

# Green Burial Cemetery, Temple Lane, Temple Balsall, Solihull

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



*understanding heritage matters*

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1712

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*Working for  
Warwickshire*

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<b>Commissioned by:</b>	Mr Paul Cureton
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<b>Planning Archaeologist:</b>	Anna Stocks, Warwickshire
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## SUMMARY

*An archaeological evaluation, consisting of four trial trenches, was undertaken on behalf of Temple Fields Cemetery Ltd. The proposed development was for the change of land use from agriculture to a green burial cemetery including access, car park, landscaping and associated works at Temple Lane, Temple Balsall, Solihull. No finds or archaeological remains were recovered from any of the trenches.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted on appeal for the change of use from agriculture to a green burial cemetery including access, car park, landscaping and associated works at Temple Lane, Temple Balsall, CV7 7ZZ (Planning Ref. PL/2015/52827/PPFL). The proposed development site lies in an area of archaeological potential.
  
- 1.2 It is a condition of the planning permission that the applicant secures the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been approved by the Planning Authority.
  
- 1.3 Archaeology Warwickshire has been commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation that will inform the Planning Authority of the potential impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

## 2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is located on the west side of Temple Lane, Temple Balsall, in the parish of Chadwick End, Solihull, and is centred around National Grid Reference SP 2042 7588 (Fig 1).
  
- 2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Mercia Mudstone with superficial deposits of Alluvium – Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel (BGS 2016).

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The earliest evidence of human occupation in the area is in the form of a prehistoric mace head identified as being of Late Neolithic or Late Bronze Age date (Solihull Sites and Monuments Record No MSI 1797).
- 3.2 Temple Balsall was the headquarters of Warwickshire's Knights Templar and was founded in the 12th century. The Old Hall (MSI 46; Fig. 1) dates back to c.1200 and is the oldest building in the locality which has been continuously used as a dwelling. The Hall is an aisled range with three bays and was much rebuilt in the 14th century. A western cross-wing was added in the late 15th century. A survey of the estate undertaken in 1541, at the time of the Dissolution, describes the hall and cross-wing and mentions a number of other structures. These include *lodgynges, a great barne, a dovehouse, stables, a fayre buttrye with a cellar under, and the Kytchyn and other offices on the north side of the hall* (RCHME 1993, 2). A conjectural plan of the Temple Balsall preceptory (MSI 6295), drawn up according to the survey of 1541, has been prepared by Gooder (1995). In 1981 the cellar, which had lain below the buttery, was excavated and produced a large quantity of 17th and 18th century material and some residual 13th and 14th century finds (Gooder 1984; Wallwork 1989). In the 18th and early 19th century the hall and cross-wing were encased in brick and outbuildings constructed immediately behind the hall. An excavation in the garden to the north of the hall in 1992 revealed an area of paving or flooring made up of sandstone and tiles and bricks; associated finds were of 19th-century date (Gooder 1995, 141).
- 3.3 In 1338 a dovecote was recorded at Temple Balsall, and was listed as producing 10 shillings for the year. A dovecote (MSI 6297) is shown on the conjectural plan Fbut the building no longer exists. Medieval ridge and furrow can be seen in the field to the north-west on aerial photographs (MSI 8793). The ridge and furrow runs in two different directions. Fishponds lie to the east which may also be medieval in origin (MSI 6296). A medieval watermill is known to have been established by the Knights Templars but its exact location is unknown (MSI 16294).
- 3.4 The Church of St Mary the Virgin (MSI 45), to the east of the Hall, has been dated to the late 13th century on the basis of stylistic attributes (Pevsner and Wedgwood 1966, 431), although Gooder suggests that a date towards the middle of the 14th

century may be more likely (Gooder 1999, 17-8). The church fell into disuse after 1540 and became roofless and derelict. In 1662 it was re-roofed and restored to use, serving as a chapel for the almshouses. In 1849 it was restored by Sir George Gilbert Scott, who was responsible for raising the roof level some five courses, possibly back to its original medieval line.

