

Telegraph Pole Renewal, Bruton House, Admington, Warwickshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



understanding heritage matters

Report No 1362
October 2013



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Telegraph Pole Renewal, Bruton House, Admington

Commissioned by: Phil Gill on behalf of Western Power Distribution (West Midlands) plc

Project Report No. 1362

Site Code: AB12

NGR: SP 205 463

Planning Reference: N/A

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Summary

Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted for the renewal of telegraph poles at Bruton House, Admington. This work required the excavation of several trenches located on the eastern and western edges of the deserted medieval settlement of Bruton. The trenches were observed by an archaeologist although no significant archaeological deposits were recorded. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered.

1 Introduction

1.1 Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted for the renewal of telegraph poles, at Bruton House, Admington, Warwickshire. The site lies within an area of deserted medieval settlement (Monument 1016923) near to a moated site. It was a condition of the consent that an archaeologist should be present during the groundworks.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of archaeological observation of soil stripping was commissioned from Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire and carried out on 3rd June 2013. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code AB12.

2 Location

2.1 The site is located on the north-eastern edge of Admington village in the parish of Whitchurch at National Grid Reference SP 205 463. The underlying geology of the area is Blue lias formation and Charmouth mudstone formation undifferentiated - mudstone (British Geological Survey Viewer <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/mapViewers/> accessed October 2013).

2.2 The site is within the medieval moated site and settlement of Bruton (List entry ID; 1016923) and is currently pasture land with some visible earthworks, although not in the areas of the replacement poles or associated trenches.

3 Methodology

3.1 The watching brief was designed to observe any groundworks associated with the development and record as far as possible, the nature of the archaeological resource on the site.

3.2 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area, local historical journals and other publications. Fieldwork involved an archaeologist being present during groundworks.

4 Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER) contains no records indicating pre-medieval activity in the immediate vicinity.

4.2 The place name Admington is of Anglo-Saxon origin. Gelling suggests it dates from the 9th century or later, and is derived from the personal name *Aethelhelm* (Dyer 1993, 7). The manor of Admington was recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as possessing 3½ hides and two ploughs. It was held by the church, and at the time of the survey there were 13 villagers and six slaves, suggesting a total population of around 95. By 1380 there were 31 households, despite a temporary setback during the Black Death in 1349, but this was followed by a sharp decline, probably after 1450, down to 11 by 1540 and 13 in 1575. The medieval settlement (HER MWA 8674) has two elements: Lower Admington, the location of the present site, running north of Admington Hall (HER MWA 8632) and Upper Admington running south (including a detached portion c.500m further south not on Fig 1). The tenements in Lower Admington appear to be less regular than those of Upper Admington, and may be earlier (Dyer 1992, 4-6; 1994, 8-9).

4.3 There is extensive ridge and furrow around Admington (HER MWA 6386), which gives an indication of the limits of the medieval settlement, in which the earthworks of abandoned house plots are visible today between existing houses (Dyer 1992, 4; HER MWA 6458). Immediately to the north of the Hall is a moat, possibly the site of the medieval manor house, and an associated leat (HER MWA 7026, 7027). To the south there are further earthworks (HER MWA 7028) also probably associated with the medieval manorial complex. A 'ruinous chapel' recorded in 1575 was probably just north of the Hall (Dyer 1992, 7). The road was once much wider, more in the nature of a village green, hence the older houses in the village being set well back from the modern road (Dyer 1994, 4).

4.4 To the east and north-east of Admington, in the parish of Whitchurch, are the earthworks of the deserted medieval settlement of Bruton (HER MWA 5002, 1338), which also include a moat (HER MWA 5193). The site is Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (List Entry ID 1016923); there are two areas of scheduling, the southern of which also includes part of the adjacent surviving ridge and furrow to preserve the relationship between the fields and the earthworks of the village.

5 Watching Brief

5.1 Telegraph pole renewal was observed in two areas, sites A and B (Fig 1). **Site A** was located within the likely extent of the deserted medieval settlement of Bruton. Initially a trench for the telegraph pole was excavated (Fig 2). It was 2.8m long, 0.5m wide and 1.85m deep. Brownish-yellow natural clay (201) was recorded at a depth of 0.25m. It was overlain by dark greyish-brown clay topsoil (200).

