

Kissing Tree House Barns Alveston, Stratford-on-Avon Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND RECORDING



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 17110
DECEMBER 2017



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Archaeological Watching Brief
Kissing Tree House, Alveston

Commissioned by: Chris Swan

Site Code: SK16

Planning Reference: 16/00402/FUL (15/02893/FUL previous approved)

Planning Authority: Stratford-on-Avon District Council

National Grid Reference: SP 2344 5641

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Date: December 2017

Report reference: Rann, C, 2017 *Kissing Tree House Barns, Alveston, Warwickshire: Archaeological Observation and Recording*, Archaeology Warwickshire Report 17110.

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SUMMARY

Archaeological observation during ground reduction of an area of former garden, hardstanding and outbuildings within the possible extent of the medieval settlement of Alveston was undertaken on behalf of Mr Chris Swan.

An undated possible linear feature, which was 5m wide and over 13m long, was recorded. It may have been medieval or post-medieval as it was overlain by mid-19th-century garden features.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the partial demolition of the greenhouse and corrugated shed, conversion and extension of former stable block to 2 no. dwelling houses and associated garaging (amendments to approved application 15/02893/FUL), Kissing Tree House Kissing Tree Way, Alveston, Warwickshire, CV37 7QT (16/00402/FUL).
- 1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake a programme of observation and recording to be undertaken in conjunction with the groundworks phase of the development in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the planning authority.
- 1.3 The fieldwork was carried out in April and July 2016. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code SK16.

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is centred on national grid reference SP 2344 5641, in the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon. The proposed development area covers an area of 0.12 hectares. It is within the conservation area of Alveston. The building to be converted is a former stable and workshop. The shed attached to the greenhouse is to be demolished.

- 2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Mercia Mudstone with superficial deposits of sand and gravel from the terraces of the River Avon (British Geological Survey 2016).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Prehistoric activity has been identified to the south-west of the site – south of the Church of St James. Geophysical survey and trial trenching revealed the remains of a possible Iron Age farmstead (Jones 2013).
- 3.2 The development site lies on the southern edge of the probable extent of the medieval settlement of Alveston (Historic Environment Record MWA 9136). The settlement may have been located near to a possible ford on the River Avon recorded as Dodda's Ford (MWA 8636). A church in Alveston was recorded in 1240 as a chapelry of Hampton Lucy (MWA 1036); the present church being rebuilt in 1837 (MWA 1037). A platform next to the Church may represent a part of the medieval settlement (MWA 9164).
- 3.3 The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886-7 (1:2500, Landmark 2003) depicts several late 18th- to early 19th-century villas with large pleasure grounds (MWA 8506, EWA 6602): At this time Alveston was reputed for its pure air and scenery. Kissing Tree House was one such villa and was formerly known as Avonmore (MWA 8510, National Heritage List for England no. 1187757). It was visited by Jonathon Lovie in 1996 (EWA 8510).
- 3.4 Parnham Lodge to the NW also had associated gardens (MWA 8586). Other villas and gardens are Alveston House (MWA 8527, MWA 8511, EWA 6603), Hemingford (MWA 8507), Baraset House (MWA 8509) and Alveston Lodge (MWA 8508).
- 3.5 Archaeological work carried out in this part of Alveston has been negative for medieval settlement evidence (EWA 10396, EWA 9951, EWA 7716).
- 3.6 In 1942 a Wellington aircraft crashed to the south-west of Kissing Tree Lane. The crash site is protected under the Protection of Military Remains Act of 1986 (MWA 20395). Kissing Tree Lane joins the former toll road from Wellesbourne to Stratford (MWA 4815) further to the south-west.
- 3.7 The stable range and glasshouse are depicted on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Landmark 2003, Fig 2). Their association with Avonmore suggests an early-mid 19th-century date.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains revealed or disturbed by the development, to collate the records in an archaeological archive and present the significant aspects of the archive in a report for dissemination. The secondary aim was 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. The objective of the work was a programme of observation and recording during ground reduction to development formation levels.

- 4.2 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications.

