

2 Church Street, Barford, Warwickshire

Archaeological Evaluation



understanding heritage matters

Report No 1301
January 2013



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: 2 Church Street, Barford

Commissioned by: Terry Hart

Project Report No. 1301

Site Code: BA12

NGR: SP 2695 6075

Planning Reference: W/11/0805
W/08/0734

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Date: January 2013

Report reference: Thompson, P, and Palmer, S C,
2013 2, Church Street, Barford,
*Warwickshire: Archaeological
Evaluation*, Archaeology
Warwickshire Report 1301

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Summary

Archaeological investigations were undertaken at 2 Church Street, Barford, Warwickshire, including two evaluation trenches to the rear of Church Street and a further trench to assess an area to the rear of Wellesbourne Road. No evidence associated with the medieval village or any medieval activity was revealed. An 18th century pit probably associated with 18th/19th century outbuildings at the rear of the property. Other modern features were also revealed.

1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Warwick District Council for the redevelopment of land to the rear of 2 Church Street, Barford. Warwickshire County Council Planning Archaeologist Anna Stocks advised that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken before the development commenced in order to allow for the mitigation of any archaeological remains that might survive on the site. A further investigation was conducted on the site to the rear of 1 Wellesbourne Road following discussions with the Planning Archaeologist.

1.2 The proposed development lies within an area of archaeological potential, within the supposed extent of the medieval settlement of Barford. There was therefore a potential for the proposed development to disturb archaeological deposits associated with the utilisation of this area from at least the medieval period.

1.3 Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Planning Archaeologist. Additional archaeological work associated with the development of 1 Wellesbourne Road was also approved. The work was undertaken in January 2013. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code BA12.

2 Location

2.1 The site is bounded by Church Street and Wellesbourne Road in the centre of Barford and forms a corner plot including the properties of 2 Church Street and 1 Wellesbourne Road, previously the Old Post Office. The site is roughly level and included several out buildings now partially demolished. The site is centred on map reference SP 2694 6074 in the parish of Barford.

3 Methodology

3.1 The principal aim of the project was to determine the presence or not of significant archaeological remains and assess the extent of any risk of damage or destruction from the proposed development on the site. Secondary objectives include communicating the results to appropriate local and regional audiences in an accessible format.

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. The fieldwork undertaken consisted of a programme of trial trenching, undertaken in accordance with Archaeology Warwickshire's Procedures Manual, the Codes and Guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists and the WCC Planning Archaeologists briefs (dated July 2012).

3.3 A total of 27m length of trenching was excavated in a series of three trenches. Each trench was 1.6m wide. This included 22 m of evaluation trenching and a third trench, agreed with the Planning Archaeologist, to investigate the nature of potential archaeological remains within the limits of the proposed development of 1 Wellesbourne Road. Topsoil and overburden was removed with a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision.

3.4 A photographic record of the excavation was produced. It contained monochrome prints as well as colour digital images of the individual trenches.

4 Archaeological and historical background

4.1 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).

4.2 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. 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.

4.3 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).

4.4 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.

4.5 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).

4.6 Other work has included a watching brief at Wilkins Close (EWA 9733) and on the High Street in 2010 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.

Other recorded (Warwickshire HER) archaeological remains

WA Ref	Description	Comments
Prehistoric		
717	Palaeolithic flint	Spot find
Romano British		
701	Cropmarks	Enclosures
18th 19th century		
706	Icehouse	Watchbury House
12728	Gardens	Barford House
9967	Well and water tank	Mill Lane

5 Archaeological investigations

5.1 Archaeological investigations on the site included two evaluation trenches to the rear of 2 Church Street (Planning Ref: W11/0805) agreed with the Planning Archaeologist. A third trench was excavated close to buildings fronting onto Wellesbourne Road in order to assess archaeological survival in footprint of the proposed extensions (Planning Ref: W08/0734).

