

Land to the Rear of 227 High Street, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1445
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*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: 227 High Street, Henley in Arden
Commissioned by: Mr M Fitzpatrick of The Sandpiper Group
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SUMMARY

Two archaeological trial trenches excavated to the rear of the medieval frontage revealed a ditch and a narrow gully. The ditch was visible in both trenches. Small amounts of pottery of 13th to 14th century date recovered from the ditch and the gully suggest that the features probably formed some kind of land division within the rear area of the medieval plot in which they are located.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the construction of two semi-detached dwellings for four 1 bed apartments and associated parking, to the rear of 227 High St, Henley in Arden. The development site is within the historic core of Henley in Arden and was likely to contain significant archaeological deposits.

1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire was commissioned to conduct a field evaluation based on a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Planning Authority in order to provide further information regarding the potential for the mitigation of any archaeological remains on the site.

1.3 This report presents the results of the fieldwork which was undertaken in May 2014. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code HH14.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The site is located to the rear of the High Street in Henley in Arden at National Grid Reference SP1514 6573. The underlying geology of the area is recorded as Alluvium, with adjacent Mercia Mudstone (British Geological Survey 1989). The site is flat, but was overgrown at the time of the evaluation and peppered with tree stumps of various sizes.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The site lies within the medieval town of Henley in Arden (Warwickshire Historic Environment Number MWA 9117) but there have been no previous archaeological interventions on the site itself. The HER contains numerous records for the immediate environs, although no known sites or finds are recorded within the application area.

3.2 There was a significant chance that medieval and post-medieval deposits, particularly those associated with industry, rubbish disposal and subsistence, could survive on the site.

The construction of the permitted development could have a serious impact on any deposits that survive.

3.3 Medieval Henley-in-Arden (MWA 9117; Fig 1) developed as a trading centre for the earlier settlement of Beaudesert to the east, which itself developed around the earthwork castle of the De Montfort family (MWA 1220, Scheduled Ancient Monument Number 21510) and the parish church of St Nicholas (MWA 1218, MWA 1221). The earliest reference to the castle dates to 1140 when Thurstan de Montfort was granted the right to hold a market on Sundays at his castle of Beaudesert (VCH 1945, 45). The castle had a series of large fishponds (MWA 1219). The first reference to Henley, which mentions a mill (MWA 1222), occurs in 1185 (VCH 1945, 208). It is likely that the original market lay in or close to the castle but then moved to a site to the west on the main road from Stratford to Birmingham. In 1220 another charter was granted for a Monday market at Henley, but when this was confirmed in 1226 the location is described as Beaudesert, which may mean that the names were interchangeable.

3.4 Whatever the case it is clear that when the De Montforts decided, either in the late 12th century (Aston and Bond 1976, 89) or in 1220 (Slater 1981, 56), to develop trade in the area further by creating a new town it was the Henley site that they chose. New town creation by lords who hoped to profit from market tolls and rents for building plots was common in this period. The new town of Henley was laid out along either side of the main road with a series of long thin plots typical of medieval planning; these combined a maximum area with a minimum of valuable street frontage. The medieval property pattern survives more or less to this day. Within each property the main building, house and/or shop normally lay along the street frontage with extensions and outbuildings at right angles behind. The rears of the plots might be used as gardens and yards with further outbuildings and rubbish pits, or occasionally for industrial or craft activities such as tanning or smithing.

3.5 Beaudesert Castle had gone out of use by the early 16th century, though its earthworks still survive, but Henley prospered in comparison developing into a thriving market town. By 1367 it had acquired its own church, dedicated to St John the Baptist (MWA 1226), although it remained a chapel of Wootton Wawen until 1914; the existing building is largely 19th-century. There was also a Guild Hall, built in the 15th century, and a market hall (MWA 1228) fronting onto the west side of the High Street; this survived from at least the late 16th century up until the mid-19th century when it was demolished (VCH 1945, 206). There is a surviving medieval market cross (MWA 1227, SAM County Number 56). The site of the village stocks is recorded not far from the market hall (MWA 7549). A watermill is recorded

at Henley in 1185 and three mills were mentioned in 1326 (MWA 1222). A detailed building survey of 150 High Street revealed evidence for it dating back to the mid- to later 14th century (MWA 8383; EWA 2710); a number of listed buildings dating from the 15th-16th centuries), testify to continuing prosperity. The Baptist chapel is 19th-century (MWA 2450).