- 4.3 An experienced archaeologist was made available for each day of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with WSI. Where potential archaeological deposits were encountered, the supervising archaeologist assessed or recorded these before they were disturbed by the machine.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 Concrete removal and ground reduction of up to 0.6m took place across the site and was observed by archaeologists.
- 5.2 The geological natural of reddish brown sand and gravel (112) was reached at a depth of c.0.6m. It was cut by a 5m wide, and over 13m long, NE-SW rectangular feature (125) which extended beyond the stripped area to the SW (Photograph 1). No finds were recovered from the light brown silty clay fill (124, Photograph 2).
- 5.3 A construction cut for a garden path was recorded cutting 124 (115). Although the path had been removed previously the underlying light greyish brown silty clay remained (116). Two sections of brick wall were found to have lined the edges of the path (113,114). They were up to four courses deep (114) and of unbonded red brick construction.
- 5.4 The foundations for the mid-19th-century garden walls and glasshouse were partially uncovered during the work. The NW-SE aligned garden wall (122) which was dismantled for reconstruction was founded on brick arches and stone pillar construction (Photographs 3, 4). Other similar foundations were revealed elsewhere on the site where demolition had taken place (Fig 3, Photograph 5). Here, on the northern glasshouse wall were three equidistant arches, infilled in later brick and the middle one partly obscured by later steps. The arches would be associated with the structure that formerly stood immediately north of the wall, possibly housing a boiler or some other form of heating for the glasshouse. The wall's red bricks were handmade and probably mid- 19th century in date. A further section of red brick boundary wall (118) was found within the western part of the stripped area, although here it was only revealed in plan.
- 5.5 Butting wall foundation 122 was the remains of a curved brick structure which may have been garden steps or an internal feature of the building shown on the First Edition map of 1886-1887 (123). A layer of charcoal was visible along the north edge of the site (121). A small area of sand next to it may have been the remains of bedding for a surface (120). A patch of lime mortar (119) was probably the remains of a surface. The top of two brick wall foundations, one linear (126) and one rectangular (127) were revealed to the north. They may have been related to the

buildings depicted on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map. The adjacent concrete surface (129) may have been a later addition.

- 5.6 A 0.10-0.15m deep layer of brownish grey silty clay subsoil was noted in the SE of the stripped area (111). Topsoil across the area consisting of 0.54m of dark greyish brown clay loam (110).

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No definitive evidence for medieval Alveston was found during the work, however an undated linear feature predating the mid-19th-century garden features may have been of this date.

- 6.2 The garden features such as the path and wall are likely to have been associated with Avonmore, the early 19th-century villa to the south.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr Chris Swan for commissioning the work and Mr Craig Swan for his help with the project.

REFERENCES

BGS British Geological Survey 2016 *Geology of Britain Viewer*
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?> Accessed December 2016.

Landmark 2003 First Edition Ordnance Survey map 1:2500 of 1886-7, digital version.

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

Context	Description	Thickness (m)	Comment
110	Dark brown grey silty clay loam	0.54	Garden soil (topsoil)
111	Brownish grey silty clay, occasional brick and tile	0.10 -0.15	Subsoil
112	Reddish brown sand and gravel		Geological Natural
113	Unbonded brick surface	0.06	Brick path
114	Unbonded brick wall, up to 4 courses high	0.18 – 0.24	Garden wall
115	Moderately steep sloping sides where visible	>0.3	Cut for path 113
116	Light greyish brown silty clay	>0.3	Fill of path cut
117	Charcoal layer	0.02	Levelling layer for path
118	Brick footings bonded with sandy yellow/pink mortar		garden wall footings
119	Lime mortar irregular shaped patch survives c. 1.7m x 1m	0.05	Possible surface or related to one
120	Sandy deposit, 1m x 1m	0.05	Bedding layer?
121	Charcoal layer	0.02	Unknown deposit
122	Red brick wall	0.65 – 0.8	Garden wall
123	Red brick wall - curved	0.45	Garden steps or possibly related to bldg. on First Edition map
124	Light brown silty clay	0.6	Fill of 125
125	Linear feature, NW-SE. 1m wide	0.6	
126	Brick wall foundation		Garden wall?
127	Brick wall foundation		Part of former building?
128	Concrete surface		surface