5.2 A trench for the 'stay' of the pole measured 2.7m x 0.5m and was 2m deep. A further trench between the poles was 22m long 0.8m deep and 0.5m wide. The deposits found in these trenches were comparable to those found in the telegraph pole trench.

5.3 **Site B** was located on the eastern edge of the medieval settlement of Bruton. Here three trenches were excavated. The first was for the pole itself and measured 3m x 0.5m. The 'stay' trench was 5m x 0.5m and the cable trench to the north was 6m x 0.5m. All the trenches were c.1.85m deep and deposits noted within them were yellowish-brown clay natural (101) overlain by 0.25m of dark greyish-brown topsoil (100). From the topsoil a sherd of medieval pottery was found which was probably 13th/14th century in date.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The replacement of the telegraph poles appears to have had no archaeological impact on the Scheduled Ancient Monument. The single sherd of pottery recovered is unsurprising in this context.

Acknowledgements

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr P Gill for commissioning the work on behalf of Western Power Distribution and to Ian George of English Heritage for approving the Written Scheme of Investigation.

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Appendix List of Contexts

| <i>Context</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 100 | Dark greyish-brown clay loam | Topsoil |
| 101 | Browinish-yellow clay | Natural geology |
| 200 | Dark greyish-brown clay loam | Topsoil |
| 201 | Browinish-yellow clay | Natural geology |

