

31, The Crescent, Brinklow, Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1599

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: 31 The Crescent, Brinklow
Commissioned by: David Gordon
Project Report No. 1599
Site Code: BK15
Planning Reference: R15/0001
Planning Authority: Rugby
Planning Archaeologist: John Robinson
National Grid Reference: SP 4368 7971
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SUMMARY

An archaeological trial trench was excavated on behalf of David Gordon on a site adjacent to the medieval market place. A range of medieval features were exposed including a ditch, a pit and a post-hole, along with two undated post-holes. A wide range of medieval pottery was recovered from the overlying cultivation zone. The evidence suggests that the proposed development will impact on some archaeological deposits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council for the construction of a new dwelling to the rear of no 31, The Crescent, Brinklow, Rugby. A condition of planning permission requires the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological works.

1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which had been approved by the Planning Authority.

1.3 The fieldwork was completed in December (11th and 14th) 2015 during which time it rained heavily overnight. This report presents the results of that work. The site archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum (site code BK15).

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The site is located on the western side of The Crescent to the rear of No 31 in what is currently a garden. It is centred around National Grid Reference SP 4369 7971 (Fig 1).

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Mercia Mudstone Group (BGS 2015).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area may be a Neolithic or Bronze Age round barrow (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No MWA 6009) which can be inferred from 'low' element in the place-name Brinklow: Low derives from the ancient term for tumulus or barrow (Dugdale 1730, 218; Lilley 1994, 54). Such a barrow may have been sited on the ridge on which the later castle was built, to the east of the church. A Neolithic or Bronze Age flint has been found to the south of the castle (MWA 4419).

3.2 A major Roman road, the Fosse Way, runs to the east of the site, partially beneath the castle, although to the north of this its precise alignment is uncertain (MWA 4759). In 1932 a number of Roman coins, including one of Valens dated to AD 364-78, were found in the garden of the school house, which impinges on the outer ditch of the medieval castle (MWA 6010). Roman period pottery was found during an observation in the churchyard in 2004 (MWA 9863). Lilley speculates that the rectilinear form of the field boundaries around the castle is suggestive of a Roman settlement site or station (Lilley 1994, 52) however suggestions that the inner bailey of the medieval castle incorporated the western half of a Roman earthwork are thought tenuous.

3.3 Brinklow (MWA 9496) is not mentioned by name in Domesday, at which time it is likely to have formed part of the larger parish of Smite (VCH 1951, 42; Lilley 1994, 54, 58). The most prominent topographical feature of Brinklow is the fine motte and bailey castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, crowning the hill just to the east of the church (SAM 21547; MWA 3656, MWA 12301, 12302). The castle was originally timber and there is no evidence it was ever rebuilt in stone. The defences may well have gone out of use within 100 years of its construction but buildings within the baileys might have remained in use for somewhat longer.

3.4 To the south, south-east and east of the castle are the remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation (MWA 7172). The ridge and furrow immediately east and south-east of the motte defines a triangular enclosure attached to the castle, which may have been used by its inhabitants.

3.5 By 1169 Brinklow was the seat of the court of the Brinklow Hundred and by 1218 it had been granted a market charter. It has been considered likely that The Crescent itself represents the site of the medieval market place (Lilley 1994). By 1307 Brinklow had gained the status of a borough and was a small market town (Lilley 1994, 54-5). However, the last record of a burgage within the borough, a plot of land held under burgage tenure, is in a deed of 1473 (Mark Booth, pers. comm., SBT DR 10/106). This probably represents the last few years of the borough. The market is not mentioned by Dugdale in his 1656 history of Warwickshire and had probably died out.

3.6 The church of St John the Baptist dates back to the 13th century but was rebuilt in the 15th century, and the only part of the 13th-century church that remains is the chancel (MWA

3655; VCH 1951, 219). The church was much restored in the 19th century. A 15th-century floor tile is recorded as a casual find from the church (MWA 3665).

