

# Clopton Bridge Stratford upon Avon Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1848  
JULY 2018



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

**Project:** Clopton Bridge, Stratford upon Avon  
**Commissioned by:** WCC Bridge Maintenance Team  
**Site Code:** SCB18  
**Planning Reference:** N/A  
**Planning Authority:** Warwickshire County Council  
**National Grid Reference:** SP 20585 54853  
**Project Manager:** Caroline Rann MCIfA  
**Fieldwork:** Jodie Duffy PCIfA  
**Author:** Jodie Duffy PCIfA  
**Illustrations:** Candy Stevens  
**Checked by:** Nigel Page MCIfA  
**Approved by:** Stuart Palmer MCIfA  
**Date:** July 2018  
**Report reference:** Duffy, J, 2018 *Clopton Bridge: Archaeological Watching Brief*, Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1848

Please note that this document has been prepared for the commissioning client or agent for a specific purpose and is time limited. It should not be relied upon by any other party for any other purpose at any other time.

**Please address enquiries to:** **Stuart C Palmer MCIfA**

**Principal Archaeologist & Business Manager**

**Archaeology Warwickshire**

**UNIT 9**

**Montague Road**

**Warwick**

**CV34 5LW**

**01926 412278**

**[stuartpalmer@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:stuartpalmer@warwickshire.gov.uk)**

**[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archaeology](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archaeology)**



## CONTENTS

	Summary	3
1	Introduction	4
2	Site Location	5
3	Archaeological and Historical Background	6
4	Aims and Methods	8
5	Results	9
6	Conclusions	10
	Acknowledgements	11
	References	12

## PHOTOGRAPHS

- 1 Road surface before works
- 2 Original footings, tie iron and pipe

## APPENDICES

A	List of Contexts	13
B	Oasis Form	14

## FIGURES

- 1 Location of Clopton Bridge
- 2 Detail from Six Inch Ordnance Survey map of 1886-7
- 3 Location of test pit observed with detail and elevations

## SUMMARY

*A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken on behalf of Warwickshire County Council during the excavation of a trial hole in Clopton Bridge to examine the connection between the bridge and the footbridge.*

*This work revealed the remains of the side of original stepped footings for the side of the bridge which predate the footbridge from 1827. The connection of the footbridge to the main road bridge using iron tie bars was also revealed.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) has been granted to WCC bridge maintenance team (Design Services) to undertake a trial hole on Clopton Bridge in order to inform future repair works or development proposals. The trial hole was located along the footway alongside the dwarf wall to examine the connection of the footbridge to the main road bridge.
- 1.2 The bridge dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and is an important survival of a medieval bridge, with notable early 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations (footway added 1827). It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Heritage List for England No: 1003739) and also a Listed Building (NHLE No: 1204167).
- 1.3 SMC was granted for this project on the condition that the groundworks are undertaken under a programme of archaeological monitoring. Archaeology Warwickshire have been commissioned to undertake the monitoring.
- 1.4 This report shows the results of the trial hole, which was excavated by the WCC bridge maintenance team in agreement with Historic England.

## **2 SITE LOCATION**

- 2.1 Clopton Bridge is centred on National Grid Reference SP 20585 54853 within the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon. It is in the southern part of the town, spanning the River Avon between Clopton and Bridgetown and carries the main route out of Stratford to the south (A3400 Shipston Road).

