

Rear of Cromwell House, Fosseway, Princethorpe, Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1533

MAY 2015



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Evaluation to rear of Cromwell House
Commissioned by: Jessica Rowlands @ Henry Rowlands
Construction Ltd
Project Report No. 1533
Site Code: PC15
Planning Reference: R13/2044
Planning Authority: Rugby Borough Council, Warwickshire
Planning Archaeologist: John Robinson, Warwickshire
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation consisting of four trial trenches was undertaken on behalf of Henry Rowlands Construction in advance of the construction of two new dwellings. All four trenches contained archaeological features dating predominantly from the 13th/14th century with one dating from the early 17th century. The gullies and pits recorded seem likely to be associated with medieval settlement around the junction of the Fosse Way and the road to Oxford. The absence of structural remains suggests the site lies in the rear parts of house plots fronting on to the road. A single sherd of Roman pottery was also found.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council for the erection of two dwellings to the rear of Cromwell House, Fosseyway, Princethorpe, Rugby, Warwickshire. The site lies in an area of archaeological potential being adjacent to a major Roman road and in the heart of the medieval settlement.

1.2 A condition of the planning permission requires 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 have been commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Planning Authority in May 2015. This report presents the results of that work. The archaeological archive will be deposited at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code PC15.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The development site occupies a plot between the B4453 and the B4455 (Fosse Way). The c.0.12 hectare site was partly stoned over prior to the evaluation (Fig 1).

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Mercia Mudstone (BGS 2015).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 There are no known archaeological remains within the application site. There is however, Romano-British settlement activity to the south (Historic Environment Record nos MWA 4888, MWA 4889) and the site lies close to the line of the Fosse Way (MWA 4759), although the actual Roman alignment of the road at this point is unclear.

3.2 The site lies to the east of the late medieval Manor House (MWA 3104). Walls relating to a late 15th century part of the building were uncovered during a watching brief in 2007 (EWA 9097).

3.3 The hamlet of Princethorpe is laid out along the Fosse way and Leamington Road. In the medieval period it was part of the manor of Wolston.

3.4 Other monuments recorded on the HER include:-

MWA 3102	Possible Moat of Princethorpe Manor
MWA6851	Smithy
MWA 4789	Toll Road

3.5 The site was within agricultural land in between the two roads at the time of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 (Landmark 2003, Fig 2).

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 Four trenches were excavated on the site, the fourth after a visit from the Planning Archaeologist who recommended its location. All trenches were excavated with a tracked mini-excavator with a 1.2m toothless ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision.

Trench 1

5.2 This trench was 15m long and just over 1.6m wide. Geological natural brownish yellow clayey sand mixed with gravel (101) was revealed at 72.57m-71.74m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Gullies 102 and 104 cut the natural. Gully 102 was aligned northeast-

southwest, had moderately steep sides 0.73m wide and a rounded base up to 0.15m deep and was filled with brown sandy loam (103) from which 13 sherds of pottery dating between the 13th to the early 17th century were recovered. Gully 104 had steep sides 0.41m wide, a rounded base 0.12m deep and was filled with brown sandy loam (105) from which small sherds of 19th century pottery and glass were recovered. Topsoil (100) was 0.59m of brown sandy loam.

Trench 2

5.2 Trench 2 was 10m long and 1.6m wide. Geological natural brownish yellow sand and gravel (202) was exposed at between 73.35m and 73m aOD. Gully 203 had moderately steep sides 0.53m wide, a flattish base 0.09m deep and was filled with brown sandy loam (203) from which a single sherd of 13th/14th century pottery was recovered. Topsoil (2010) was 0.25m deep but had been recently covered by 0.28m of road stone (200).

Trench 3

5.3 Trench 3 was 15m long by 1.6m wide. Geological natural was exposed at between 75.1m and 73.71m aOD. Gully 302 was aligned north-northeast – south-southwest and had steeply sloping sides 0.6m wide, a rounded base 0.12m deep and was filled with brown sandy loam (302). No finds were recovered from the feature despite searching the entire length exposed. Two shallow pits were recorded. Pit 304 was sub-circular 1.5m in diameter, a flattish base 0.08m deep and was filled with brown sandy loam (305) from which four sherds of 13th/14th century pottery were recovered. Pit 306 was sub-circular 1.12m wide, a flattish base 0.06m deep and was filled with brown sandy loam fill (307) from which no finds were recovered.

