery on the south side of the church. No structural remains associated with the church were revealed and no evidence for any Roman period activity was revealed, during the evaluation.**

## 1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Warwick District Council for a rear and side extension at 13 Stratford Road, Warwick (11/0131). The proposed development lies within an area of significant archaeological remains, adjacent to previously recorded Roman period features and within 30m of the site of the medieval St Lawrence's Church and its recently discovered graveyard (Archaeology Warwickshire forthcoming). A condition of planning permission required that a programme of archaeological fieldwork be undertaken. The County Planning Archaeologist required that an archaeological field evaluation be undertaken to better inform the planning authority of the potential for significant archaeological remains to survive on the site of the proposed development.

1.2 Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire was commissioned to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation and carry out a programme of archaeological work approved by the planning authority, which was undertaken in November 2012. This report presents the results of that programme. The site archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code WR12.

## 2 Location

2.1 The site is located on the east side of Stratford Road and close to the western boundary of Warwick Castle Park and Foxes Study, centred on National Grid Reference SP 2781 6426. It is currently occupied by a domestic residential building and associated gardens. The site is generally flat, although higher than the level of Stratford Road and the front of the property slopes down to the level of the adjacent pavement.

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is 2nd river terrace deposits (British Geological Survey 1984).

## 3 Methodology

3.1 The evaluation was designed to determine, as far as possible, the nature of the archaeological resource on the site and to gather sufficient information as to the extent, character, state of preservation and date of any remains within the site so a decision could be made on the requirement for any further mitigation strategy.

3.2 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications. This was followed by the excavation of a two trenches designed to cover a representative sample of the area to be developed.

## 4 Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The site lies within the valley of the River Avon, an area extensively settled by a later prehistoric agricultural population, which by the Roman period had expanded to the point where there was precious little land not in agricultural production. At least one Roman ditch and a small amount of Roman pottery were found during recent excavations on the site of the medieval church of St Lawrence (Archaeology Warwickshire 2010). Several Roman coins have also been found in the field immediately to the south of Foxes Study.

4.2 By the medieval period the site was part of the extra-mural suburb of West Street at the southern edge of the medieval town of Warwick. Historic mapping including John Speed's map of Warwick of 1610 (Speed 1610) shows that there were buildings along West Street to the south of the Goyssel Brook at this time.

4.3 The graveyard of St Lawrence's church was discovered when the road was widened in 1837 and a Norman capital (carved stone column head) was found. However, the exact location of the site of the church of St Lawrence (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 1956) was not established. The church was however recently revealed during investigations within the gardens of 5 Stratford Road, between 2009 and 2010 (Archaeology Warwickshire 2010). Investigations found the remains of two walls which were interpreted as belonging to the nave of the church, part of the chancel and at least 180 burials immediately to the north of the church (Archaeology Warwickshire forthcoming).

4.4 Further burials were recorded when underpinning work was carried out at 11 Stratford Road in 2005 (EWA 7723, Warwickshire Museum 2005). Walls which may have belonged to the south side of the Church and more of the graveyard was found during archaeological observation of construction work at the same site in 2008 (Rann and Thompson 2008).

### Map evidence

4.5 John Speed's map of 1610 shows a building which may be the church of St Lawrence, but is not labelled as such. This is surprising as St Michael's, St Johns and St Helen's chapels, associated respectively with the former leper hospital, hospital and Knights Templar preceptory are all labelled. Fish and Bridgeman's map of 1711 also shows a property boundary between 13 Stratford Road and 5 Stratford Road (Fish and Bridgeman 1711) with a possible building where 3 Stratford Road is today. Baker's map of Warwick from 1788 (Fig 2, Baker 1788) shows this same property boundary.

4.6 The Fish and Bridgeman map shows buildings to the north of the site, but not the site. The map is not very accurate (e.g. the castle is marked as a rectangle) but does give a good impression of the town's street plan and general location of buildings. The church does not seem to be shown in the position where it has now been found, but the area is marked as a (nameless) chapel. It might seem odd that the 1711 map even mentions the church site if it

had already gone by 1703, but Fish is recorded as surveying his map in 1695. It is plausible that the remains of the church were demolished between it being surveyed in 1695 and the map being published.