3.7 The properties either side of the Crescent to the north-west of the castle bailey appear likely to have formed the earliest part of the medieval settlement (Lilley 1994). This area includes the medieval church, and the motte and bailey castle. Medieval pottery was found in the garden of the school house, which impinges on the outer ditch of the medieval castle, in 1932 (MWA 5480). Work at the rear of Grove Hall revealed residual medieval pottery (EWA 956), while recording at 47 and 49 The Crescent (EWA 6814) revealed a backfilled pond which may have been open in the medieval period (MWA 8796).

3.8 An archaeological watching brief at No 29 The Crescent (EWA 6738) found a relatively large amount of pottery dating from the 12th-14th centuries, but no features (MWA 8743), while observation at 44 and 46 The Crescent recorded only post-medieval features it did also recover a fragment of 14th/15th century floor tile and pottery dating from the late 15th/16th century up to the 20th century (EWA 7650).

3.9 Archaeological recording between 28 and 30 Broad Street (EWA 6807) revealed a probable property boundary ditch, but no evidence of medieval structures (MWA 8792). An archaeological watching brief carried out at The Church Hall, Broad Street in 2009 did not record any significant archaeological features, finds or deposits (EWA 9453). Medieval pottery was found during excavations at 'The Motte' Ell Lane (MWA 19167, EWA 10206).

3.11 The village expanded to the south-west in the post-medieval period. Archaeological recording at The Dun Cow in 2003 found post-medieval material, but no medieval features or finds (EWA 7347). Archaeological work (EWA 7034) in the southern part of the village has recorded an 18th-century boundary wall (MWA 8966). The Rectory (MWA 3659) was built in the early 19th century.

3.12 The earliest map of the area dates to 1793 (WRO CR 2026/24) and shows the property along the street frontage and the former canal to the rear. There are no buildings within the area of the new development. There are none shown on the parish map of Brinklow of 1838 (WRO Z 262 (L)) or the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 (Landmark 2003, Fig 2) when the development site is depicted as an orchard.

3.13 An archaeological watching brief undertaken during redevelopment of The Brae (EWA 9859) failed to identify any medieval or otherwise significant deposits. A layer of greyish brown clay loam that contained a variety of medieval and later pottery sherds probably developed during the cultivation of allotments in the early 1900s (Jones and Gethin 2010).

3.14 The site lies to the rear of Tudor House, a Grade II listed building (National Heritage List for England number 1233433) forming part of a large timber framed structure with jettied wings at either end, facing out on to The Crescent. The listing states that the building is 16th century in date and it has now been split into three separate properties.

Further HER records for Brinklow:

Monuments

MWA 3658	Early 18th C House (National Heritage List for England number 1299534)
MWA 3664	Site of a Toll House
MWA 3669	Site of a Brewery or Malthouse
MWA 3670	Brewery or Malthouse
MWA 3668	Smithy
MWA 6861	Smithy
MWA 3661	Disused Canal
MWA 3666	Dovecote
MWA 3667	Smithy
MWA 3662	Congregational Chapel
MWA 4788	Toll Road
MWA 13432	Bulls Head Inn
MWA 13433	White Lion Inn
MWA 13434	Raven public house

Events

EWA 7430	Further Observation at St John's Church
EWA 9986	Strip, map and sample excavation, 5 Coventry Road

4 AIMS AND METHODS

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

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

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

5 RESULTS

5.1 A single trial trench 1.6m wide and 15m long was excavated using a 1.5T mini-excavator with a 0.9m wide toothless ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Topsoil and overburden was removed in shallow spits to the top of the geological natural yellowish brown clay (3).

5.2 The geological natural was cut by several archaeological features.

Medieval

5.3 Ditch 8 had moderately steep sides 1.1m wide, a flat base up to 0.18m deep and was filled with dark greyish brown clay with occasional charcoal flecks (9) which yielded sherds of 13th/14th century pottery.