Trench 4

5.4 Trench 4 was 7m long and was positioned in the newly laid driveway at the behest of the Planning Archaeologist. Geological natural red sandy clay (402) was revealed at 75.57m - 75.47m aOD. Ditch 403 was aligned east-west and had a moderately sloping north edge and a steeply sloping south edge with a rounded base. It was filled by brown sandy loam (404) from which two sherds of 13th/14th century pottery were recovered.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 All of the trenches contained archaeological features. These were mostly pits or gullies and they were all relatively shallow implying substantial truncation by ploughing. The most significant features were medieval (203, 304 and 403) or early 17th century (102). The

17th century feature contained residual medieval sherds and several medieval pottery sherds were found in the topsoil of Trench 1.

6.2 The archaeological evidence recorded seems likely to be associated with medieval settlement in the immediate vicinity, probably fronting onto the old course of the Oxford road which lies parallel to the south-western boundary of the site. None of the exposed archaeological features appeared to represent building remains and were more likely to represent parts of boundaries in the rear parts of house plots.

6.3 The two undated features in Trench 3 were very similar to those which did contain pottery and are likely to also be medieval in date. A single sherd of Roman pottery, thought to be too unabraded to have been deposited in a manuring scatter, was also found which might imply that Roman settlement activity lies close by.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Jessica and Darren Rowlands for commissioning the work and Planning Archaeologist John Robinson for providing the Brief.

REFERENCES

BGS 2015 British Geological Survey Viewer

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed April 2015

Landmark 2003 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887, 1:2500, digital version.



Photograph 1: Trench 1



Photograph 2: Gully 102



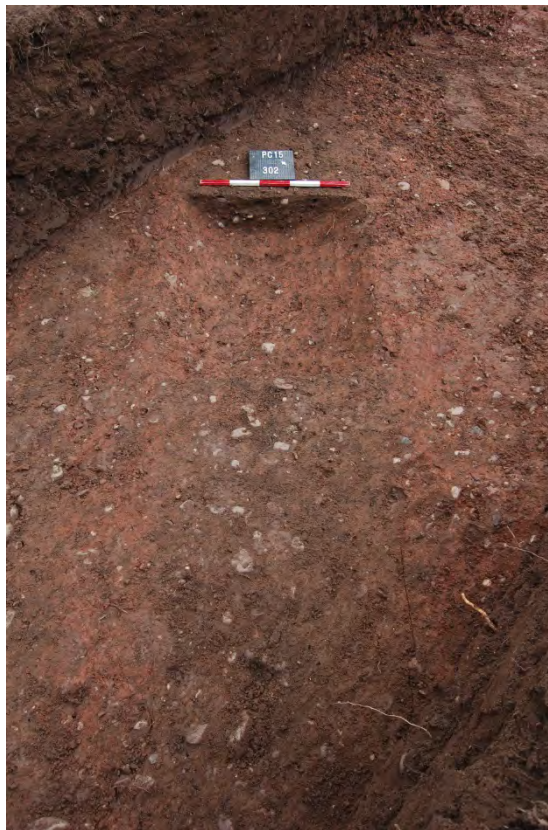
Photograph 3: Trench 2



Photograph 4: Gully 203



Photograph 5: Trench 3



Photograph 6: Gully 302



Photograph 7: Pit 304



Photograph 8: Pit 306



Photograph 9: Trench 4



Photograph 10: Ditch 403

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment</i>
100	Topsoil	Current
101	Geological natural	
102	Gully	
103	Gully fill (of 102)	
104	Gully	
105	Gully fill (of 104)	
200	Hardcore	
201	Topsoil	Current
202	Geological natural	
203	Gully	
204	Gully fill (of 203)	
300	Topsoil	
301	Geological natural	
302	Gully	
303	Gully fill (of 302)	
304	Pit	
305	Pit fill (of 304)	
306	Pit	
307	Pit fill (of 306)	
400	Hardcore	
401	Topsoil	
402	Geological natural	
403	Ditch	
404	Ditch fill (of 403)	

