

31-34 New Road, Studley, Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1539

June 2015



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Rear of 31 – 34 New Road Evaluation
Commissioned by: Frampton Construction Services Ltd
Project Report No. 1539
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation consisting of two trial trenches was undertaken on behalf of Frampton Construction Services Ltd on land adjacent to the Roman Ryknield Street and within the supposed core of the medieval settlement. No archaeological features were identified and no finds were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the demolition of a factory and the erection of six dwellings in two separate units with associated parking (application Ref. 11/01104/FUL).

1.2 It was a condition of the planning permission that the applicant secure a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken in conjunction with the development.

1.3 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Planning Authority. This report presents the results of that work. The archaeological archive will be deposited at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code SN15.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The site lies on the east side of New Road in the area between Alcester Road and New Road. The site was formerly occupied by a 20th-century factory and builders yard (Fig 1). The site covers an area of c.0.10ha and lies on part of a west to east slope.

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is recorded as varying between New Inn Sand and Gravel and Alluvial fan deposits further down slope all overlying Mercia Mudstone (BGS 1989).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Studley is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 (as *Stodlei*), when the parish had a population that can be estimated at c.175 people. A priest is also mentioned in 1086, suggesting that a church was in existence by that time (VCH 1904, 334). The earliest surviving parts of the present parish church, however, belong to the early 12th century, with the main structure dating to the 14th and 15th centuries. The church, castle, and the original

focus of the settlement of Studley, lie some distance away from the Roman road, across the river to the east (MWA 570).

3.2 An Historic Environment Search carried out in March 2015 (HER search no. 15/37) revealed details of the supposed line of Ryknild Street, a major Roman road, to the east of the site marked now by the Alcester Road (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No. MWA 445). This road ran from the Fosse Way, at Bourton-on-the-Water in Gloucestershire, to Templeborough in South Yorkshire (Margary 1973, 278). It was one of the primary arterial routes of Roman Britain running roughly north-south through the centre of the province. No evidence for roadside settlement during the Roman period has been previously uncovered in Studley during archaeological fieldwork at Needle Close, Studley (MWA 7943). A watching brief was carried out in 1998 at the Cottage on the Green and finds of 18th/19th-century pottery were recovered from the topsoil, but no archaeological features observed (MWA 8331).

3.3 A watching brief was also carried out at Marcott in 2000 during groundworks for an extension (EWA 6947). A possible stone wall foundation was recorded and a number of 18th-19th century finds were recovered. Further work was carried out at Marcott in 2003 when the foundation trenches for a music room were being excavated; a few fragments of 19th-century pottery were recovered, but no archaeological finds or features relating to the medieval settlement.

3.4 No estate or tithe maps survive for the area. The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1:2500, Fig 2) shows that the area of the development was part of an orchard on the southern edge of the village.

3.4 There are a number of Listed Buildings in the village. The Manor House is 16th century with 17th-century additions. The Chestnuts dates to the 17th century, as does Tudor Walls, while The Farmhouse on The Green dates to the 18th century.

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 Two evaluation trenches were excavated within the proposed new house footprints. The trenches were machine excavated 12m long by 1.6m wide and 13m long and 1.6m wide by a 360° excavator fitted with a ditching bucket. No archaeological features were recorded in either of the two of the trenches although modern drains were recorded in both.

Trench 1

5.2 Trench 1 was located in the proposed footprint of the smaller eastern plot. A layer of geological natural silty clay with small and large pebbles (5) was revealed at a depth of 1.7m (74.99m aOD). This layer contained no other inclusions and was not cut by any features. The natural clay was overlain by a 0.38m thick layer of dark grey brown silty loam (4), which contained small fragments of brick and tile. This layer was sealed by rubble deposits totalling 1.2m thick: A mixed layer of brick fragments and mortar (3) was 0.35m to 0.4m thick and a layer of brick rubble was 0.7m to 0.8m thick and contained a large amount of 20th century building debris including brick, fireplace and concrete (2). This was particularly loose in places, although the Planning Archaeologist agreed to the use of a toothed bucket to allow the removal of compacted or concreted deposits. The ditching bucket was reused to clear the remainder of the deposits.

5.3 The layers of rubble were covered by a make-up layer and concrete slab (1), which formed the ground surface. No finds were recovered from Trench 1 and no archaeological features were recorded.