3.6 Previous archaeological work in Henley has revealed traces of medieval occupation although much has been destroyed by subsequent development. An archaeological evaluation at 116/118 High Street revealed two medieval pits to the rear of the development area together with a number of post-medieval boundary features (Warwickshire Museum 1997c; MWA 7969; EWA 978). Archaeological observation at 199 High Street revealed an occupation layer containing 13th- to 15th-century pottery and high levels of 19th-century activity (Warwickshire Museum 1997d; MWA 8178, 8179; EWA 3318). Archaeological observation at Beaudesert Lane in 1994 recorded a layer containing 13th- to 15th-century pottery below a considerable build-up of 19th-century material (Warwickshire Museum 1994; MWA 7394). An archaeological watching brief carried out in 1992 to the rear of the Red Lion public house revealed an 18th-century cess pit (MWA 7219).

3.7 To the north of the present development area observation of foundation trenches to the rear of 50-75 High Street also revealed no medieval occupation (Warwickshire Museum 1997a; MWA 7976) and later work to the rear of 51-63 High Street revealed modern disturbance had destroyed any archaeological remains (Warwickshire Museum 1997b; MWA 8189). An archaeological evaluation at 85-87 High Street in 1995 examined a burgage plot, any of whose medieval remains had been destroyed by 19th-century and later activity (MWA 7491, Warwickshire Museum 1996a). Across the High Street on the site of the old Fire Station archaeological observation recorded a similar situation with no pre-19th-century material or structures having survived (MWA 7490; EWA 4148, Warwickshire Museum 1996b). At the south end of the town archaeological observation did not reveal any medieval remains (MWA 7970). Observation of groundworks to the north at 9-17 High Street in 2004 recorded evidence of post medieval activity, though here much of the groundworks had been completed before archaeological observation took place (Warwickshire Museum 2005).

3.8 The Tithe Apportionment map of 1843 (WRO CR 569/278 pt 1, Fig 2) shows a series of narrow tenements stretching back to the river from the street frontage. These originated as medieval properties, some of which had been subdivided and others joined together over time. In medieval times the area of number 227, the garden and rear plot would probably have covered two such properties.

3.9 There are a large number of historic public houses on the High Street in Henley (MWAs 13409, 13410, 13411, 13412, 13413, 13414, 13415, 13416, 13426, 13428, 13429, 13430) some of which are also Listed Buildings (Listed Buildings shown in black on Fig 1).

3.10 By 1887 the front of the site appears to be occupied by three adjoining buildings, with a further building immediately to the rear. The rear of the property is not shown as being occupied by any buildings, and the same situation exists in 1905 (Figs 2 and 3).

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 Henley 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 trenches were opened up by a JCB excavator. Topsoil and other overburden were removed under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist until either the upmost archaeological horizon or geological natural was reached.

5 RESULTS

Trench 1

5.1 Trench 1 was 10.5m long and 1.6m wide. It was machined down to geological natural deposits, a maximum depth of 1.1m below the current ground surface (70.48m above Ordnance Datum, a.O.D.). The geological natural consisted of greenish grey clay (107). This was cut by a ditch (105) running in an approximately north-south direction. It was 1.2m wide, up to 0.4m deep and was filled by a dark greyish brown clay with occasional charcoal flecks (106). At the east end of the trench the geological natural was disturbed by the large tree roots for a former sycamore tree, the large stump of which remained in the south-east corner of the site. It was also obscured by a large service trench (103) believed to be an electricity cable trench. The cables were not exposed and the trench was filled by brick rubble hardcore (104). In the undisturbed area of the trench the geological natural was

overlaid by between 0.10m and 0.20m of greyish brown clay loam (102). A single sherd of Midlands Yellow pottery dating from between approximately 1540 to 1720 was recovered from this layer. Layer 102 was covered by between 0.15 and 0.30m of greyish brown clay loam (101) which was sealed by between 0.35m and 0.45m of very dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil.