- 3.5 The complex of buildings to the north-east of the church date largely to the 17th and 18th centuries. The Hospital of Almshouses for old women was founded by Lady Katherine Leveson in 1677 (MSI 47). The almshouses were rebuilt in 1725-6 by Smith of Warwick. The entrance gateway to the almshouses also dates to the 18th century (MSI 48). The Vicarage is an 18th century red brick house which was remodelled in 1836 (MSI 49). The School dates to 1867 (MSI 50). Temple House dates to c.1736 and is built of red brick (MSI 346). Temple Farm, to the east, had a watermill which was in operation from 1852 until the 1930s (MSI 3111).
- 3.6 Archaeological observation of drainage trenches in the churchyard in 2000 revealed a sandstone wall and a brick wall to the north-west of the church (MSI 14001, MSI 14002; ESI 655; Warwickshire Museum, 2001). The former is thought to belong to one of the outbuildings of the preceptory, probably the dairy or brewhouse. The latter may have been a former boundary wall to the churchyard, although rather substantial for such a structure. In 2005 the remains of a limestone wall were recorded, possibly part of the Low Parlour (MSI 1366; ESI 675). Another section of demolished wall was recorded during observation at the south-east corner of the hall, possibly room of the former East Wing (MSI 1380).
- 3.7 To the west of the site is the Springfield House Water Garden (MSI 1577), this is made up of a series of water features including two large pools fed by a canalised stream. Springfield Hall is an 18th-century brick house (MSI 125).
- 3.8 The Field Group of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society undertook a survey of the parish of Barston, to the north (ESI 614). Archaeological building assessment, trial trenching and observation of test pits was carried out at Temple Balsall in 2007 (ESI 695). In 2008 observations were carried out during landscaping (ESI 704).



- 3.9 The new burial site lies between a fishpond to the west and the Templar's complex to the north-east). No development is shown in the field on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 (Fig 2) or later maps. The agricultural field is bounded roads to the north and east.

## **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 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.
- 4.4 The four trenches were opened up by a JCB excavator fitted with a 1.60m wide toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and other plough soils were removed under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist until either the top of archaeological remains or geological natural was reached.

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 All four trenches were 30m long and 1.60m wide. No significant archaeological deposits or remains were encountered.

### **Geological Natural**

- 5.2 The natural consisted of strong brown sand and gravel, with occasional brownish yellow sand patches, in all the trenches, at a depth of between 0.30m and 0.70m. The geology sloped downhill, from Temple Lane at the east side of site, to the wooded area at the west.

### **Typical deposits**

- 5.3 In trenches 2 and 3 a layer brown silty sand, probably a former ploughsoil, overlay the geological natural. Whilst across the entire site, overlying the former ploughsoil or geological natural, a layer of modern ploughsoil or topsoil had formed across the area to a depth of c.0.4m.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation has established that no significant archaeological deposits will be disturbed by the proposed development.
  
- 6.2 The absence of any artefactual material from the evaluation trenches is unusual but probably indicates that there are no occupation sites in the near vicinity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1. Trench 1



2. Trench 2



3. Trench 3



4. Trench 4



## APPENDICES

### A List of contexts

<b>Trench</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Depth (m) or height AOD (m)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1	100	Dark greyish brown sandy loam	0.33-0.50	Topsoil
1	101	Strong brown sand and gravel	98.52- 100.33 AOD	Geological Natural
2	200	Dark greyish brown sandy loam	0.30	Topsoil
2	201	Brown silty sand	0.25	Layer, only at NE end of Trench 2, former plough soil
2	202	Strong brown sand and gravel	99.62- 100.47 AOD	Geological Natural
3	300	Dark greyish brown sandy loam	0.40-0.45	Topsoil
3	301	Brown silty sand	0.20-0.30	Layer, former ploughsoil
3	302	Strong brown and brownish yellow sand and gravel	98.88- 100.58 AOD	Geological Natural
4	400	Dark greyish brown sandy loam	0.34-0.45	Topsoil
4	401	Strong brown and brownish yellow sand and gravel	100.31- 101.46 AOD	Geological Natural