Trench summary

	2 Church Street W11/0805		1 Wellesbourne Road W08/0734
	Trench 1	Trench 2	Trench 3
Dimensions	11m x 1.6m	12m x 1.6m	4.5m x 1.6m
Ground Surface	46.94m aOD	46.91m aOD	46.64m aOD
Significant archaeological remains	None	n/a	None
Geological natural	45.88m - 46.2m aOD	46.25m aOD	45.83m – 46m aOD

Trench 1

5.2 A layer of orange sand (104) was revealed in the base of the trench. This geological natural sand was recorded at a depth of 0.8m below the current ground surface and at a height of between 46.2m and 45.88m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Above this was a 0.5m layer of brown sandy loam (101). A large pit (102), cut through layer 101 and down into the natural sand (104).

5.3 Pit (102) was at least 2.5m long and 1.5m wide, only part of which was revealed within the trench. This was filled by a dark greyish brown sandy loam (103) with very occasional modern brick. Both layers 101 and the pit fill (103) were overlaid by a 0.3m thick layer of greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (100) which contained occasional fragments of brick, tile and plastic.

Trench 2

5.4 This trench was also excavated in shallow spits under the supervision of an archaeologist down to geological natural orange sand with gravel patches (206), which was reached at a depth of 0.5m below the current ground surface at a height of between 46.24m and 46.27m aOD. Above this was a 0.4m thick layer of brown sandy loam (201).

5.5 Cutting through layer 201 and down into the natural sand (206) were two features; a pit (202) and a ditch (204). Pit 202 had a square northern end, but extended beyond the southern edge of the trench. It had steeply vertical sides and a flat base and was 0.85m deep with a maximum width of 1.5m. It was filled by a brown sandy loam (203) which contained occasional 18th-century brick, tile and pottery. Ditch 204 was 2.4m wide and a maximum depth of 1m, with steeply sloping sides and a flattish base. It was filled by a yellowish brown sandy loam (205) which contained occasional fragments of brick, tile and 18th- and 19th-century pottery. The pit and ditch fills (203 and 205) and layer 201 were all covered by 0.1m of modern hard standing consisting of crushed tarmac (200).

Trench 3

5.6 The supervised excavation of this trench revealed a similar deposit sequence to the other trenches. At the base of the trench geological natural orange sand with occasional gravel patches (302) was revealed at a depth of 0.69m below the current ground surface; at a height of between 46.07 and 45.83m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

5.7 Above this was a layer of varying thickness, between 0.46m and 0.62m of brown sandy loam (301). This was sealed by 0.07m of modern tarmac. No archaeological features were exposed in this trench.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The investigation of the site revealed no significant archaeological remains. The site undoubtedly occupies a significant location at the corner of Church Street and Wellesbourne Road junction in the centre of the village. The early map evidence confirms the occupancy of

the site, in the 19th century, by a number of buildings, including those fronting the street and outbuildings to the rear.

6.2 The site seems certain to have been within one or more of the original medieval settlement plots. However, no medieval finds were recovered and no features associated with medieval activity in these plots were exposed. There was no clear evidence of extensive truncation or disturbance to explain the lack of medieval remains; however, it is possible that post-medieval and modern activity may have had an impact on earlier remains. Alternatively, as the investigated area lies approximately 20m from the road frontage it is possible that this may coincide with a little used area of a medieval plot. All surviving features appeared to be of later post-medieval date, perhaps no earlier than the 18th century, and were probably associated with activity in and around the outbuildings shown on the 1887 and 1905 Ordnance Survey maps.

Acknowledgements

Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire would like to thank Terry Hart for commissioning the work. Work on site was carried out by Rob Jones and Kevin Wright.