B List of Finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
100	Pottery	11	13th-18th century
103	Pottery	13	13th-early 17th century
104	Pottery	1	19th century
104	Glass	1	19th century
104	Tile	1	19th century
104	Nail	1	19th century
201	Pottery	1	1st/2nd century
204	Pottery	1	13th/14th century
305	Pottery	4	13th/14th century
404	Pottery	2	13th/14th century

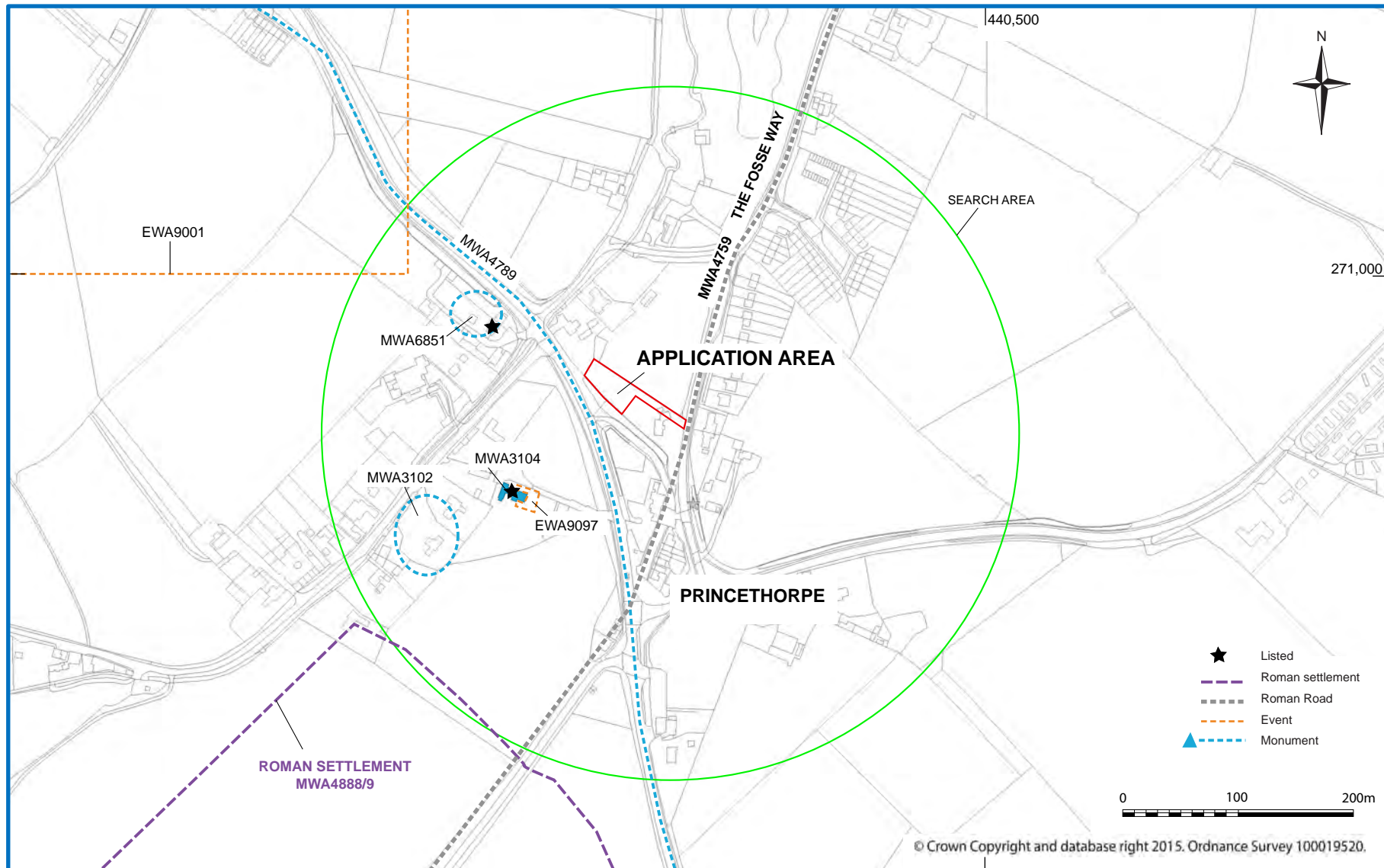


Fig 1: Location of Application Area and Historic Environment Information

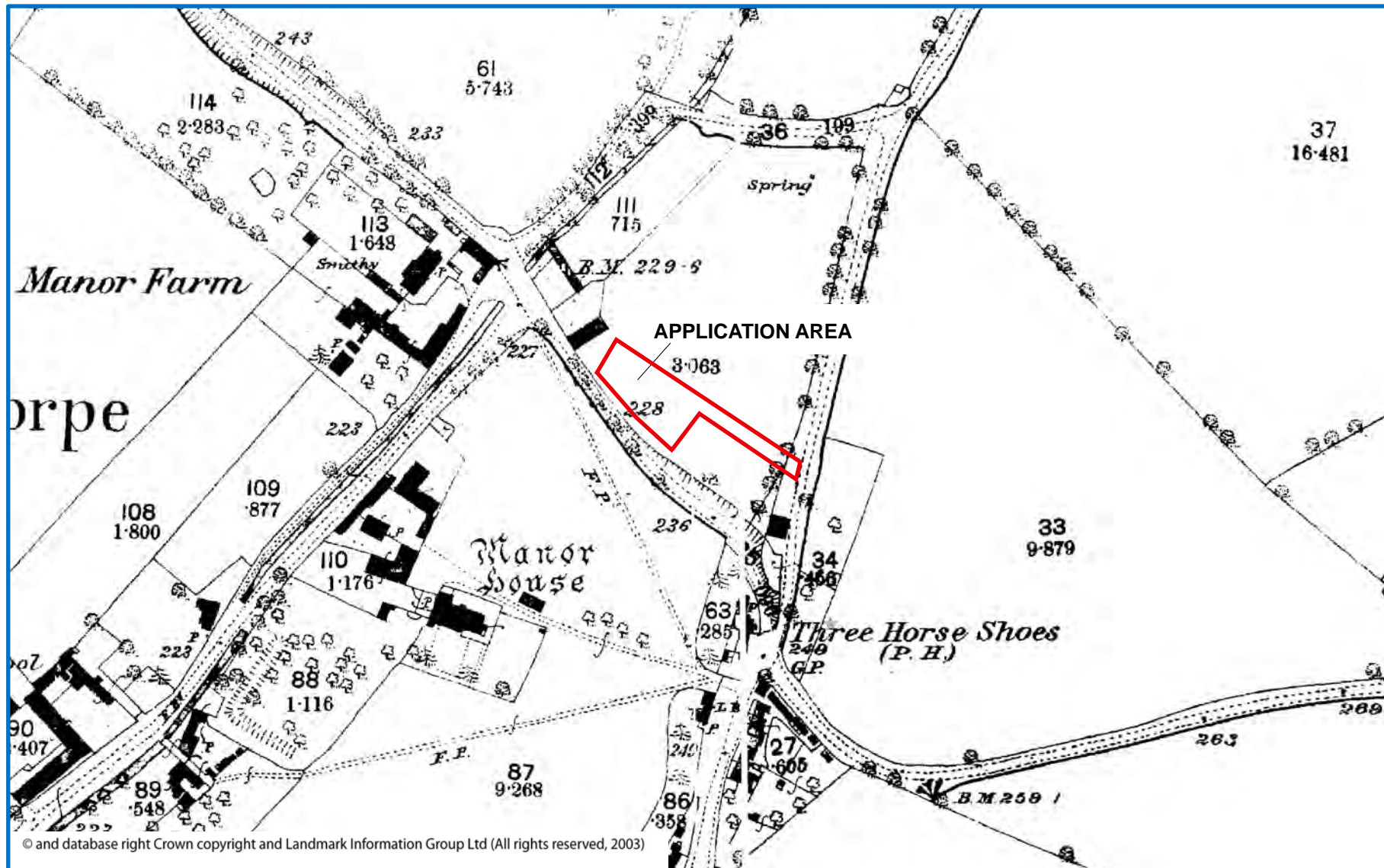


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