4.7 By 1711 West Street, south of the Goysel Brook, was known as Stratford Road. To the north of the site was the junction of Stratford Road and two other streets going east and south, the latter of which is still used as a modern entrance to the castle grounds. Several other streets to the east of West Street, only Avon Lane (marked as number 19) is actually named, are also shown, none of which now exist. They seem to suggest that the western suburb of Warwick was formerly much more densely occupied. If so, then a likely medieval heyday might have been from the 13th to 14th century, probably finishing at the arrival of the Black Death in 1349. Warwickshire suffered from further outbreaks of plague in 1361, 1369 and from 1375-6.

4.8 Baker's map of Warwick of 1788 shows the site as part of land belonging to a Thomas Pestle. Shortly afterwards he must have sold the land as the Earl of Warwick is recorded as the owner in 1790. The building now forming 3 and 5 Stratford Road was originally a single late 17th-century house, later extended (listed Grade II; LBS 307656). The original stone house is most probably that shown on the 1788 map. The plot to the south was owned by Mrs Curtis and is shown as a small field.

4.9 A similar picture is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1889 (Ordnance Survey 1889) and the Third Edition Ordnance Survey of 1926 (Ordnance Survey 1926).

## **History of St Lawrence's church**

4.10 The church of St Lawrence (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record Number MWA 1956, Fig 1) appears to have lain at the outermost limit of the suburb, in the sort of location often occupied by medieval hospitals such as St John's and the leper hospital of St Michael, elsewhere in Warwick. St Lawrence's leper hospital is mentioned in 1255-56 (VCH 1969, 422) and whilst this might have been connected with the church of St Lawrence it is likely it may have been mistakenly attributed as there appears to be no other reference to it.

4.11 St Lawrence's was a relatively small church and its history is intimately linked with the main parish churches of Warwick. The original mother church of Warwick was probably All Saints' which was located somewhere within the castle grounds. In 1123 Roger de Beaumont, Earl of Warwick, founded the collegiate church of St Mary's and the church of All Saints' was united with it. The college was granted rights to seven other Warwick churches at the same time: St Nicholas's, St Michael's (the leper hospital chapel), St Sepulchre's (the priory church), St Helen's (within the priory precinct), St John's (situated in the western part of the market square), St Peter's (situated on High Street near the corner of Castle Street) and St Lawrence's. The church of St James (the west gate chapel) was added to this grant shortly afterwards. Each church had its own rector and kept the tithes of the rectory, but had to give part of its income to St Mary's (VCH 1969, 522).

4.12 A licence to let of 1319 does mention a rectory house for St Lawrence's. The college strengthened its rights in 1367 when the bishop gave an order that the churches of St John, St Michael, St Peter, St James and St Lawrence, apparently mostly in a ruinous condition or lacking in churchyards, need no longer be repaired, their parishioners being instructed to

attend St Mary's. The churches and any churchyards were to be shut. This was not necessarily entirely popular with the local clergy and perhaps the parishioners as by 1398 the profits of both St Peter's and St Lawrence's were being withheld on the grounds that the order of 1367 did not extend to the successors of the then dean and canons of the college (a rector of St Lawrence's being recorded in Dugdale in 1380). It seems likely that out of all of the small churches which were ordered to be shut that both St Peter's and St Lawrence's were the largest. The order was confirmed by the crown and the churches were finally appropriated when either surrendered or on the death of the resident rector. At St Peter's this happened when the rector resigned in 1400 whilst in the case of St Lawrence's it appears to have been on the death of the last rector in 1410.

4.13 The church building was still standing in 1632 (VCH 1969, 533). The site was sold in 1669 to Jonathan Faires when the church was described as "decayed" and no longer used as a chapel but functioning as barn. By 1703 the site was sold again and the new message is described as "*where stood decayed St Lawrence Chapell*" (English Heritage 1973).

### **Other recorded archaeological remains in the immediate vicinity**

4.14 A Dominican house of Blackfriars stood on the opposite side of West Street, probably at the north end in the angle formed by West Street and Friars Street (MWA 1959). The friary was established by 1263 and was surrendered to the crown in 1538, when the church is described as having a steeple (and therefore a tower). Surprisingly the dedication of the church is not known. It was demolished by 1551. Burials associated with the friary have been found during excavations for building works in the locality, but no remains of its buildings have ever been recorded.