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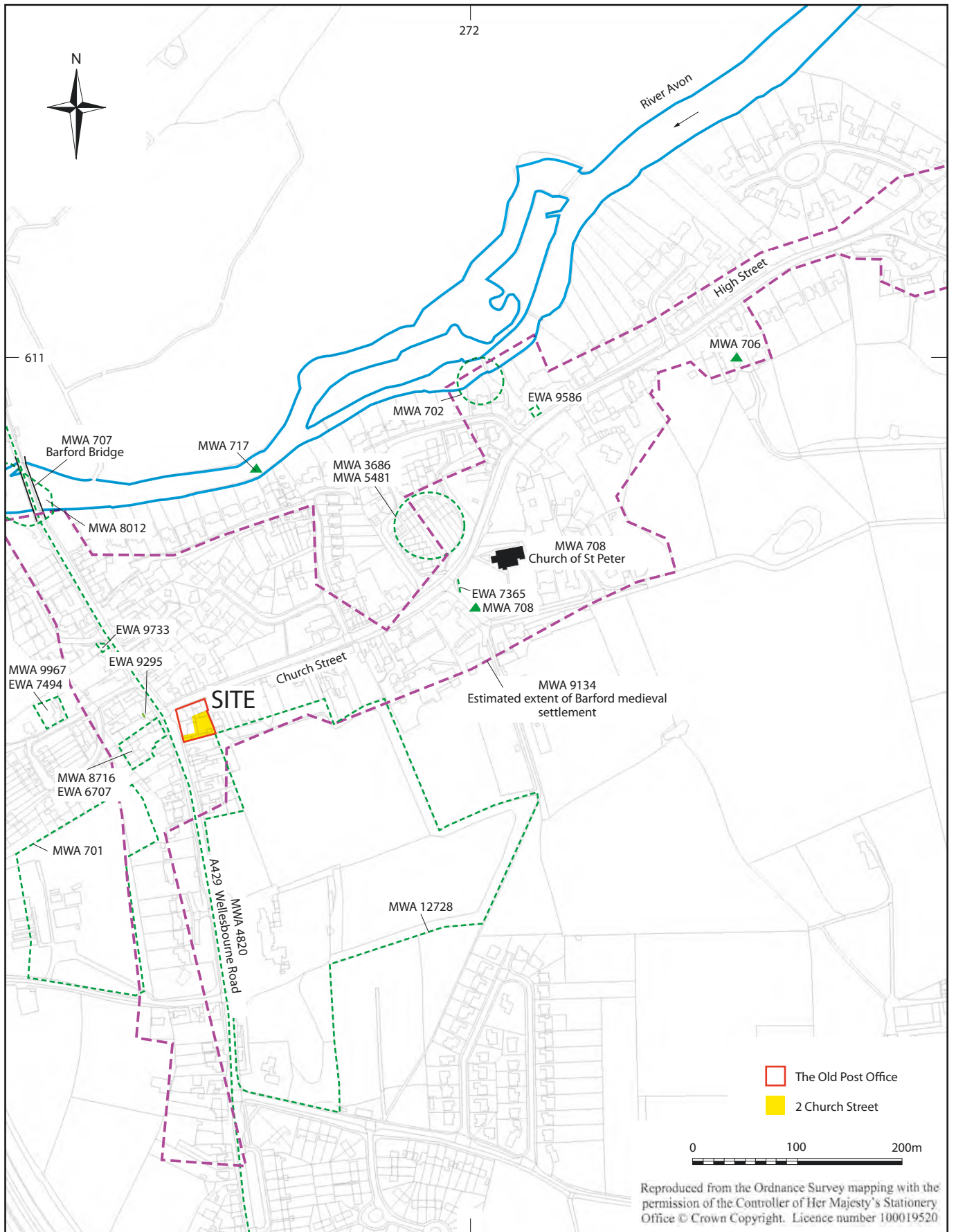