5.4 Sub-oval pit 6 had very steep sides 0.53m wide, an uneven base 0.13m deep and was filled with greyish brown clay with occasional charcoal flecks (7). Several sherds of 13th/14th century pottery were recovered from this fill.

5.5 Posthole 10 was 0.4m in diameter and filled with very dark greyish brown clay (11) which yielded a sherd of medieval pottery. This feature was flooded before it could be photographed.

Undated

5.6 Postholes 4 and 14 remained undated. Posthole 4, 0.38m in diameter and 0.05m deep was filled with dark greyish brown clay with very occasional charcoal flecks (5). Posthole 14, 0.44m wide and up to 0.07m deep was filled with greyish brown clay (15).

5.7 The archaeological features were sealed under 0.38 to 0.45m of dark greyish brown silty clay (2) which seemed to be a cultivation layer. 42 sherds of medieval pottery with a date range from the 12th to the 16th century, were recovered from this layer.

Modern

5.8 Service trench 11 was filled by reddish brown clay (12).

5.9 Between 0.28 and 0.30m of very dark greyish brown clay loam topsoil (1) sealed the trench and produced a range of pottery including medieval and 19th century sherds along with occasional animal bone. The 19th century pottery included part of a James Keiller and sons marmalade jar.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The trial trench has established that archaeological deposits survive in the area proposed for development. The features, although shallow, have been dated by pottery to the medieval period.

6.2 This plot to the rear of Tudor House may have had its origins in the early 13th century at the time of the founding of the market. The archaeological features recorded represent activity likely to be associated with outbuildings, small scale animal husbandry, light industrial activity and waste disposal.

6.3 The pottery assemblage recovered from the cultivation layer is the largest so far from any archaeological work carried out in Brinklow. The bulk of the pottery dated from the 13th to 14th century and included fragments of cooking pots and jugs. A smaller amount dated from the 15th century and into the 16th century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr David Gordon for commissioning the work.

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VCH 1951 *The Victoria County History of Warwickshire, Vol. VI, Knightlow Hundred*,
London

WRO Z 262 (L) 1838 *Map of the Parish of Brinklow*, William Phillips, Warwickshire County
Record Office.



1. 31 The Crescent



2. Trial trench looking north



3. Posthole 4



4. Pit 6



5. Ditch 8



6. Posthole 14

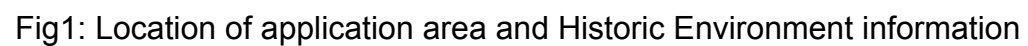
APPENDICES

A List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Depth</i>
1	Topsoil	Very Dark greyish brown clay loam	0.28-0.30m
2	Layer	Dark greyish brown silty clay	0.38-0.45m
3	Geological natural	Yellowish brown clay	
4	Post-hole	Sub-round, 0.38m diameter	0.05m
5	Post-hole fill	Greyish brown clay	
6	Pit	Steep sides and uneven base, 0.53m wide	0.13m
7	Pit fill	Greyish brown clay	
8	Ditch	Moderately steep sides and flat base, 1.1m wide	0.18m
9	Ditch fill	Dark greyish brown clay	
10	Post-hole	Sub-round, 0.40m diameter	
11	Post-hole fill	Dark greyish brown clay	
12	Service trench	Modern, unexcavated	
13	Service trench fill	Reddish brown clay	
14	Posthole	Sub-round, 0.44m diameter	0.07m
15	Posthole fill	Dark greyish brown clay loam	

B List of Finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Pottery	6	13th-19th century
1	Animal bone	1	Medieval or post-medieval
1	Door knob	1	19th century
2	Pottery	42	12th-16th century
7	Pottery	4	13th-14th century
9	Pottery	11	13th-14th century
9	Roof tile	1	13th-14th century