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Stratford was the site where the Roman road from Alcester to the Fosse Way crossed the River Avon (MWA 1066). What is now Bridge Foot is likely to have formed part of the Roman road leading down to the ford which was situated somewhere in the general area of the present Clopton Bridge.
- 3.2 The ford is also referred to in charters from AD985 to 988 (Hooke 1999).
- 3.3 A bridge is first mentioned in this location in 1235 when a bridge keeper is documented (VCH 1945, 224). It was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to replace an earlier timber bridge. Leland records a "*poore bridge of timber*" which was replaced by *Sir Hugh of Clopton* (d 1497) by this "*great and sumptuous bridge*" (VCH 1945).
- 3.4 The 15<sup>th</sup> century stone bridge consists of fourteen segmental-pointed arches with a long causeway at the west end and was repaired on numerous occasions during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 3.5 In 1814 the bridge was widened and an octagonal toll house (MWA 1012) built in response to increasing traffic on the toll road. A stone pillar which stood on the third pier from the east end which bore an inscription was destroyed. On the northeast side the cutwaters were retained to support the arches of the widening, but on the southwest side only traces remain.
- 3.6 The footway was added in 1827 and was designed by John Nicholls, an engineer from Wellesbourne and was made in the Eagle Foundry, Birmingham. Subsequent phases of repair throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries left little mark on the appearance of the bridge which remains an important survival of a medieval bridge with notable early 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations.
- 3.7 A tramway bridge was established within sight of Clopton Bridge downstream in 1823 to carry a horse drawn tramway (MWA 1013).
- 3.8 The only archaeological work to be carried out at Clopton Bridge was by Archaeology Warwickshire (formerly Warwickshire County Council Museum Field Services Archaeology Projects Group) in March 1999. This recorded the digging of two trial

trenches associated with water mains maintenance. The trial trenching did not reveal any significant findings: they were cut into the gravel infill of the bridge and did not reveal any of the structural fabric of the bridge itself.

- 3.9 The bridge is today a Scheduled Ancient Monument (NHLE No: 1003739) and a Listed Building, the listing also incorporating the Octagonal Toll House at the bridges northern end (NHLE No: 1204167).



## 4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains that were disturbed by the excavation of the trial hole within the carriageway, to collate the records in an archaeological archive and present the significant aspects of the archive in this report.
- 4.2 It will also be to form an understanding of the remains recorded in terms of their character and date, and to place the evidence in its local and regional context.
- 4.3 The work required an experienced archaeologist to be on site during groundworks to monitor the digging of the trial hole.
- 4.4 The trial hole was cut by circular saw, a pneumatic drill was used to break the tarmac and thereafter it was hand dug.

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The removal of the tarmac (100) and hard core (101) revealed the sandstone ashlar stepped foundation (102) of the north side of the 15<sup>th</sup> century bridge. A tie iron extended below the foundation and had clearly been drilled and inserted during the construction of the footbridge in 1827. A modern pipe trench containing a reddish brown sandy clay backfill (103) was also recorded running along the bridge parallel to the original foundations.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The programme of archaeological work was able to record that over time the width of the road surface has been widened, covering the original 15<sup>th</sup> century footings of the north side, as well as increasing the height of the current road surface.
  
- 6.2 The construction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century walkway was also recorded as one of the iron tie beams that had been drilled and inserted from the outside of the bridge was exposed below the original foundations.

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank the WCC Bridge Maintenance Team for commissioning the work and Nikesh Mistry for facilitating the project.

## REFERENCES

BGS *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> British Geological Survey Accessed June 2018