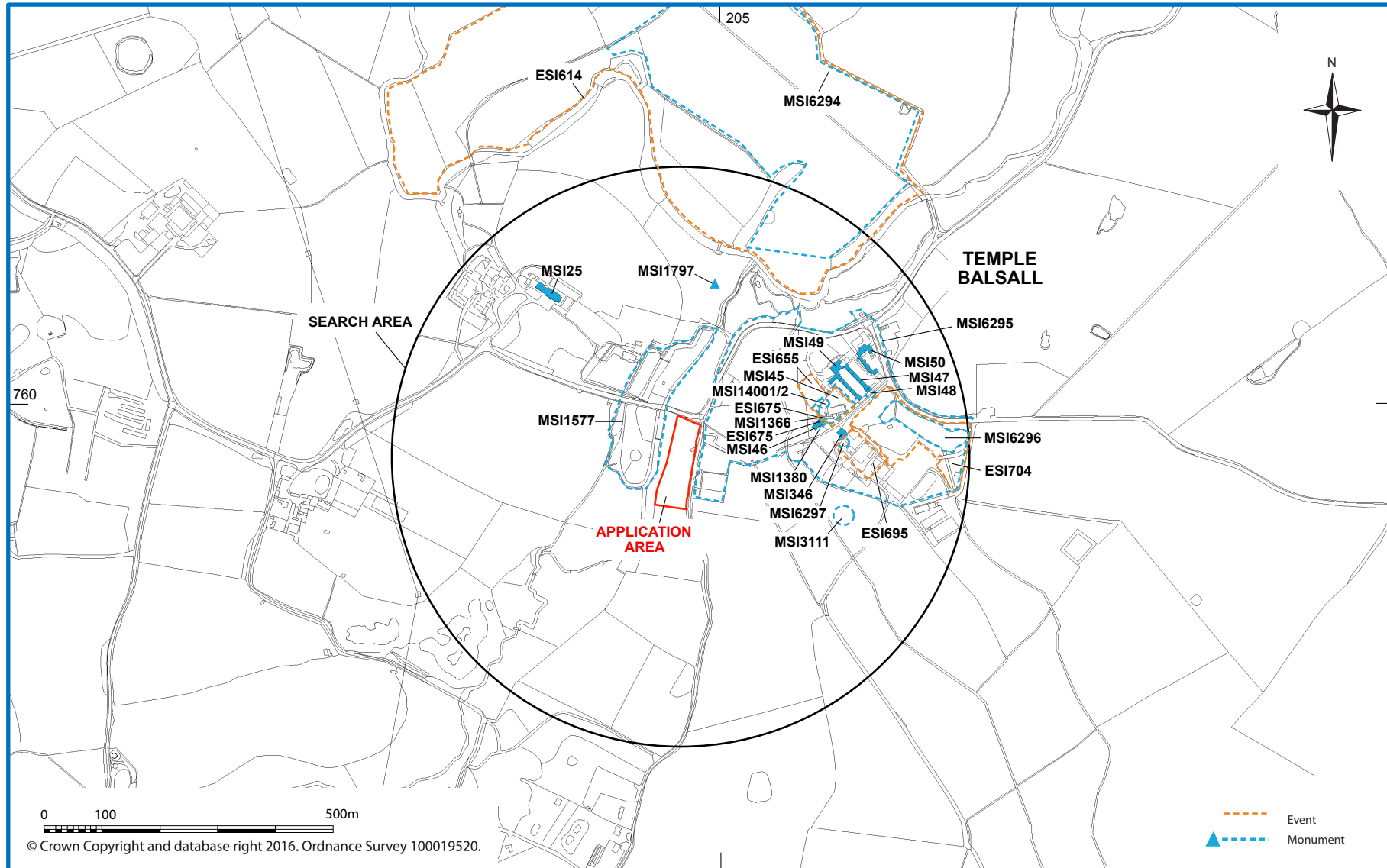


Fig 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment information

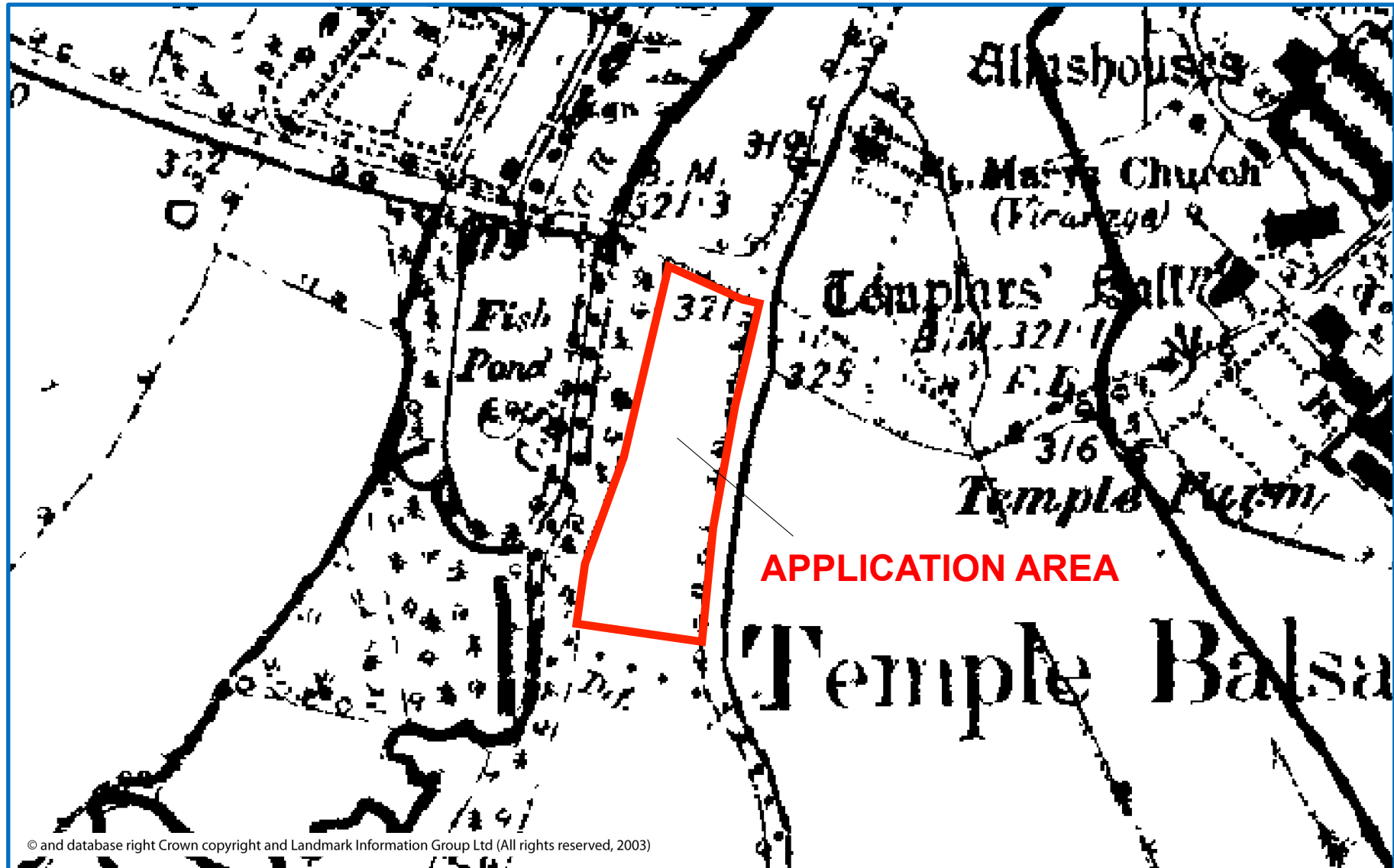


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