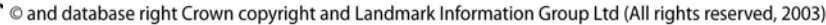


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

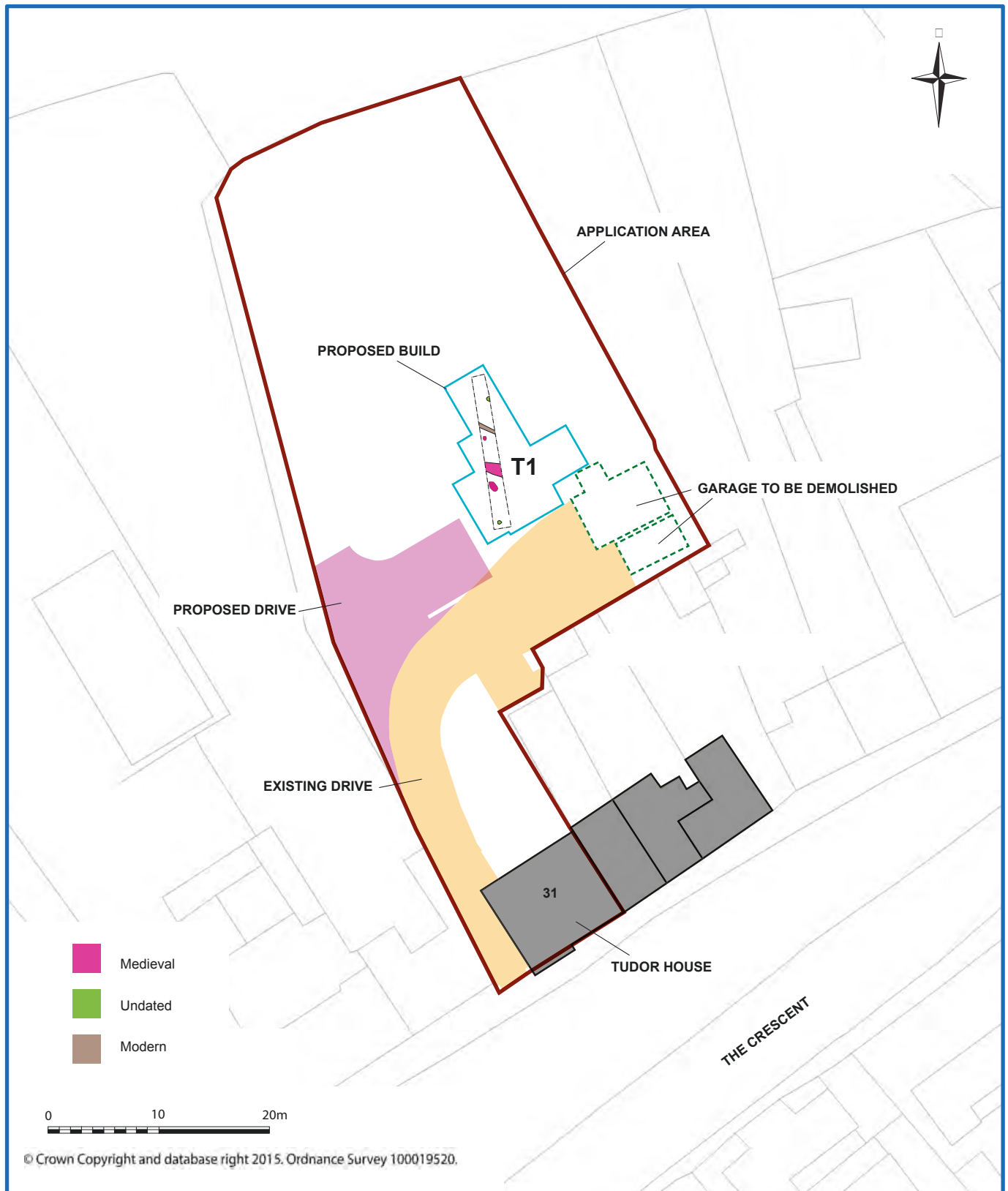