Trench 2

5.2 Trench 2 was 10m long and 1.6m wide. It was excavated down to the geological natural clay (207) which was reached at a depth of between 0.91 and 1.24m below the current ground surface. This was cut by two features, a ditch (205) and a gully (203). The narrow gully was only 0.36m wide and 0.13m deep with moderately steeply sloping sides and a rounded base. It was filled by a dark greyish brown clay loam (204) from which a single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered. The ditch (205) was 0.95m wide and up to 0.2m deep with moderately steep sides and a flattish base. It was filled by a dark greyish brown clay loam with occasional charcoal flecks (206). Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from this fill. The geological natural was overlaid by between 0.2m and 0.45m of brownish grey clay with occasional charcoal flecks (202) from which three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. It was overlaid by between 0.4 and 0.45m of greyish brown clay loam (201) which contained very occasional small fragments of roof tile and brick (not retained). This was covered by between 0.30 and 0.45m of very dark greyish brown sandy loam topsoil (200).

Deposit Sequence

5.3 The geological natural was cut by two medieval features. The ground surface they were cut from no longer exists as the overlying layer of soil in both trenches appears to have been cultivated, probably during the medieval period. Overlying the medieval strata were two distinct layers of soil which seem likely to have been cultivated until recent times. This sequence is consistent with the rear of a burgage plot in a small to medium sized town with easy access to rubbish disposal outside the confines of the property, as distinct from the centre of a large town where rubbish disposal space was at a premium.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The evaluation has established that some archaeological features of medieval date survive within the rear area of the development site. The ditch was seen in both trenches 1 and 2 and was of broadly similar dimensions in both. It is several metres inside the expected line of a rear boundary ditch of the original medieval burgage plots and therefore probably

represents some sort of subdivision of the plot, possibly between different activities. The area of tree root disturbance and electricity service trench in trench 1 occupy this approximate position and it was perhaps the softer soil of a backfilled ditch that the tree roots were following. The pottery found within the exposed medieval features shows that they were filled in during the 13th to the 14th century.

6.2 The significant archaeological deposits in trench 1 were encountered at a depth of 1.1m below the current ground surface (at 70.49m a.O.D). The significant archaeological deposits in trench 2 were exposed at a depth of 1.24m below the current ground surface (70.27m a.O.D.).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Warwickshire Museum 1996b *Archaeological Observation at Henley-in-Arden Fire and Police Station, Warwick.*

Warwickshire Museum 1997a *Archaeological Observation at 50-75 High Street, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, Warwick.*

Warwickshire Museum 1997b *Archaeological observation at 51-63 High Street, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, Warwick.*

Warwickshire Museum 1997c *Archaeological Evaluation at 116-118 High Street, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, Warwick.*

Warwickshire Museum 1997d *Archaeological Observation at 199 High Street, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, Warwick.*

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APPENDICES

A List of contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy loam
101	Layer	Greyish Brown clay loam
102	Layer	Brownish grey clay
103	Service trench	Probable electricity cabled
104	Service trench fill	Brick hardcore
105	Ditch	
106	Ditch Fill	Greyish brown clay loam
107	Geological natural	Greenish grey clay
200	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy loam
201	Layer	Greyish Brown clay loam
202	Layer	Brownish grey clay
203	Gully	
204	Gully fill	Dark greyish brown clay loam
205	Ditch	
206	Ditch fill	Dark greyish brown clay loam
207	Geological natural	Greenish grey clay