4.15 Foxes Study and Warwick Castle Park (MWA 6956) lie immediately to the north-east of the garden of number 13. Between the 1740s and the 1780s the park was steadily increased in size, gradually swallowing up land to the east of West Street and the rear of Stratford Road.

4.16 A medieval jetton (a coin-like counting piece) dating to the reign of Edward II (1307-1327) was found to the west of the site (MWA 9841, Fig 1). Several sherds of pottery dating from the 13th/14th century to the 19th century were recovered during an archaeological watching brief at 93 West Street (EWA 7094, Warwickshire Museum 2001). A medallion commemorating the 1832 Reform Act was found to the northeast of the site (MWA 9855).

4.17 The site of a tannery is noted on the 1851 Board of Health map located to the north of the site (MWA 8223). Archaeological observations (EWA 7557) that took place here in 1998 found remains of a wood lined trough and a culverted stream that were most likely associated with the tanning industry (Jones 1998).

## **5 Evaluation**

5.1 Two trial trenches totalling 8m in length were excavated in positions agreed with the Planning Archaeologist. The trenches were located in areas of the site coinciding with the proposed extension footprint in order to sample the area likely to be disturbed by the development. No trenches were located in the concreted area at the side of the house where

surface water and foul water services were located (evidenced by manhole chambers and three fall pipes).

5.2 A tracked one tonne excavator using a toothless 1.0m wide bucket was used to remove topsoil and other overburden. The overburden was removed in spits under the supervision of an archaeologist. Machining continued until the top of significant archaeological deposits or evidence of human remains was identified. Excavation then proceeded by hand.

5.3 Archaeological contexts were cleaned, photographed and planned to an appropriate scale. A series of graves were identified and human bone defined to allow identification of the bone and establish the extent and nature of the burials. Grave cuts were not excavated and no human remains were disturbed or removed.

5.4 A 0.3m deep sondage was excavated where no burials were present in Trench 2, to establish the likely extent of stratigraphy and the depth of natural deposits.

## **Trench 1**

5.5 This trench was located close to the rear of the present house in the area of the proposed footprint of the new extensions.

### **Trench 1 summary**

<b>Dimensions</b>	3m long	1.6m wide	1.2m deep
Ground surface		50.82m aOD	
Possible cemetery soil		50.10m aOD	
Identified grave fills		49.79m aOD	
Natural Gravel		49.72m aOD	

5.6 A deposit of yellowish brown gravel (120) was revealed at the base of the trench at 49.72m aOD. No finds were recovered from this context which was cut by several graves.

5.7 The eastern ends of two probable grave cuts were revealed on the western side of the trench. Neither cut (105 and 114) was well defined, but the fills contained articulated human remains (respectively Skeletons 107 and 116). Two further grave cuts (111 and 117) were identified in the south-eastern corner at the limits of the excavated trench. The grey brown fills (112 and 115) were similar to other grave fills and revealed skulls (respectively Skeletons 113 and 119). The partially revealed western end of a fifth grave (108) occurred against the section. A further stone-lined grave was suggested by sandstone fragments (212).

5.8 The graves were overlaid by a 0.5m thick deposit of undifferentiated brown sandy loam (102). No disarticulated human remains were revealed in this deposit, but it is likely that this comprises, at least in part, a cemetery soil.

5.9 A modern pipe (104) was revealed in the south-western corner of the trench. This pipe associated with rain water drainage for the current property and was not disturbed. The ceramic pipe was in a pipe trench (103), which partly cut into layer 102.



5.10 A layer of grey brown sandy loam (201) was overlaid by a garden soil (100) was the uppermost surviving deposit and with the turf formed the existing ground surface.

## Trench 2

5.11 This trench was excavated to the rear of the house in order to sample the area of the proposed rear extension. The trench was repositioned very slightly with the agreement of the Planning Archaeologist to avoid live services along the rear of the property.

### Trench 2 summary

Dimensions	5m long	1.6m wide	1..2m deep
Ground surface		50.82m aOD	
Possible cemetery soil		50.10m aOD	
Identified grave fills		49.95m aOD	
Natural Gravel		49.75m aOD	

5.12 Geological natural yellowish-red gravel (120) was partly revealed in a hand excavated sondage at the base of the trench at 49.75m aOD. No finds were recovered from this deposit and no features were revealed at that level.