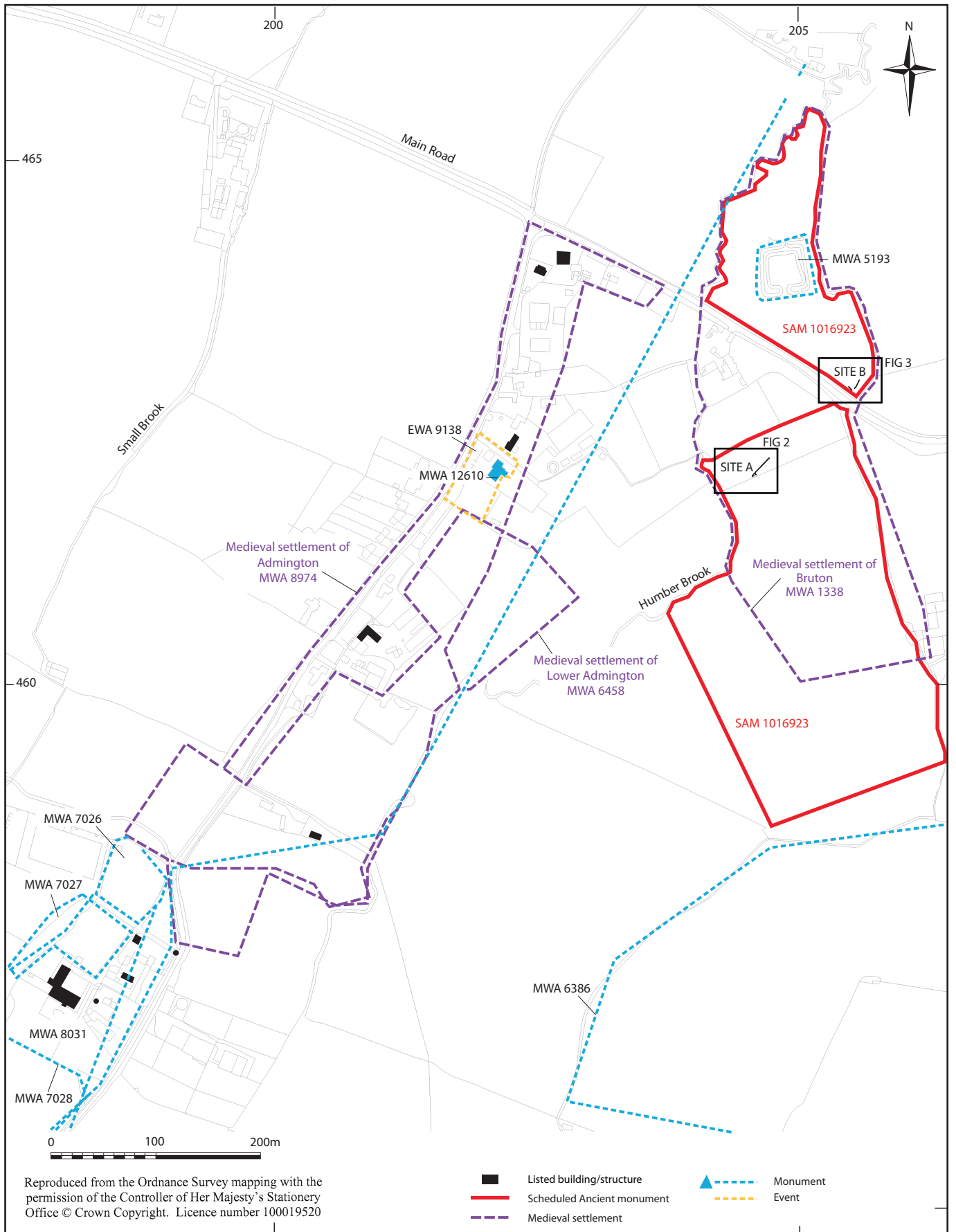


Fig 1: Location of sites A and B

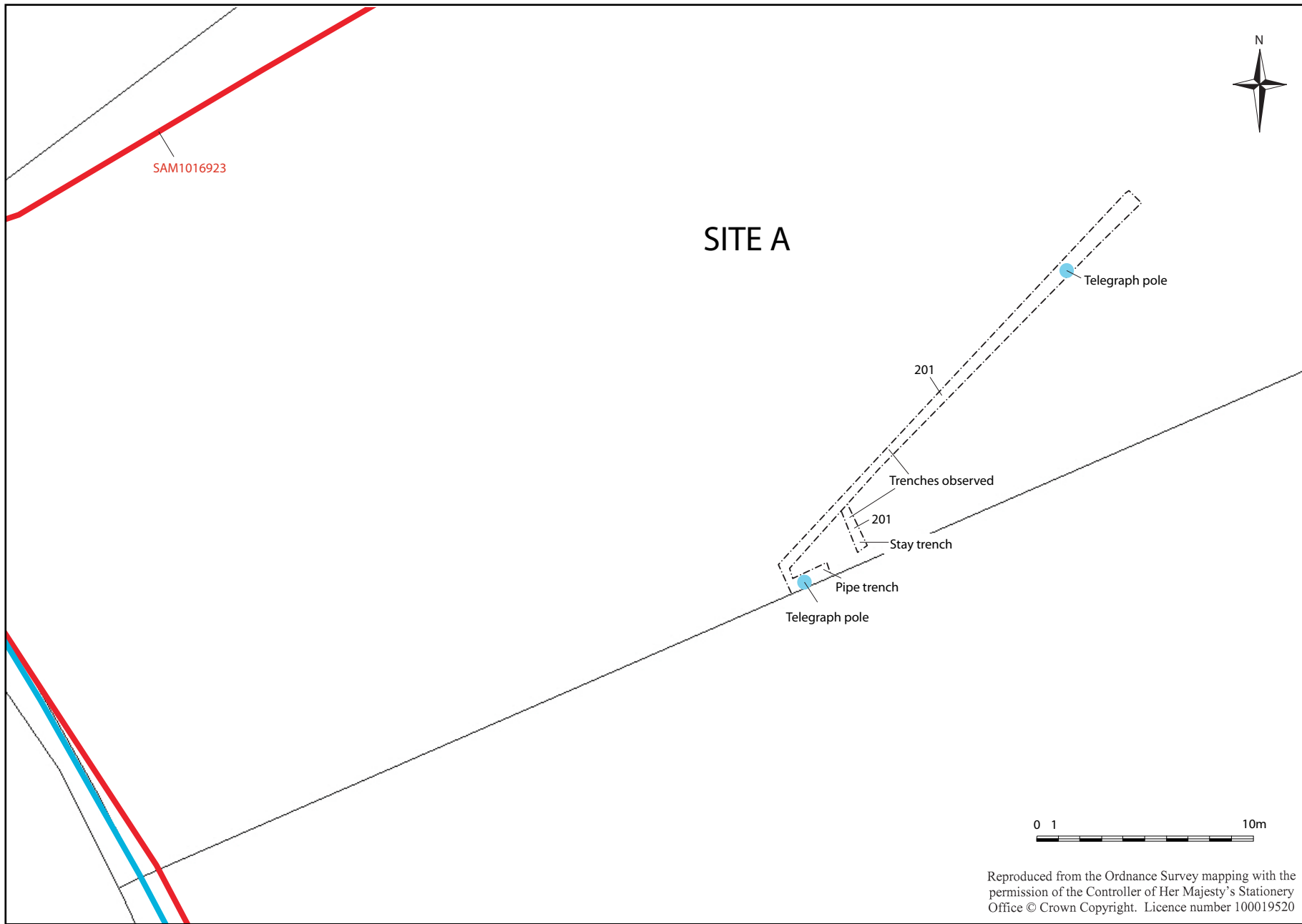
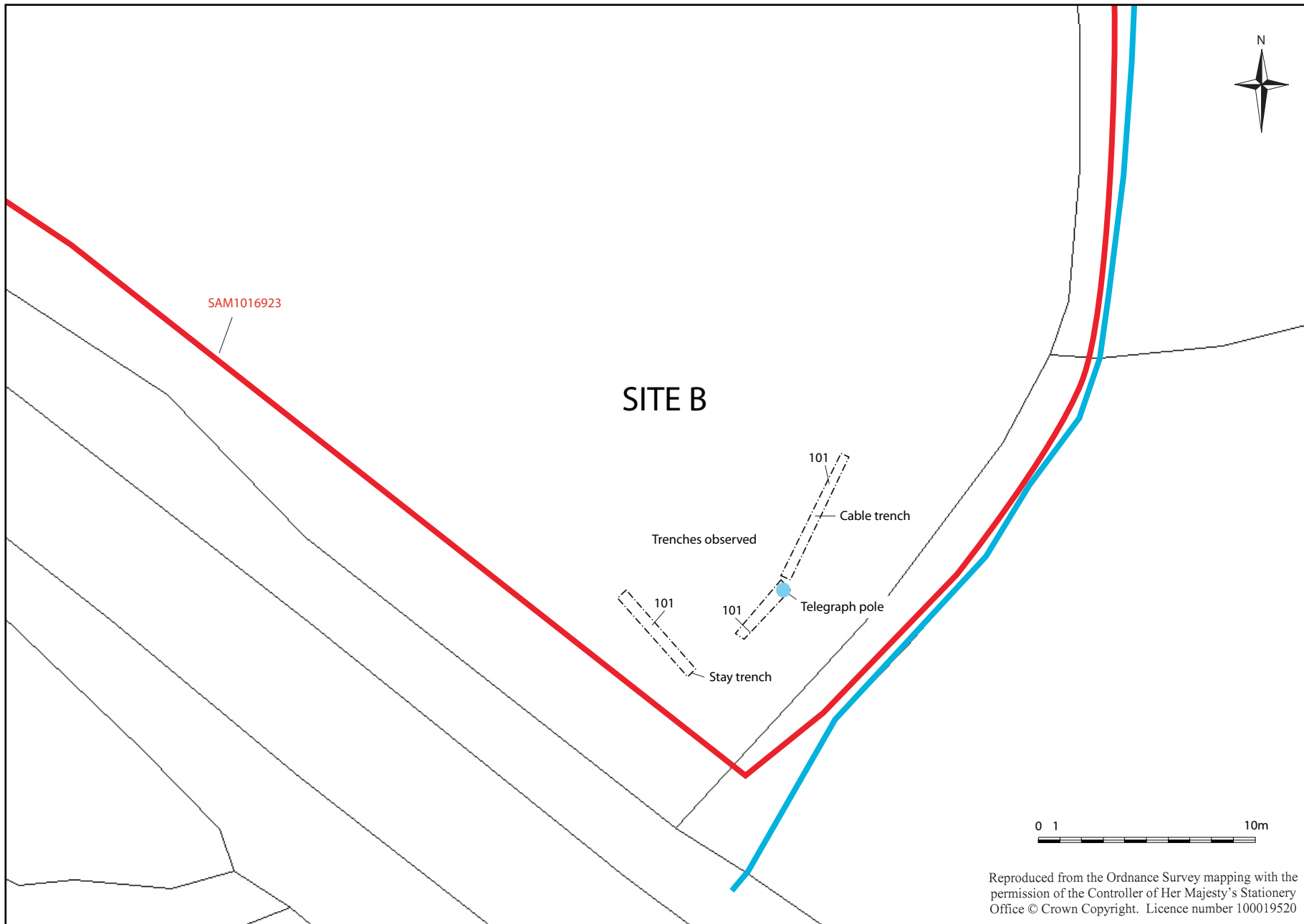


Fig 2: Location of trenches observed

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Fig 3: Location of trenches observed



Fig 4: General view of trench excavations