B**List of Finds**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
102	Pottery	1	16th-18th century
106	Pottery	2	13th-14th century
106	Tile	5	13th-14th century
106	A. Bone	3	13th-14th century
202	Pottery	3	13th-14th century
204	Pottery	1	13th-14th century
204	A.Bone	1	13th-14th century
206	Pottery	2	13th-14th century
206	Tile	1	13th-14th century
206	A.Bone	1	13th-14th century

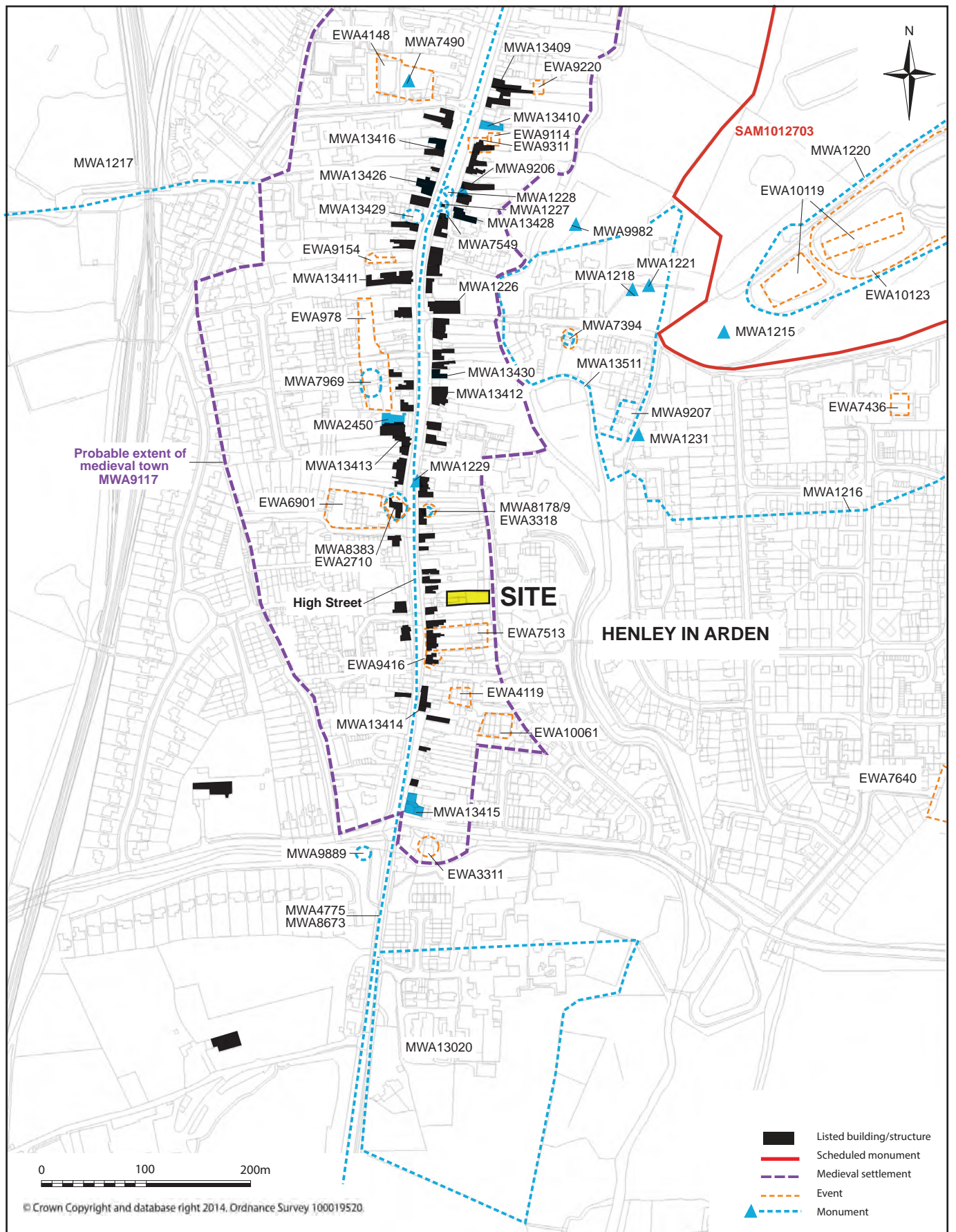