5.13 At least four probable rows of grave cuts were identified. A single grave cut (203) at the north-western corner of the trench contained a skull and articulated bone (Skeleton 205) within the grave fill (204).

5.14 The western ends of two probable grave cuts were revealed at the south-eastern limits of the trench. Both cuts (223 and 226) were not well defined, but the fills contained articulated human remains (respectively Skeletons 225 and 228). Three further grave cuts (206, 217 and 220) were identified at the western limits of the excavated trench. The grey brown fills (207 and 221) were similar to other grave fills and revealed skull (Skeleton 208) and skeletons (219 and 222).

5.15 The partially revealed western end of a fifth grave (213) occurred against the section. This included several fragments of sandstone probably part of a stone-lining (216). Further evidence of stone lining was revealed against the eastern section where sandstone fragments (212) were revealed.

5.15 The graves were overlaid by a 0.5m thick layer of undifferentiated grey brown silty clay (201). No disarticulated human remains were revealed in this deposit, but it is likely that this comprises, at least in part, a cemetery soil.

5.16 A garden soil (100) was the uppermost surviving deposit and with the turf the topsoil formed the existing ground surface.

## Summary of inhumations

Skeleton Number	Grave	Level aOD	Comments
107	105	49.71m	
110	108	49.56m	
113	111	49.78m	
116	114	49.69m	
119	117	49.79m	
205	203	49.95m	
208	206	50.23m	
211	209	49.83m	?Stone lining
215	213	49.91m	?Stone lining
219	217	49.81m	
222	220	49.89m	
225	223	49.85m	
228	226	49.87m	
229	Non identified		Disarticulated
230	Non identified		Disarticulated

## 6 Conclusions

6.1 No archaeological remains associated with the possible Roman period activity in the vicinity were revealed during the fieldwork; however it is possible that such remains may survive on the site.

6.2 A total of at least 10 graves were revealed. These were generally aligned south-west to north-east and it was possible to identify four distinct rows of graves in Trench 2. Human bone was identified in all the graves and was cleaned or defined to allow initial assessment of bone identification and articulation. No complete skeletons were revealed as in all cases the graves extended beyond the limits of the trenches. None of the inhumations were removed or disturbed.

6.3 Notwithstanding that no dateable material was found in the graves, no graves were completely excavated, there is little doubt that, based on the location, alignment and density of graves, the presence of stone-lined burials, and the condition of the bone, that these form part of the medieval churchyard associated with St Lawrence Church. The absence of any structural evidence in the graves tends to confirm the currently conjectured extent of the church further to the north.

6.4 The medieval churchyard extended over an area with a north-south dimension of at least 48m. It undoubtedly extended from the eastern side of the Stratford Road; although it is most likely that the western limit was lost during road widening work in 1837. The northern limit probably lies close to the property boundaries of 3 Stratford Road and the current work shows the southern limit includes 13 Stratford Road and probably beyond. The eastern extent of the churchyard is less well understood, but the original churchyard may have been approximately 2500m<sup>2</sup>.

## Acknowledgements

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## Appendices

### A List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Trench 1</b>		
100	Topsoil layer	
101	Greyish brown sandy loam	
102	brown            Natural geology	
103	Pipe trench	
104	Fill of pipe trench	
105	Grave cut	
106	Grave fill	
107	Skeleton	
108	Grave cut	
109	Grave fill	
110	Skeleton	
111	Grave cut	
112	Grave fill	
113	Skeleton	
114	Grave cut	
115	Grave fill	
116	Skeleton	
117	Grave cut	
118	Grave fill	
119	Skeleton	
<b>Trench 2</b>		
200	Topsoil layer	
201	Greyish brown sandy loam	
202	brown            Natural geology	
203	Grave cut	
204	Grave fill	
205	Skeleton	
206	Grave cut	
207	Grave fill	
208	Skeleton	
209	Grave cut	
210	Grave fill	
211	Skeleton	
212	Stone lining	
213	Grave cut	
214	Grave fill	
215	Skeleton	
216	Stone lining	
217	Grave cut	
218	Grave fill	
219	Skeleton	