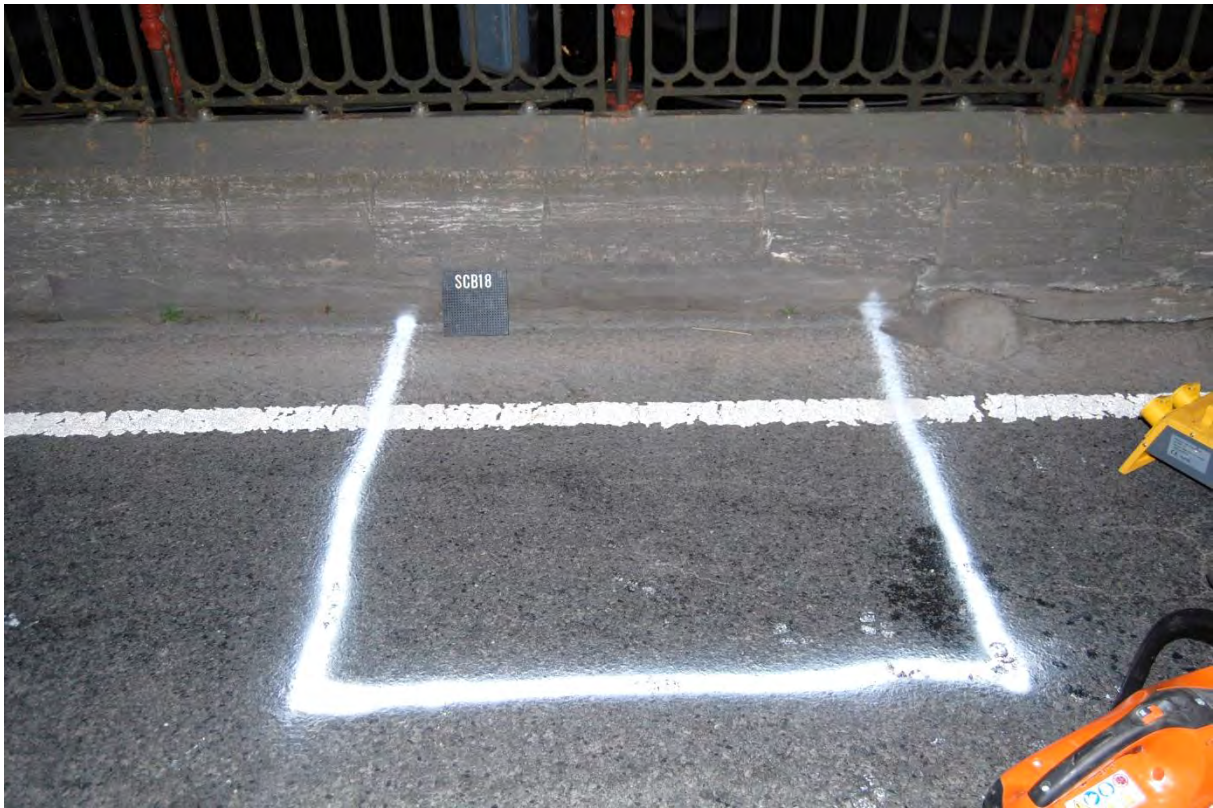
Hooke, D, 1999 *Historic Landscape Assessment*. Unpublished document.

Landmark 2003 Ordnance Survey First Edition (1886) Sheet 44.NW, digital version

VCH 1945 Victoria County History of Warwickshire, Vol III, Barlichway Hundred, London

Warwickshire County Council Libraries and Heritage 1997 *Historic Road Bridges in Warwickshire: A Preliminary Survey*. Unpublished report by Warwickshire County Council Libraries and Heritage

Warwickshire County Council Museum Field Services Archaeology Projects Group 1999 *Archaeological Recording of Clopton Bridge, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire*. Unpublished grey literature report.



1. Road surface before works



2. Original footings, tie iron and pipe

## APPENDICES

### A List of contexts

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Thickness (m)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
100	Tarmac	0.08	Tarmac road surface
101	Tarmac hard core	0.	Hard core
102	Stone	0.19	Stone sides of Bridge
103	Reddish brown sandy clay		Backfill for modern pipe
104	Pipe		Modern pipe – use unknown.

B Oasis Form

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>	<b>OASIS No</b> archaeol27- <b>322475</b>
<b>Project name</b>	Clopton Bridge
<b>Short description (250 words max)</b>	<i>A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken on behalf of Warwickshire County Council during the excavation of a trial hole in Clopton Bridge to examine the connection between the bridge and the footbridge. This work revealed the remains of the side of original stepped footings for the side of the bridge which predate the footbridge from 1827. The connection of the footbridge to the main road bridge using iron tie bars was also revealed.</i>
<b>Project type (Eg DBA, Eval etc)</b>	Watching brief
<b>Site status (None, NT, SAM etc)</b>	SMR SAM
<b>Previous work</b>	Yes
<b>Current land use</b>	Road Bridge
<b>Future work (yes, no, unknown)</b>	Unknown
<b>Monument type / period</b>	none
<b>Significant finds (artefact, type, period)</b>	None
<b>Methods &amp; techniques</b>	Trial hole
<b>Development Type</b>	
<b>Prompt</b>	SMC
<b>Position in planning process</b>	n/a
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	
<b>County</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Site address (inc postcode)</b>	Clopton Bridge, Stratford upon Avon.
<b>Study area (sq.m or ha)</b>	1 sqm
<b>OS Easting &amp; Northing (use grid sq letter code)</b>	SP 20585 54853
<b>Height OD</b>	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>	
<b>Organisation</b>	Archaeology Warwickshire
<b>Project brief originator</b>	Historic England
<b>Project design originator</b>	
<b>Director/supervisor</b>	Jodie Duffy PCI/A
<b>Manager</b>	Caroline Rann MCI/A
<b>Sponsor or funding body</b>	Warwickshire County Council
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>	
<b>Start date /end date</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2018