Fig 1: Site location

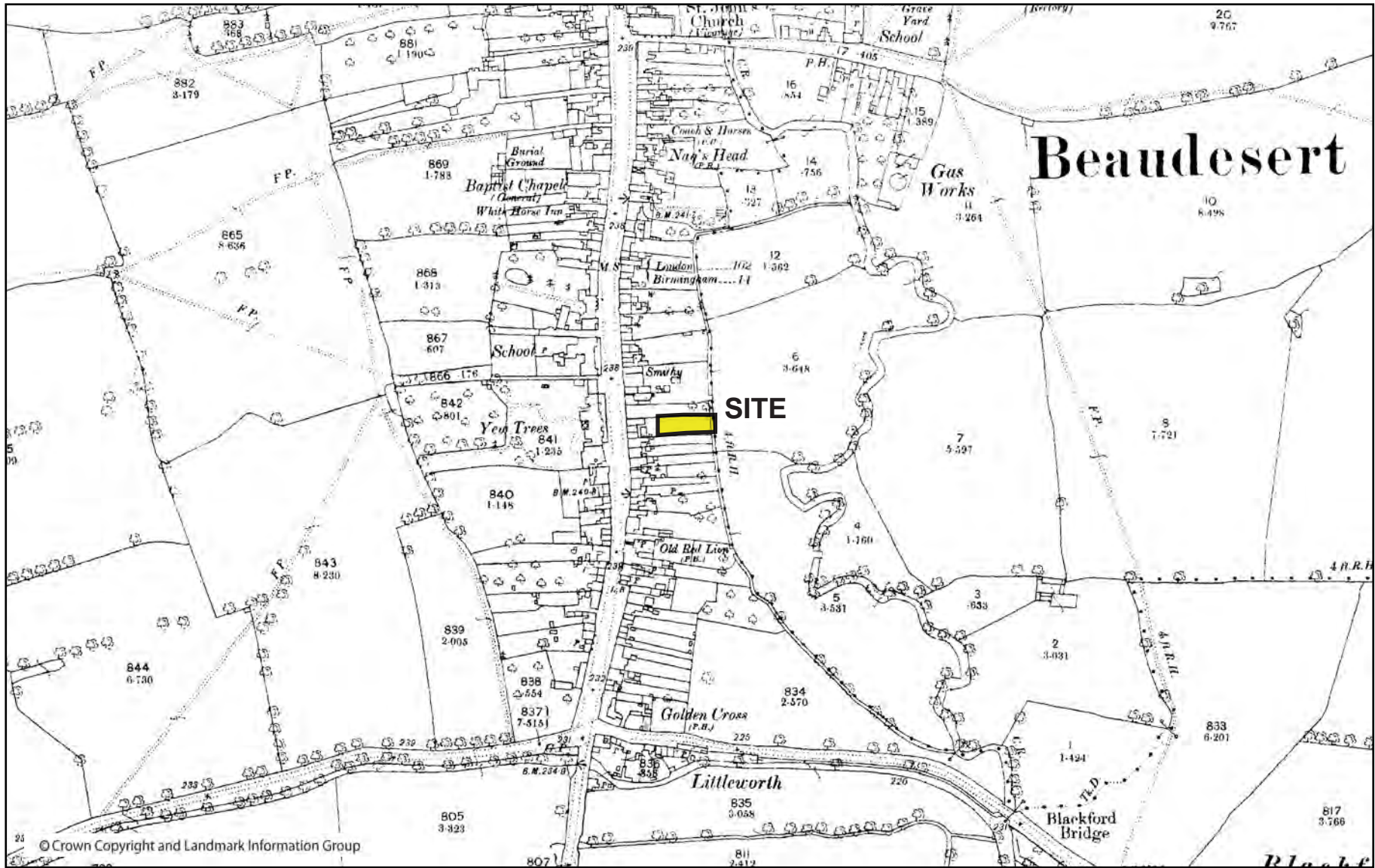


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

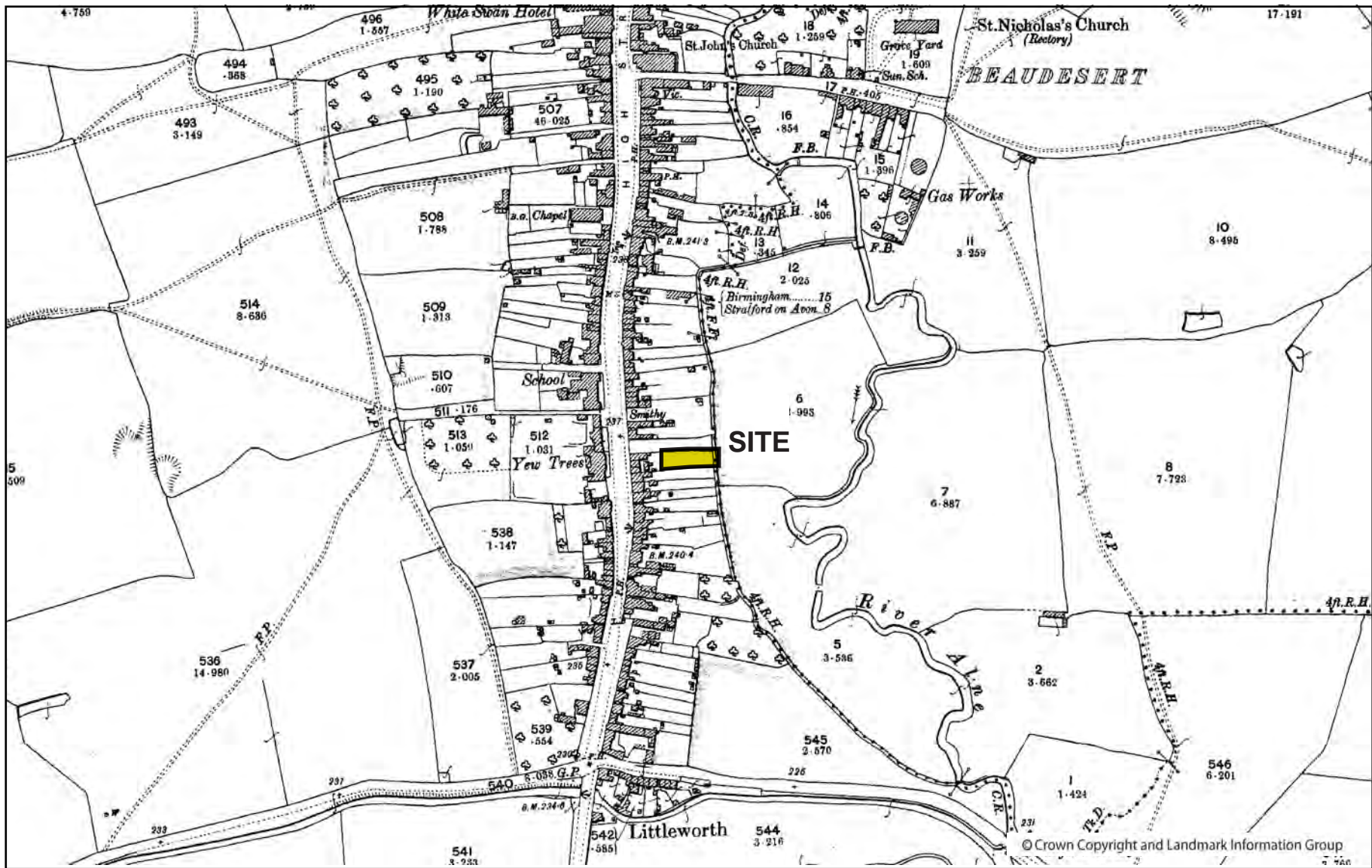
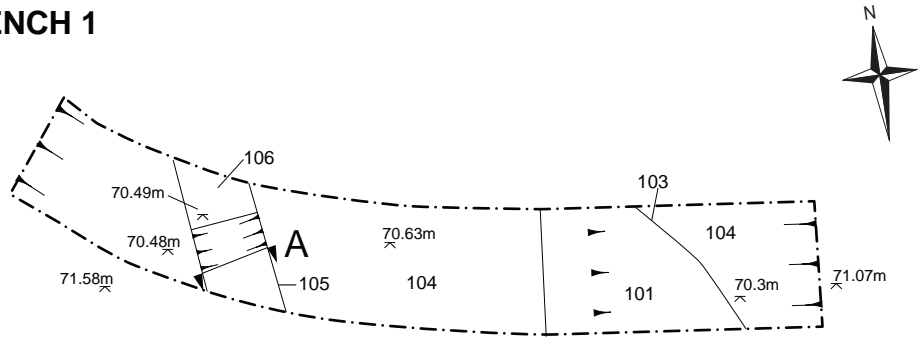