220	Grave cut	
221	Grave fill	
222	Skeleton	
223	Grave cut	
224	Grave fill	
225	Skeleton	
226	Grave cut	
227	Grave fill	
228	Skeleton	
229	Skeleton	Disarticulated remains
230	Skeleton	Disarticulated remains
231	Brownish sand and gravel	Natural geology

## **B List of Finds**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Date/Comments</i>
100	Tile	1	Modern
	Clay pipe	5	Stem
	Pottery	7	18th/19th century
201	Clay pipe	4	Stem fragments
	Pottery	9	17th/18th century

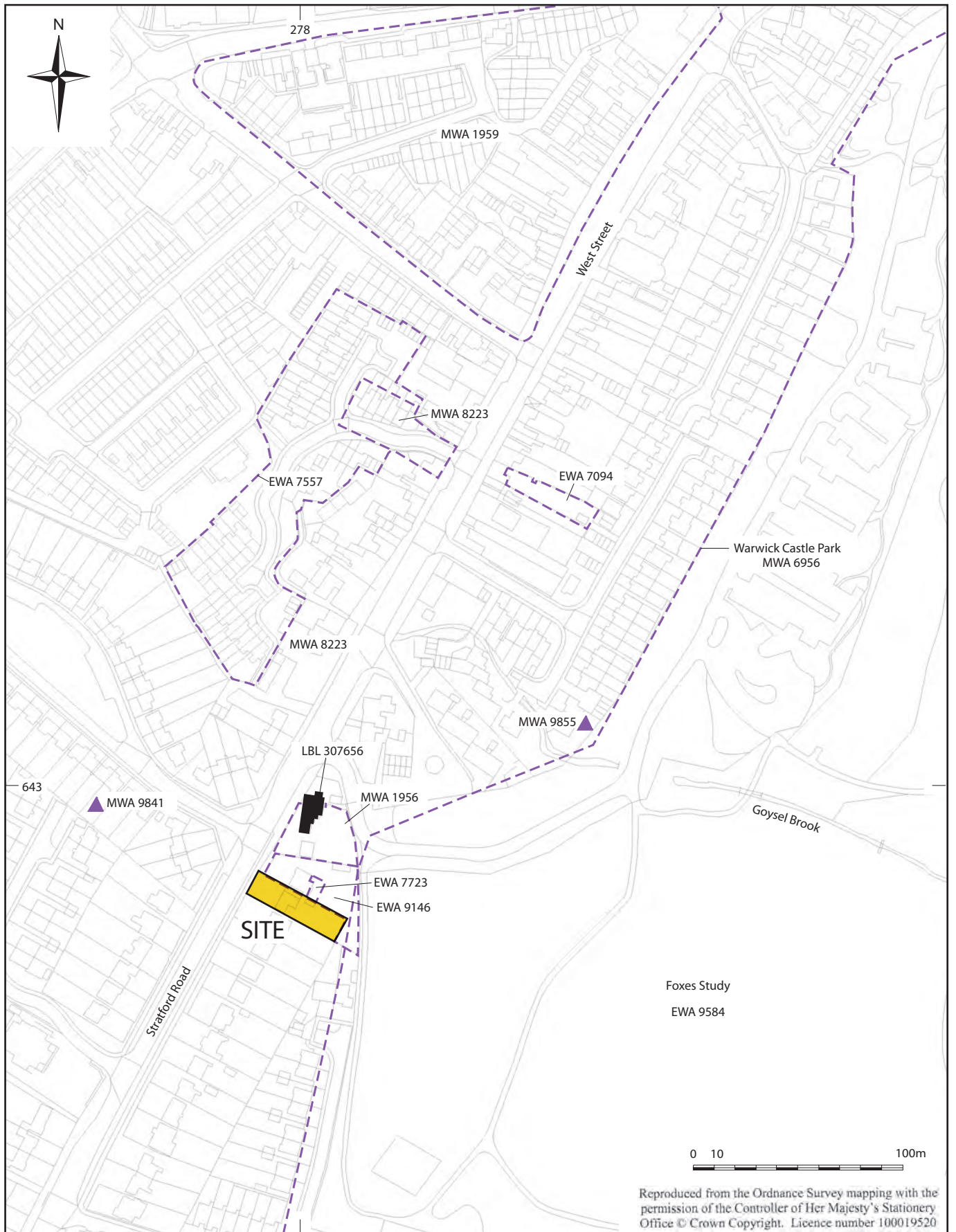


Fig 1: Site location



Fig 2: Detail from Baker's map of Warwick 1788

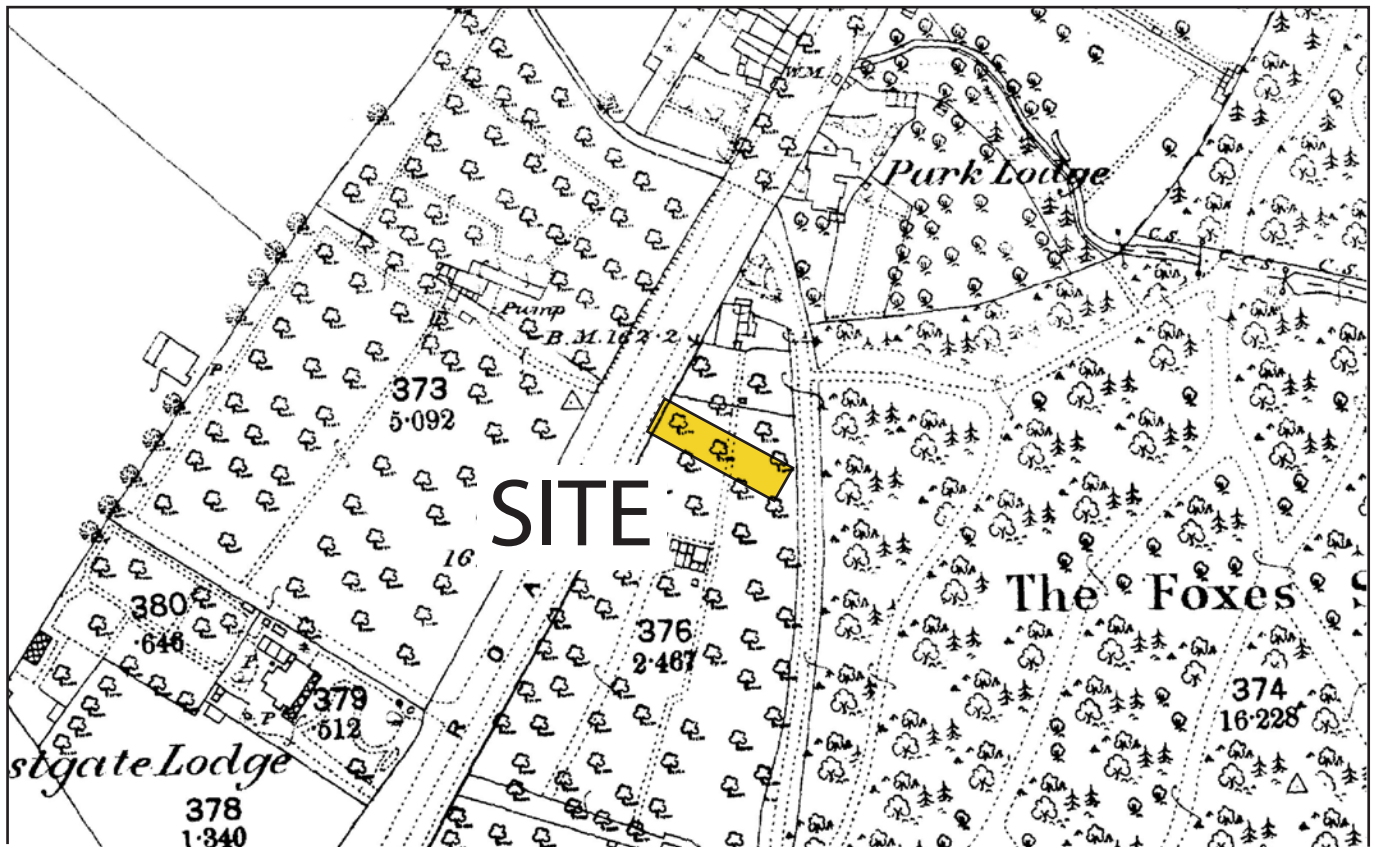