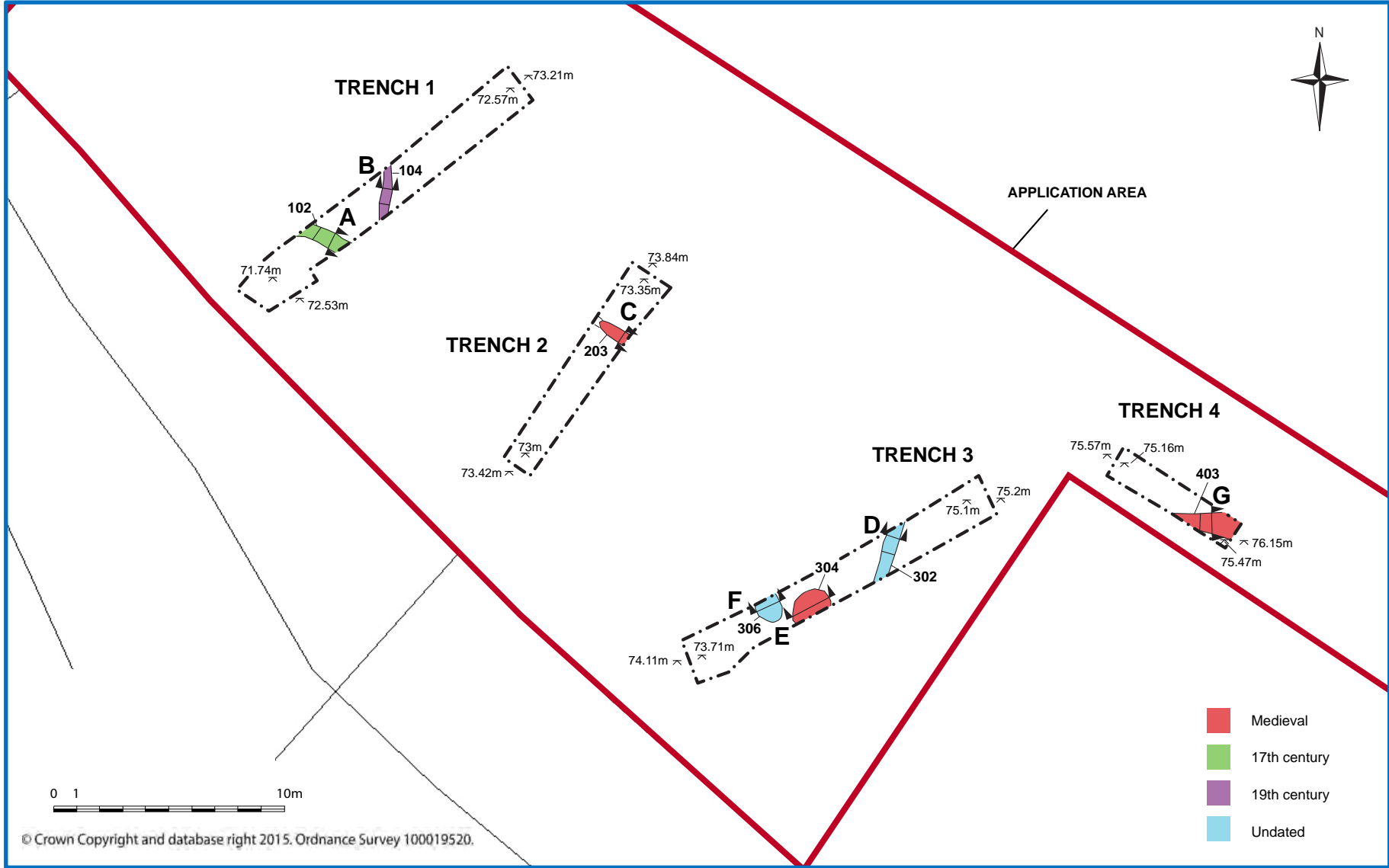


Fig 3: Location and detail of excavated trenches 1 to 4

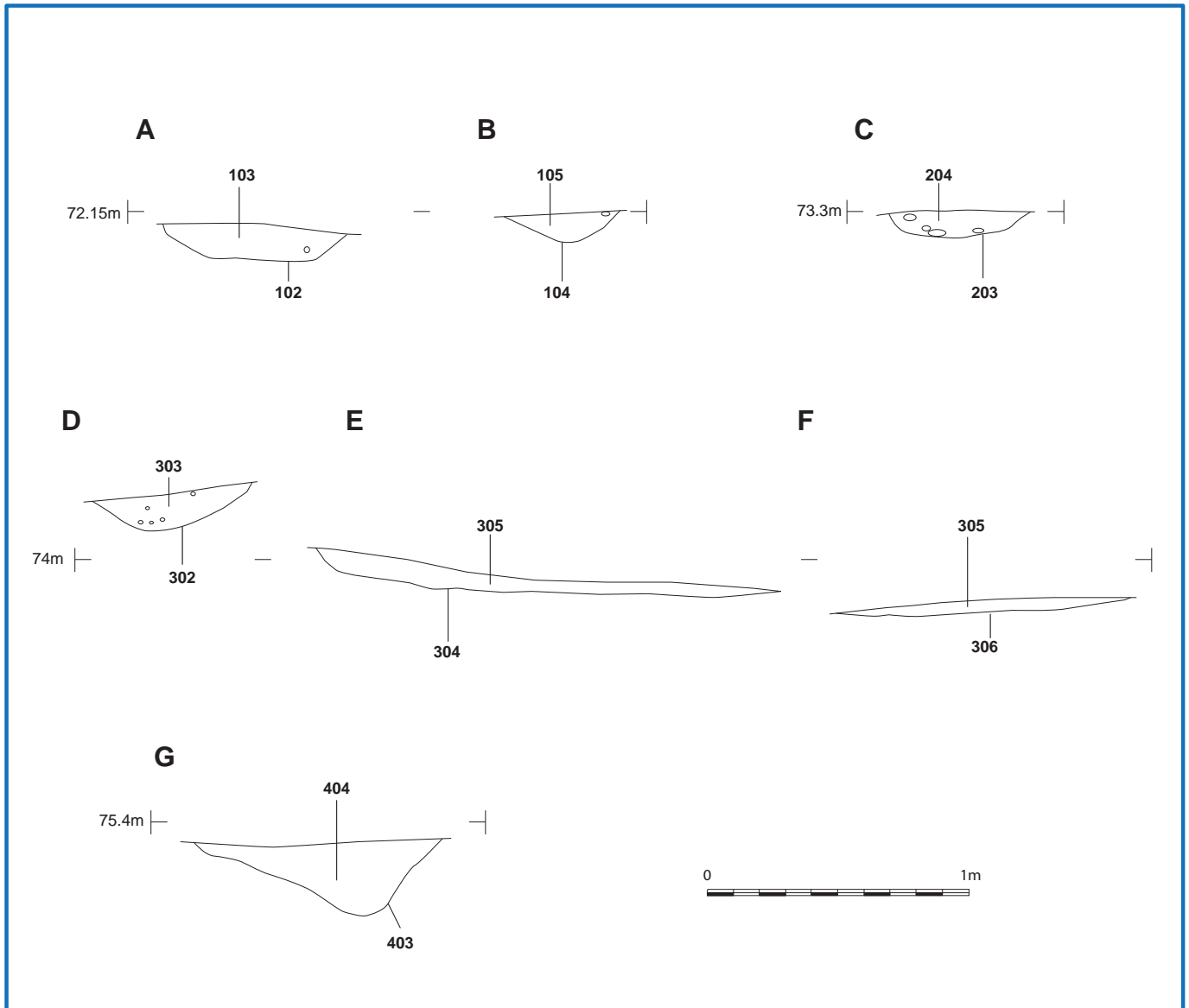


Fig 4: Sections A to G