Fig 3: Detail from Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1905

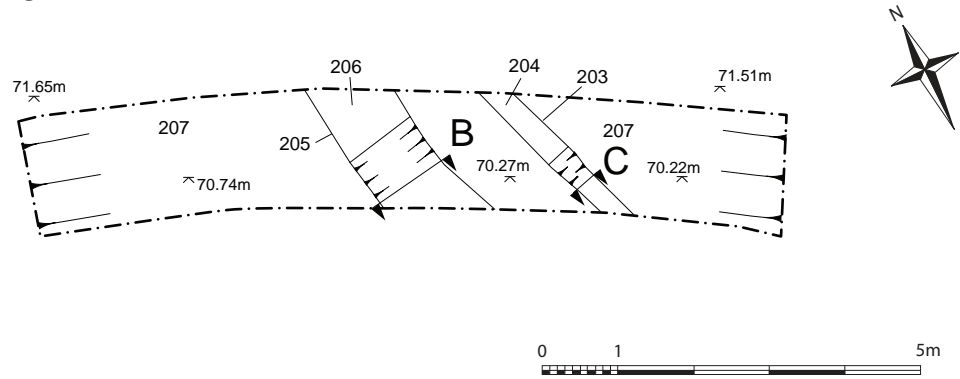


Fig 4: Location of excavated trenches

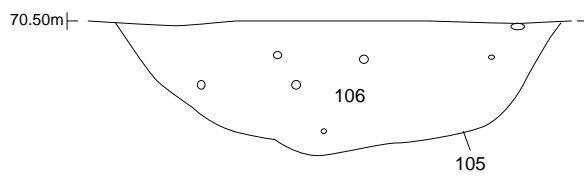
TRENCH 1



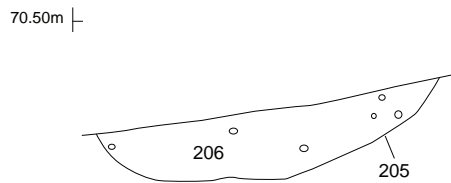
TRENCH 2



A



B



C

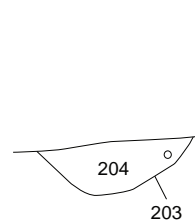


Fig 5: Plans of trenches 1 and 2 and sections A-C



Fig 6: Trench1 looking east



Fig 7: Section across feature 105



Fig 8: Trench 2 looking south-east



Fig 9: Section across gully 203



Fig 10: Section across ditch 205