5.4 The trench was crossed by a modern ceramic drain, which cut into layer 2. This was left in situ.

Trench 2

5.5 A similar, if slightly less deep, sequence of deposits was revealed in Trench 2, which was located in the proposed footprint of the western dwelling plot. Geological natural clay (9) was revealed at a depth of 1.45m (75.44m aOD). The light greyish brown clay included

patches of reddish brown clay and large pebbles. No features were revealed cutting into the natural clay.

5.6 The natural clay was sealed by a layer of dark grey brown silty clay loam (8) which was 0.3m thick and extended across the limit of the trench. This contained brick fragments and was almost certainly the same deposit as layer 4 in Trench 1.

5.7 The layer was cut by a short length of brick wall foundation (10). The foundation extended for 1.4m along the northern limit of excavation and was composed of four courses of mortar bonded brick. The foundation was overlain by a 0.3m thick layer of brick fragments, mortar and other building debris (7) and was covered by a 0.4m to 0.5m thick layer of loose brick rubble (6), which were the same deposits as recorded in trench 1

5.8 The trench was crossed by a modern drain, which cut into layer 6. This live surface water drain was left undisturbed.

5.9 The layers of rubble, 6 and 7, were sealed by a make-up layer and concrete slab (1), which formed the ground surface. No finds were recovered from this trench and no archaeological features were recorded.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The evaluation revealed no evidence for Roman roadside activity or medieval settlement. No stratified deposits or features pre-dating the post-medieval period were revealed and no unstratified medieval finds were present.

6.2 The investigation showed that the earliest activity was the presence of an extensive garden or horticultural soil, which also included building debris. This appeared to be in use during the latter part of the 18th century through the 19th century and was probably associated with orchards or other open areas at the edge of the settlement of Studley.

6.3 The development area was clearly subject to intense dumping or levelling as up to 1.7m of rubble was dumped on the site. Whilst the extent of modern activity appears to diminish slightly on the western side of the site the quantity of material suggests this extends across the site. It is likely that the later 19th century and 20th century open areas, situated to the rear of street fronting properties, had a sloping aspect and this was levelled for the formation of a builders yard and later factory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Steve Frampton for commissioning the work and for providing the machine on site.

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WRO QS 75/110 *Studley Inclosure Map of 1824*, Warwickshire Record Office.

APPENDIX

List of contexts

Trench 1

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	make up/concrete slab	Modern yard
2	Layer	Brick rubble
3	Layer	Brick rubble
4	Layer	
5	Layer	Natural