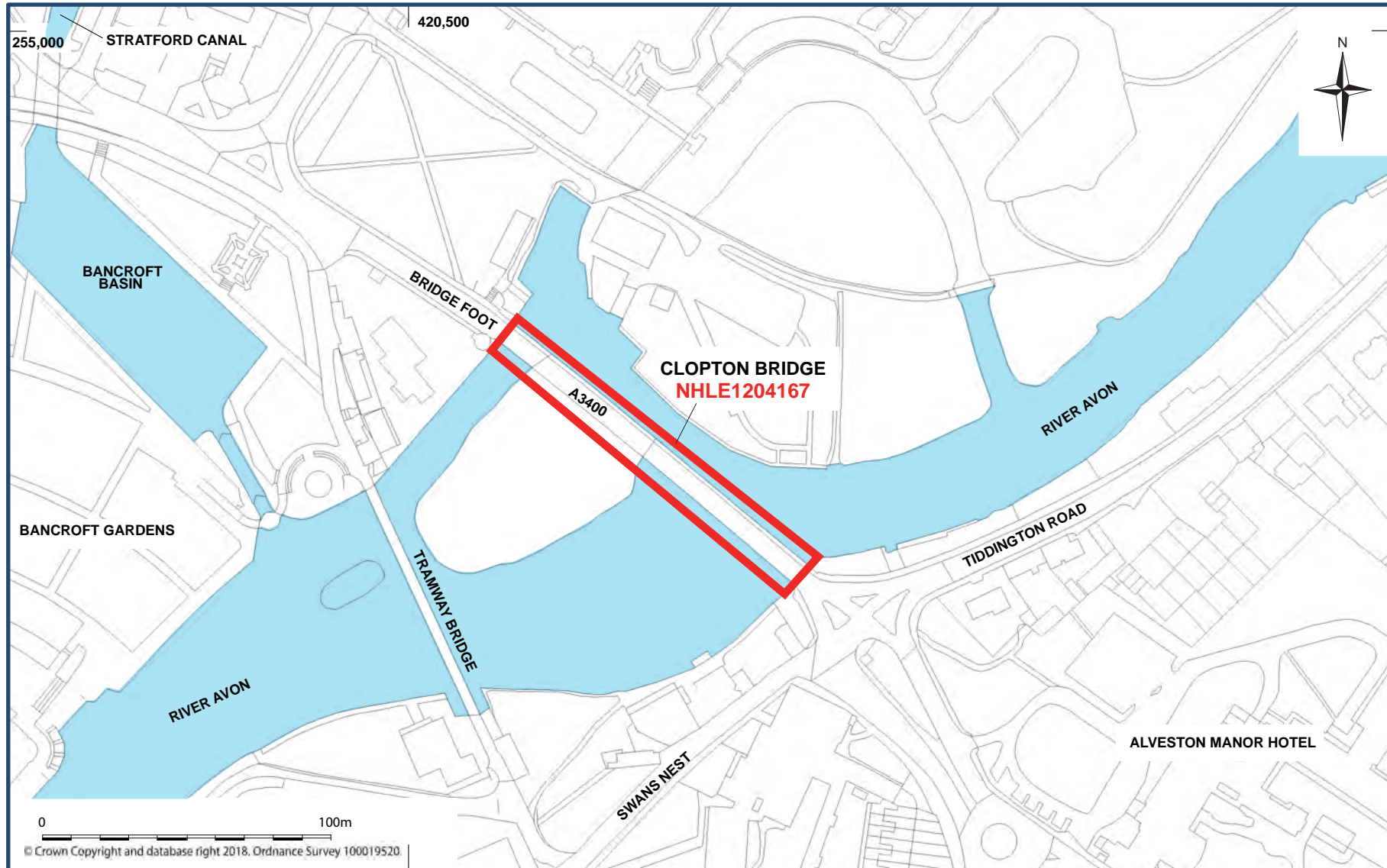


Fig 1: Location of Clopton Bridge