Fig. 1: Site location



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

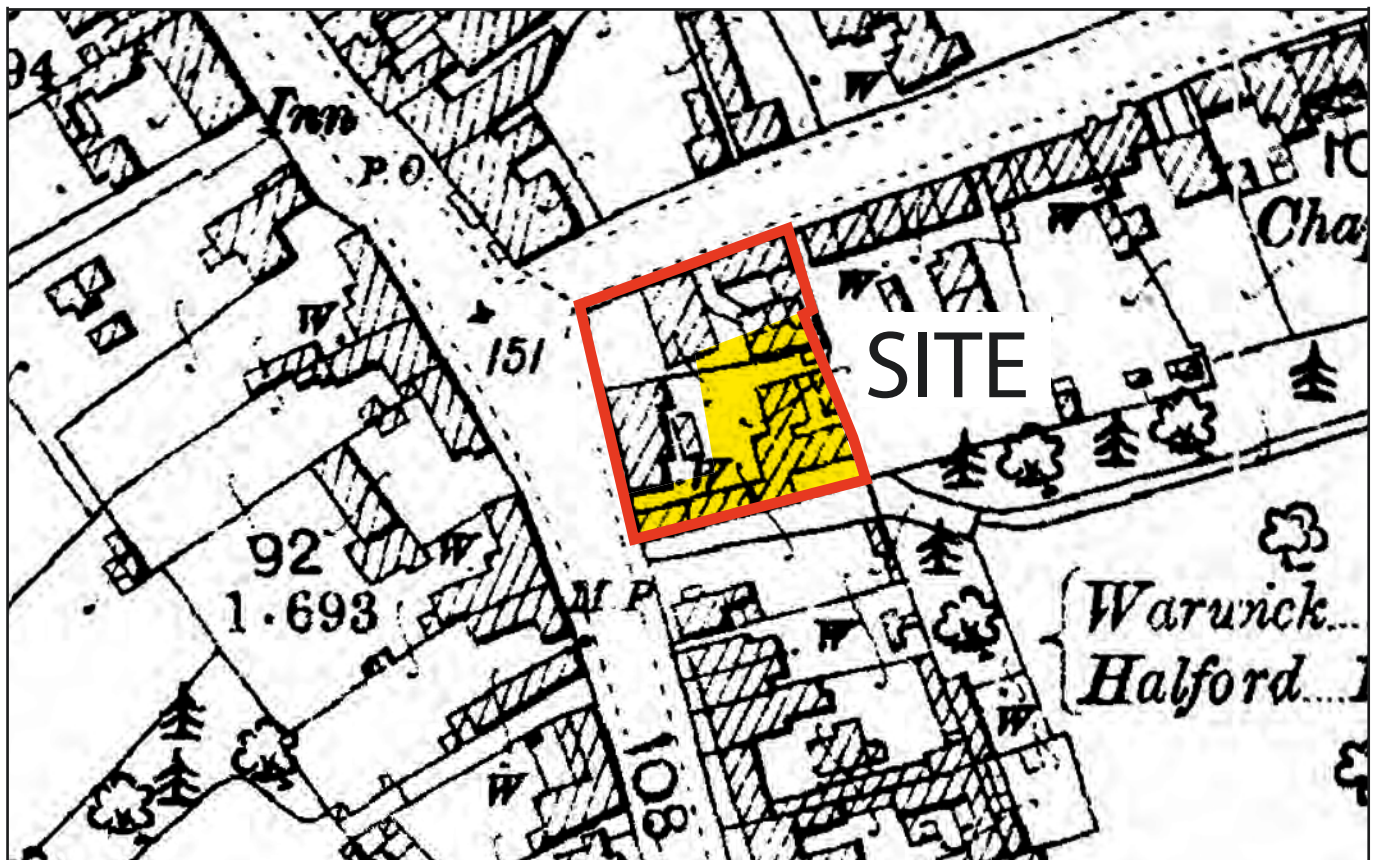


Fig 4: Detail from Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1905