Trench 2

6	Layer	Brick rubble
7	Layer	Brick rubble
8	Layer	
9	Layer	Natural
10	Wall foundation	



Photograph 1. Trench 1



Photograph 2. Trench 2

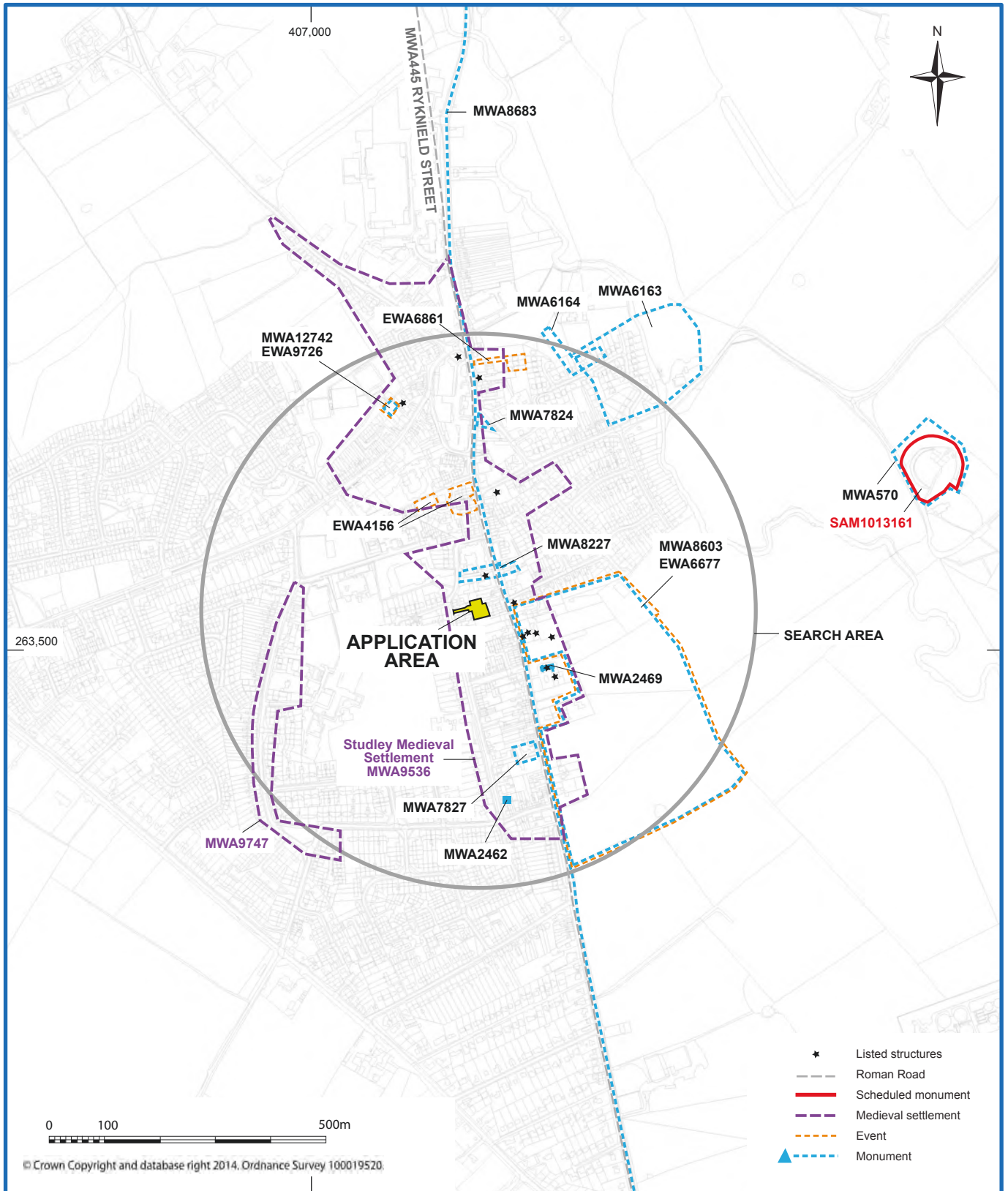


Fig 1: Location of Application Area and Historic Environment Information

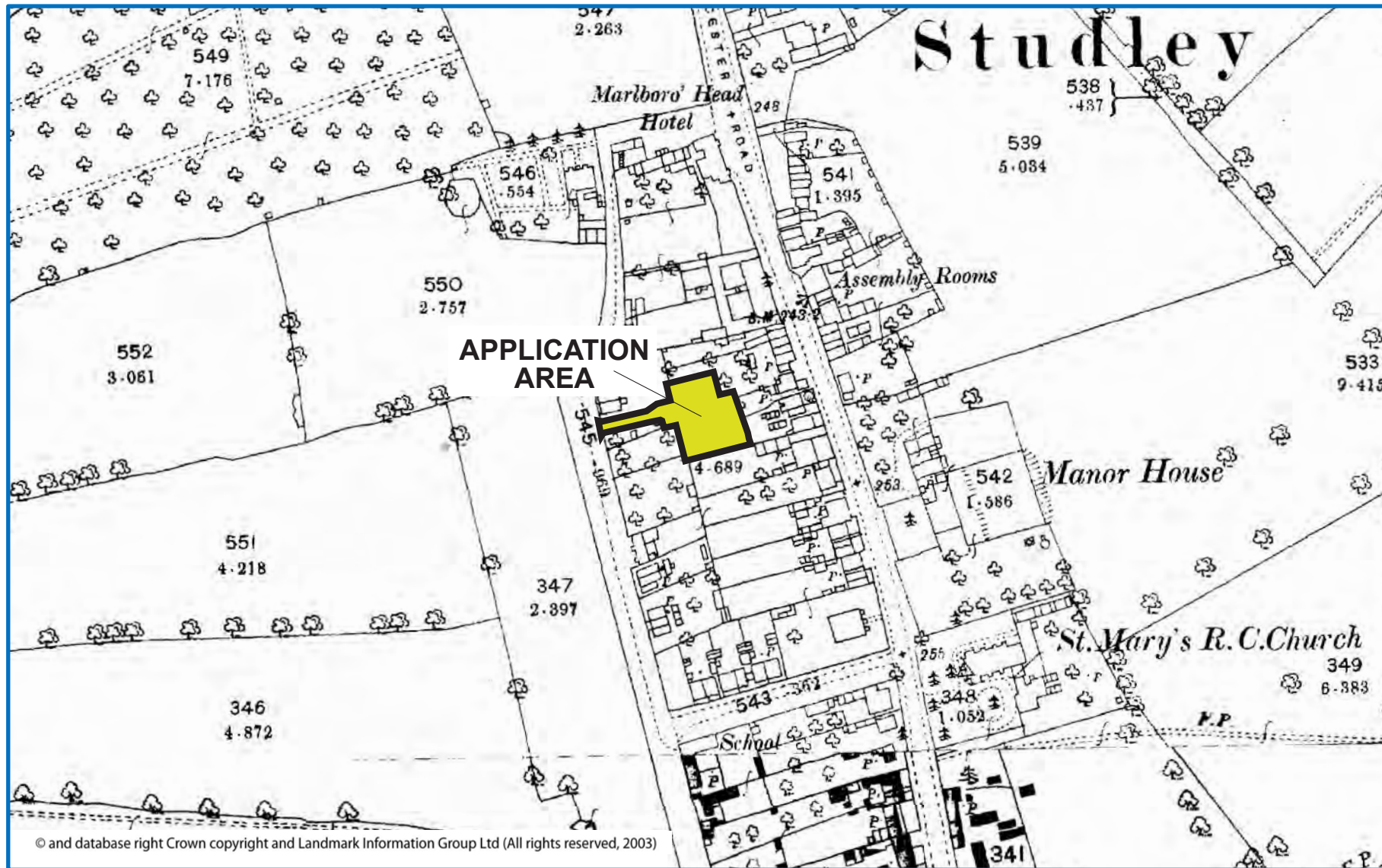