1: View of site looking north, showing former path and linear feature 125



2: Section through feature 125, looking NE



3: Wall foundation 122 and arches below



4: Demolished wall 122, looking south



5: Arches in the foundations of glasshouse on southern boundary

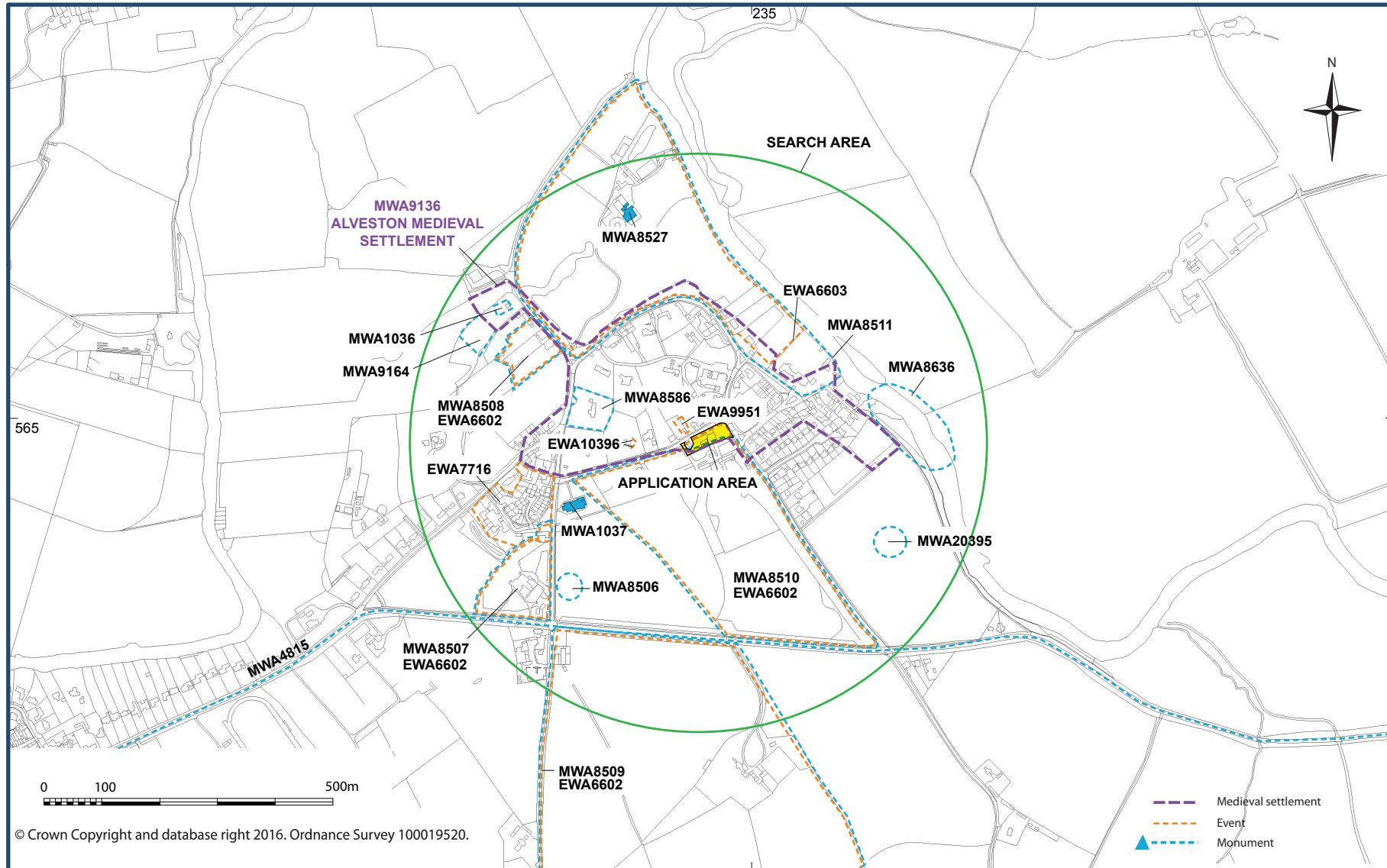


Fig 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment information