Fig 3: Location of excavated trench

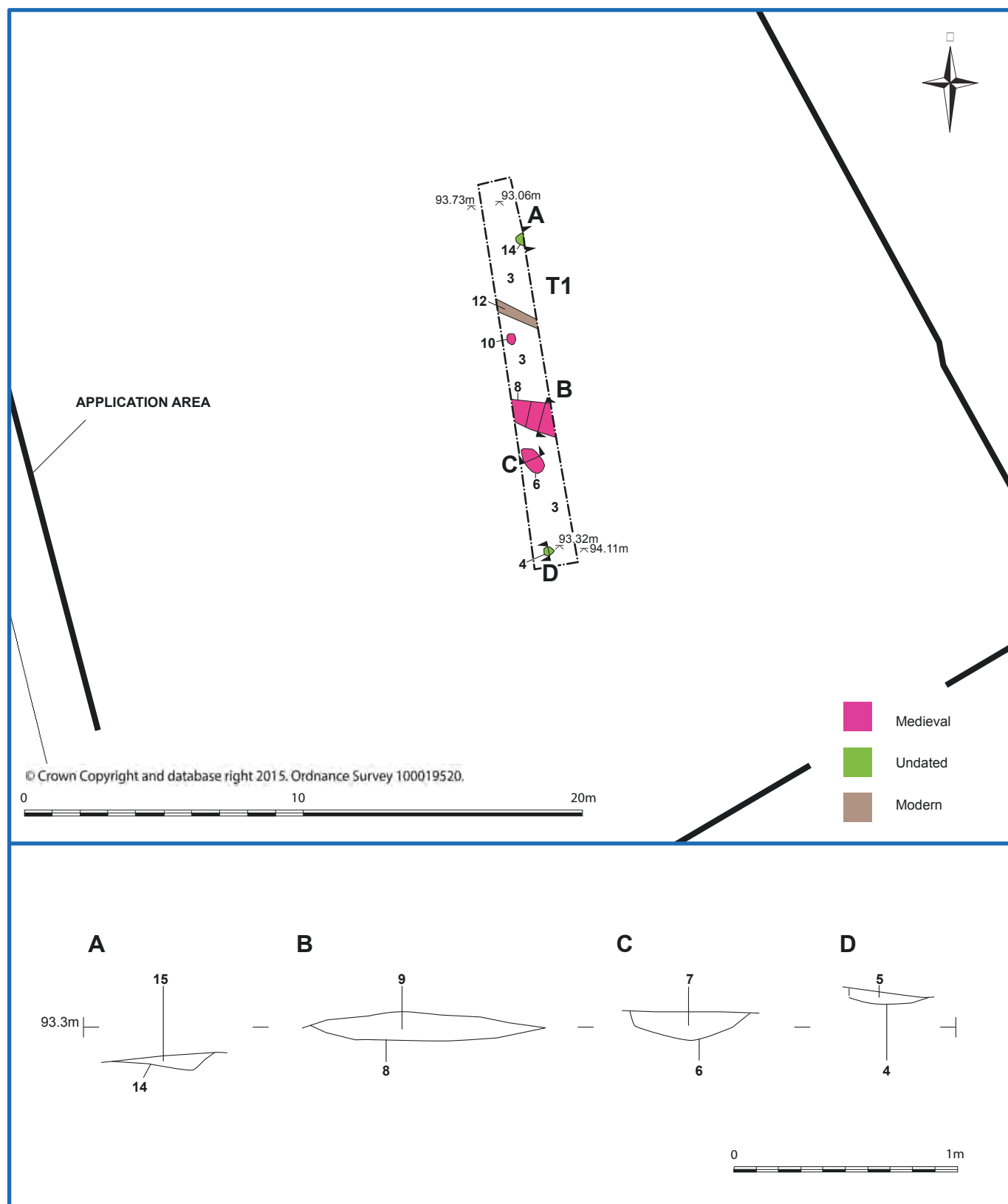


Fig 4: Detail of trial trench and sections A - D