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

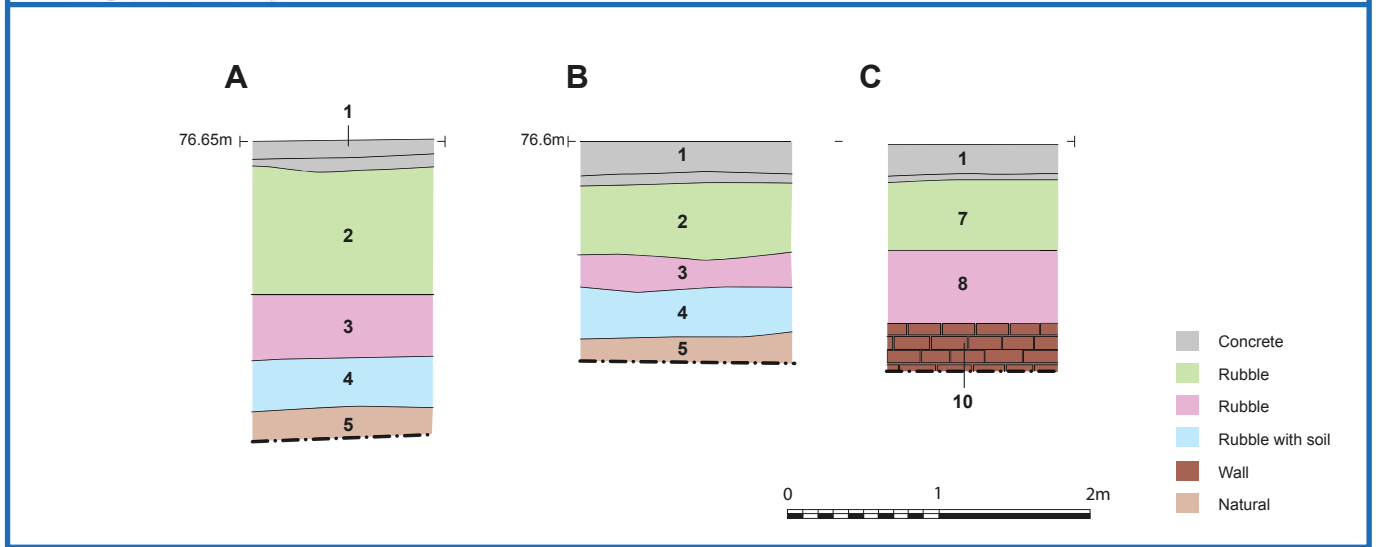
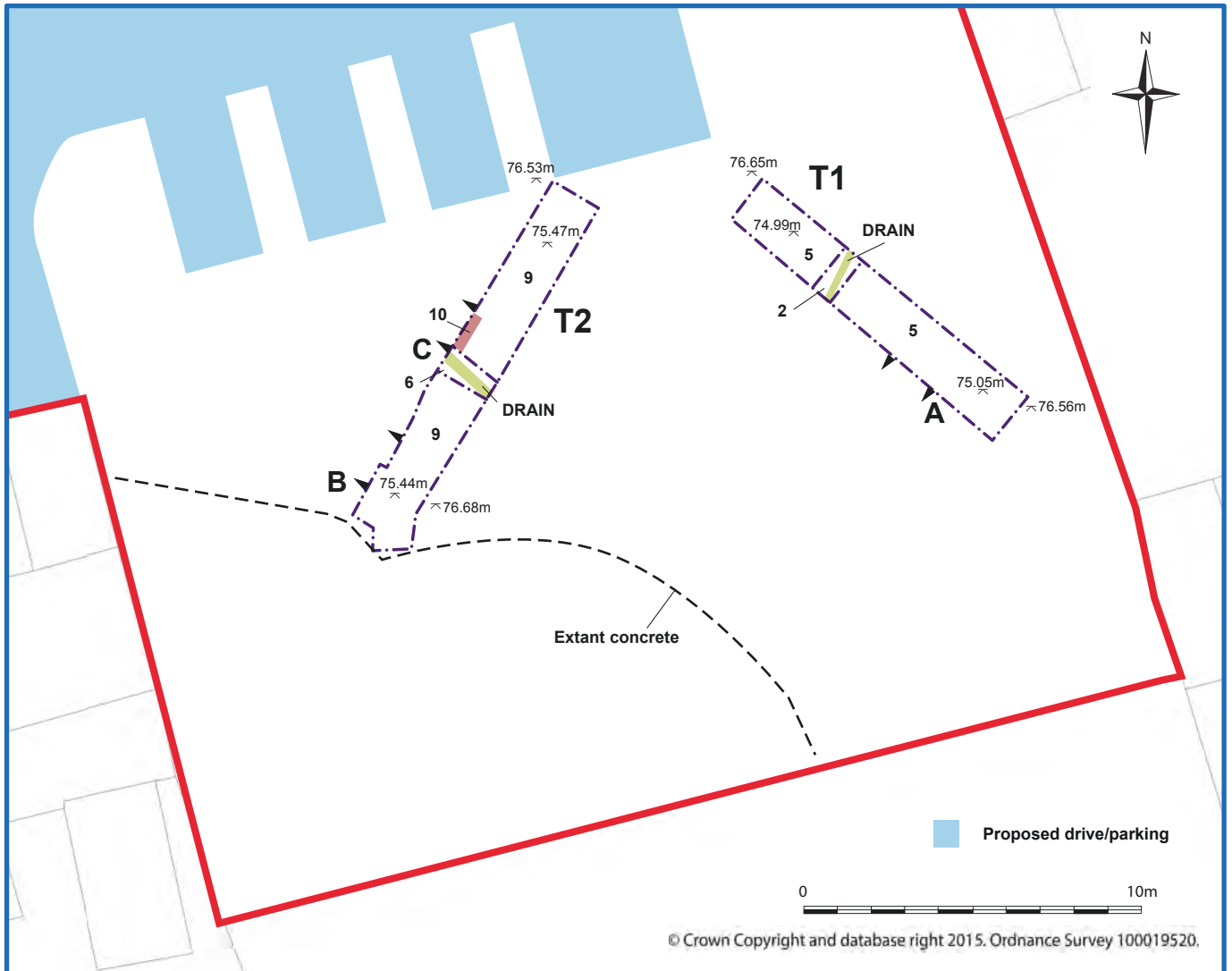


Fig 3: Detail of excavated trenches and sections A to C