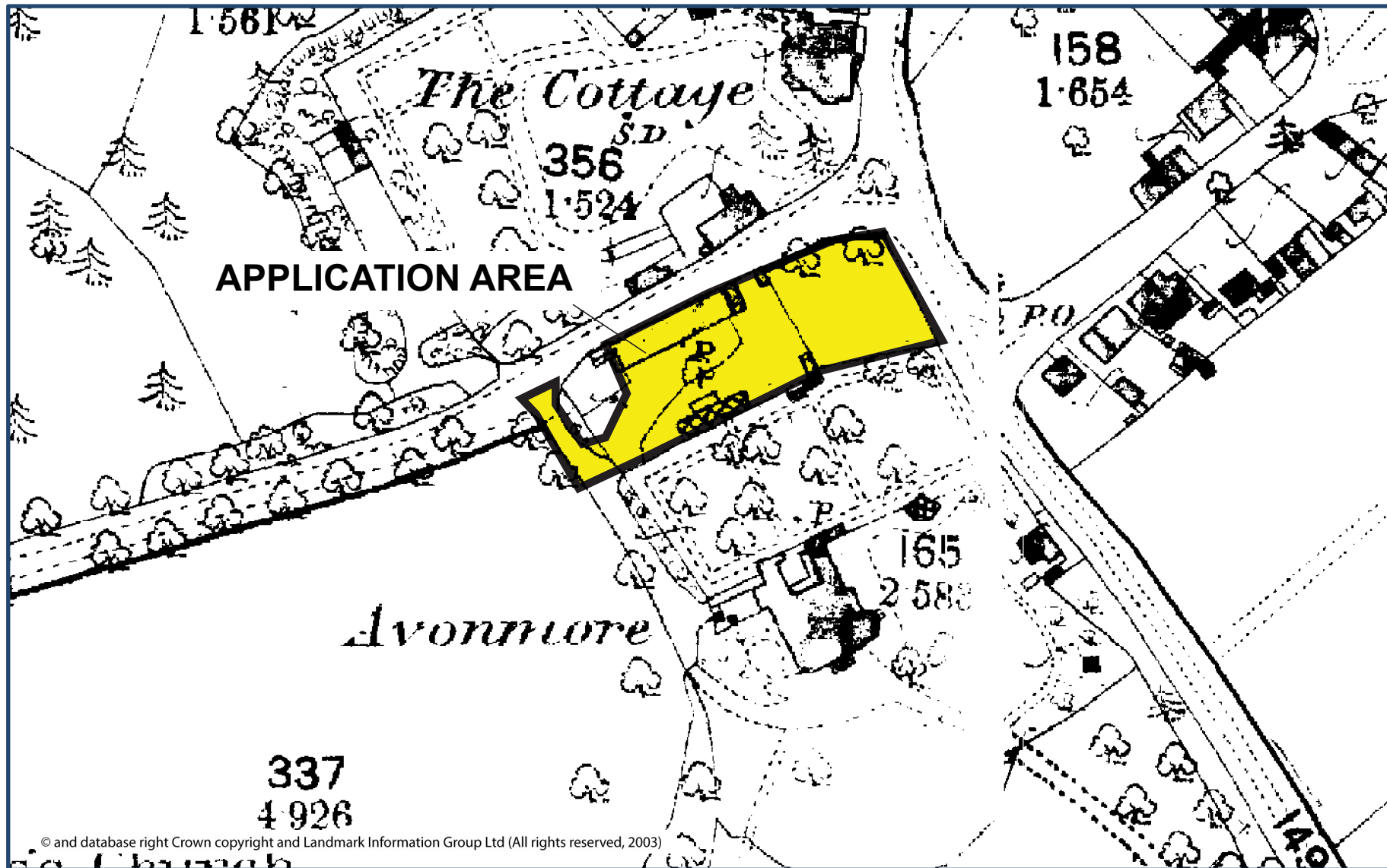


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1866-7

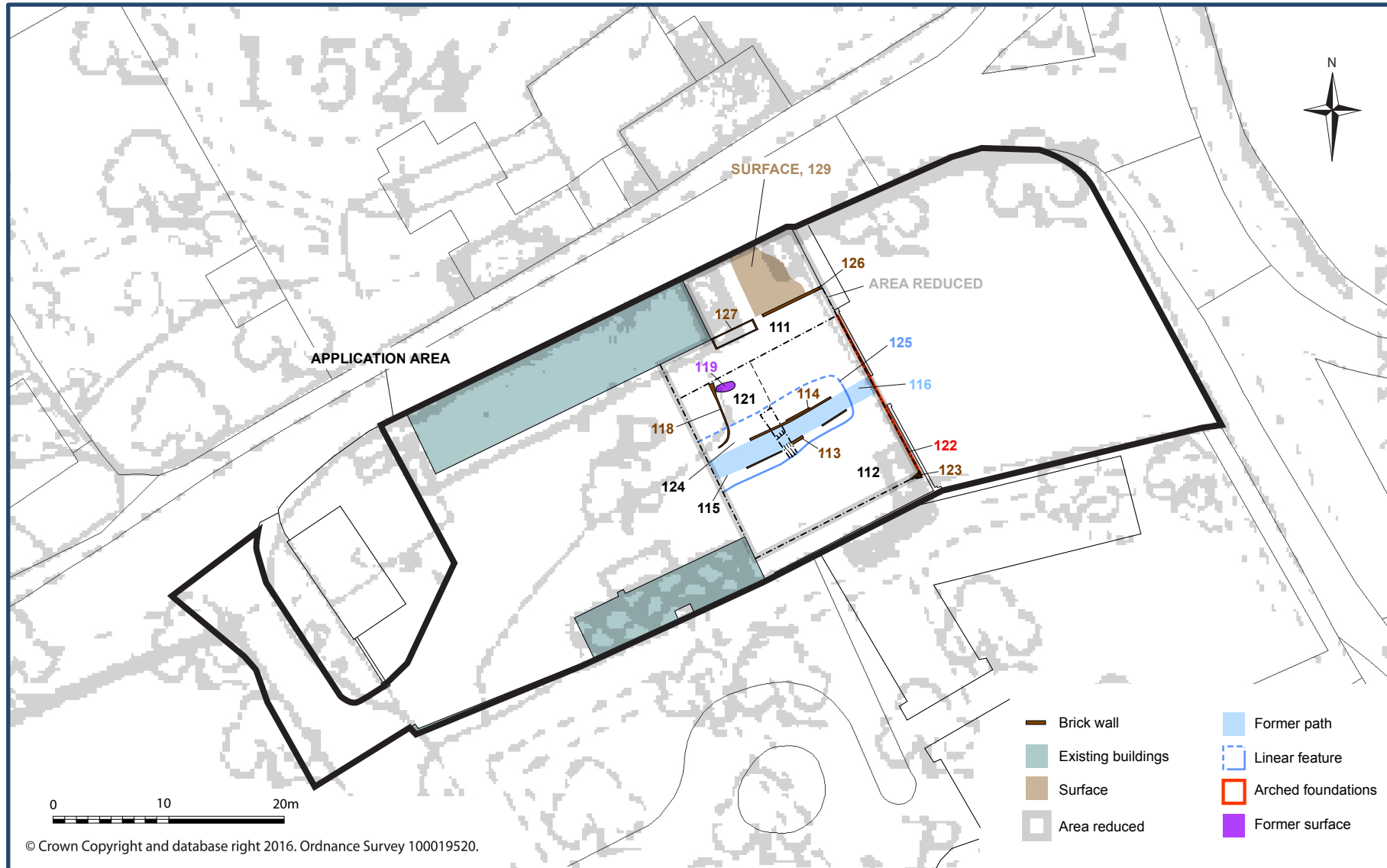


Fig 3: Area reduced overlying Ordnance Survey mapping of 1887