Fig 3: Detail from 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1889



Fig 4: Detail from 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1905



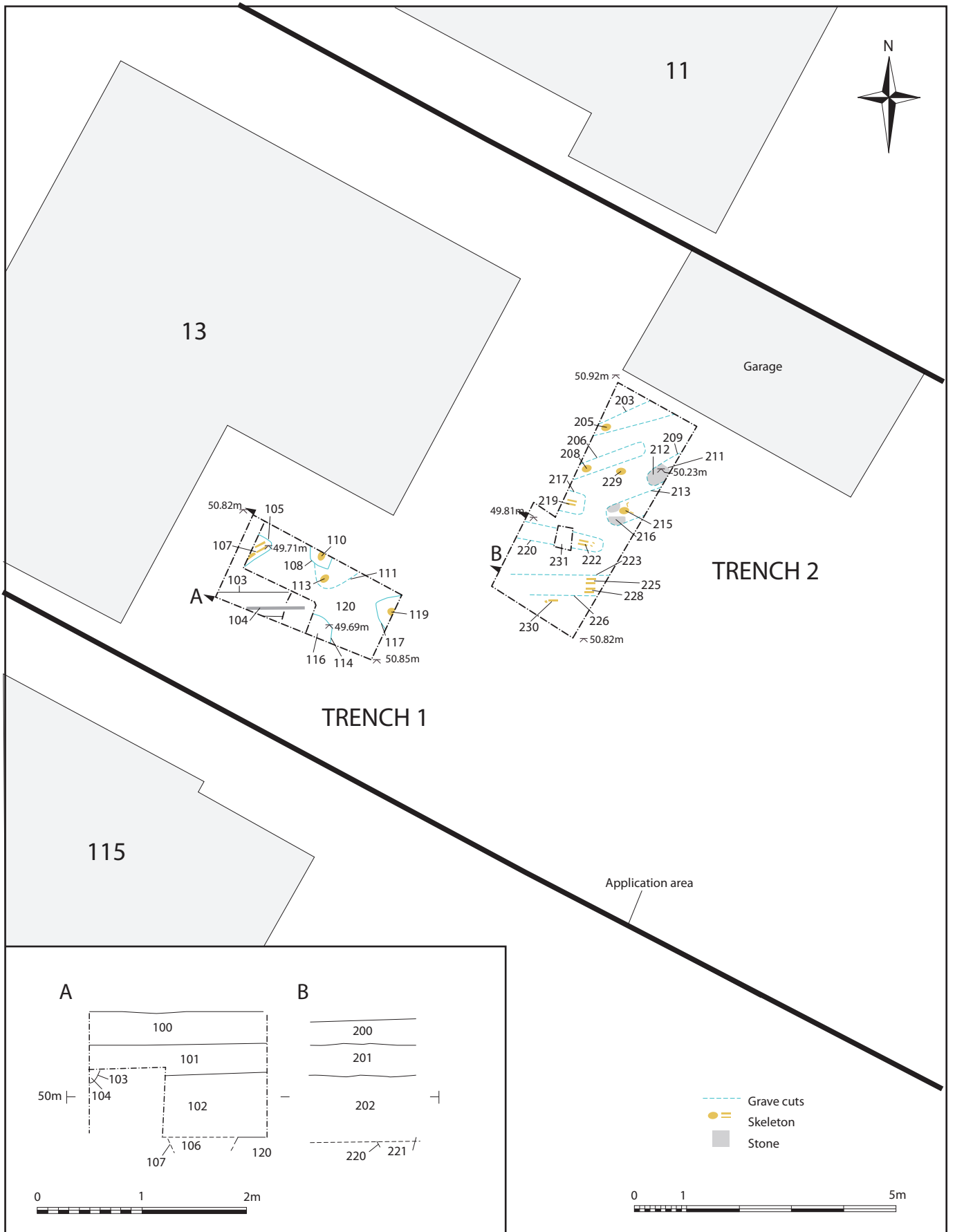


Fig 5: Evaluation trenches and sections A-B



Fig 6: Composite plan of Church of St Lawrence and its cemetery



Fig 7: View of Trench 1



Fig 8: Cleaning in Trench 2