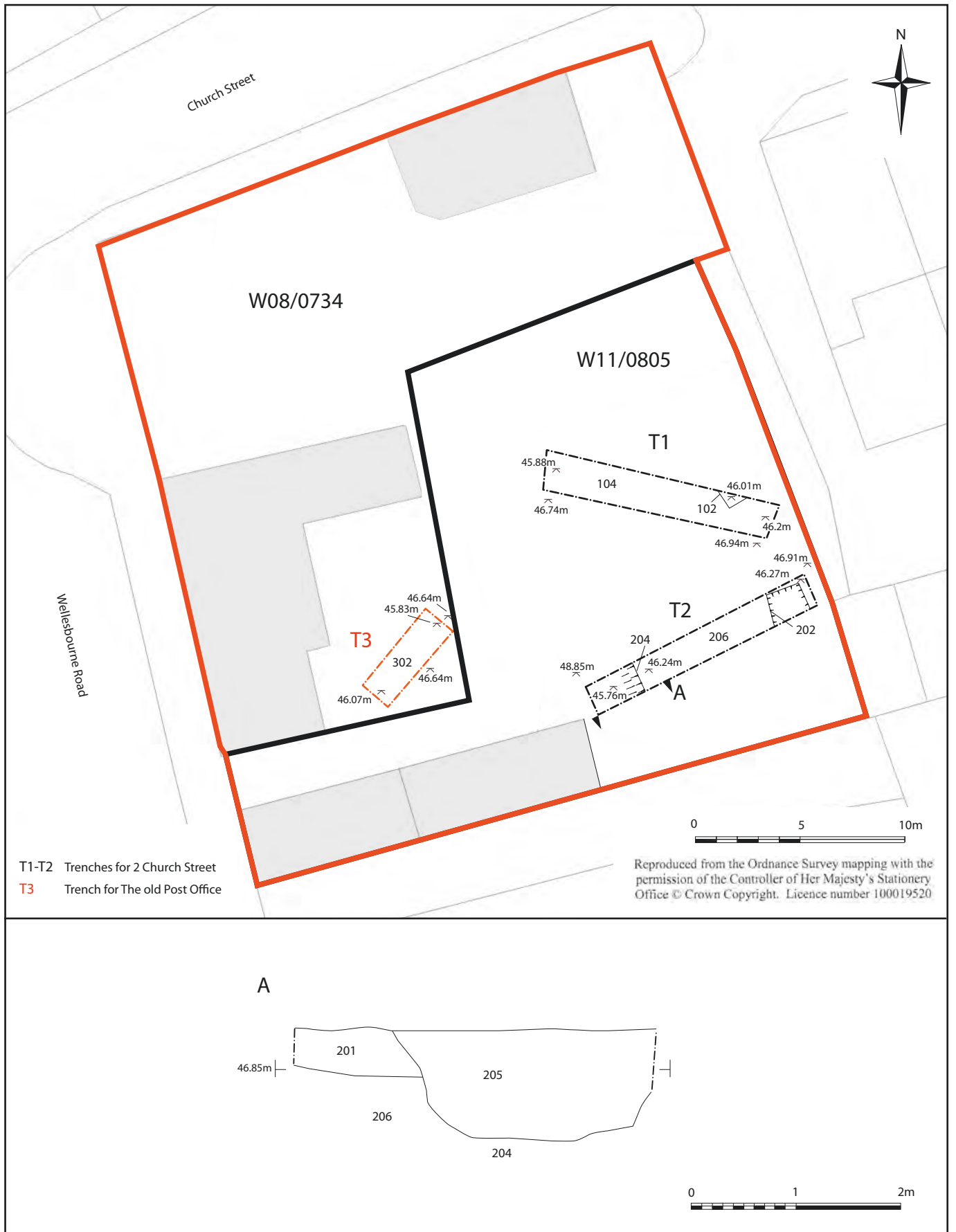


Fig 5: Trenches excavated and section A



Fig 6: View west along Trench 1



Fig 7: Ditch 204 in Trench 2



Fig 8: View of Trench 3