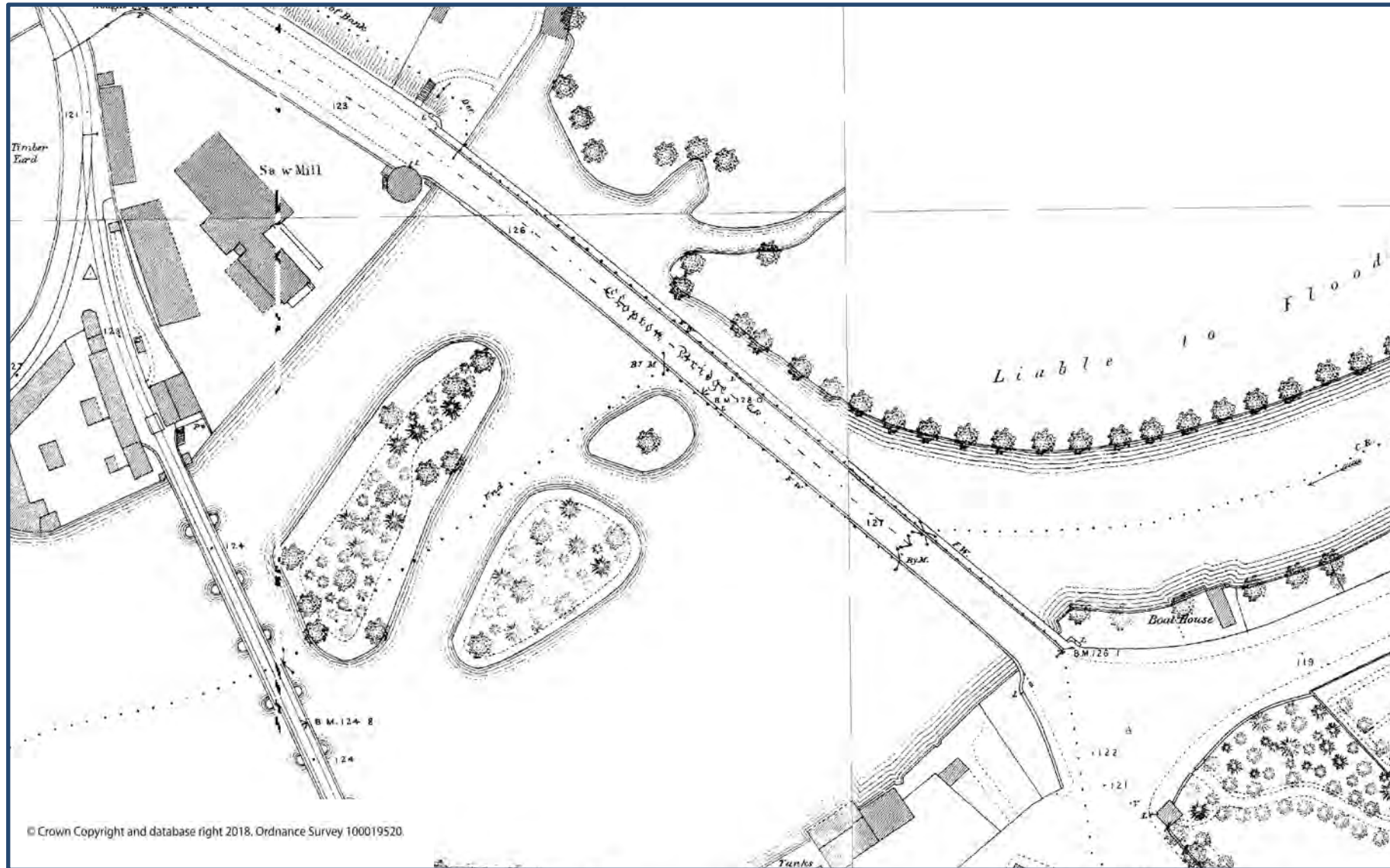


Fig 2: Detail from Six Inch Ordnance Survey map of 1886-7