1888

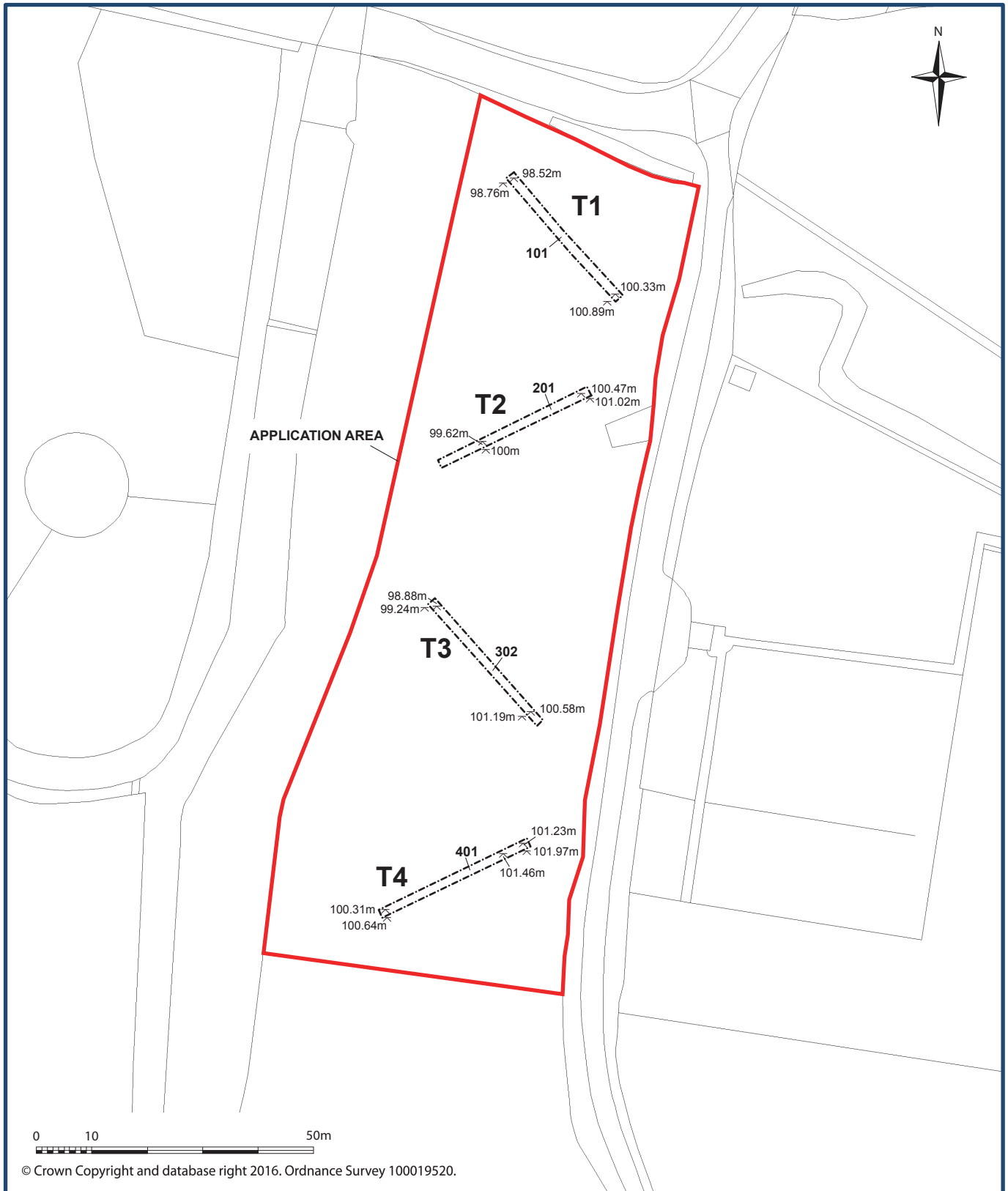


Fig 3: Location of excavated trenches