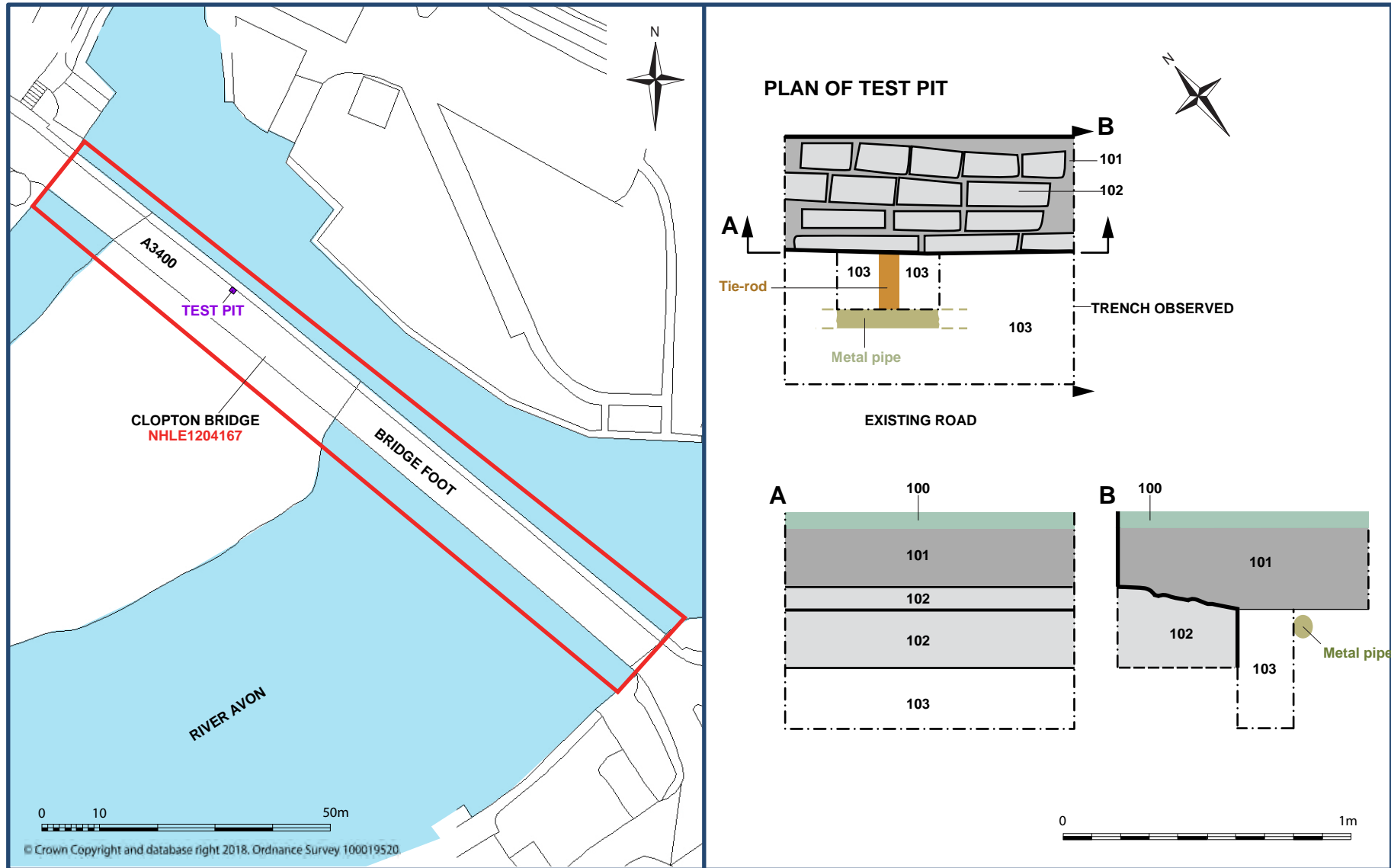


Fig 3: Location of test pit observed with detail and elevations