

Sutton Lane, Lower Brailes, Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1554

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Evaluation at Sutton Lane
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of the Feldon Housing Association in advance of new development. No evidence for Roman or medieval settlement was found although a series of undated ditches and gullies which predated the ridge and furrow system were recognised. Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered from the overlying plough soils.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission is being sought from Stratford-upon-Avon District Council for development of 18 houses on land off Sutton Lane, Lower Brailes, Warwickshire. The site lies in an area of archaeological potential and there is a possibility that archaeological deposits could be disturbed or exposed by the development.

1.2 Warwickshire Planning Archaeologist Anna Stocks, in her capacity as advisor to the planning authority, has advised that the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in order to provide more information regarding the archaeological impact of the proposed 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 BS14.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The site is located to the west of Sutton Lane and is surrounded by fields to the north, south and west with the eastern side bound by a small number of houses. The application area (approximately 1 ha) is mostly flat, ploughed arable land. The underlying geology is mudstone of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation and no drift geology is recorded (British Geological Survey 2014).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 A detailed magnetic gradiometer survey was conducted at the site in September 2014 (Davies R. 2014). It was able to identify a number of anomalies that have been characterised as being of probable and possible archaeological origin.

Probable Archaeology

- 1 A number of widely spaced parallel linear anomalies across the site are related to ridge and furrow cultivation.

Possible Archaeology

- 2-3 Positive linear anomalies in the south east of the site that are indicative of former cut features of possible archaeological origin. Anomalies 3 are possibly damaged by ridge and furrow activity (Anomaly 1), however it is not clear which anomaly is earlier.

Other Anomalies

- 4 Areas of magnetic disturbance are the result of substantial nearby ferrous metal objects such as fences and underground services. These effects can mask weaker archaeological anomalies, but on this site have not affected a significant proportion of the area.
- 5 A number of magnetic 'spikes' (strong focussed values with associated antipolar response) indicate ferrous metal objects. These are likely to be modern rubbish.

3.2 Geophysical survey in the area has been successful in identifying archaeological sites. A multi-phase site including prehistoric features was found at Henbrook Lane (Historic Environment Record MWA 13080). This included a possible pit alignment (HER MWA 13079).

3.3 Roman finds have been recorded 300m to the north-west of the site (HER MWA 10072) and in the corner of the site, although this location may not be precise (HER MWA 18272). Further finds were made over 150m to the east (HER MWA 2331). These findspots could represent a settlement or other activity within the 500m search area.

3.4 Brailes is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) as a royal manor with an estimated population of c.665 (VCH 1949). However, this population would have been divided between various settlements in the parish including Upper Brailes, then known as Over Brailes (HER MWA 2359). An early medieval saltway ran through the settlement (HER MWA 8672) and there is a medieval motte and bailey castle (HER MWA 2311) which is further north in Upper Brailes. The medieval settlement of Brailes was much larger than it is today, particularly in the 13th century and the site lies just to the south of an area believed to be shrunken medieval settlement at Upper Brailes (HER MWA 2359). A similar area of

shrunken settlement is recorded for the village of Lower Brailes (HER MWA 2315). The site was probably part of the open fields at this time, as the cropmark remains of ridge and furrow are visible on aerial photographs (google earth). This supports the conclusions of the geophysical survey.

3.5 Other HER records in the 500m search area include:-

MWA 13003	Brailes villa gardens	post-medieval
MWA 2304	Friends Meeting House	post-medieval
MWA 2305	Primitive Methodist Chapel	post-medieval
MWA 2330	Coin findspot	post-medieval
MWA 4828	Turnpike Road	post-medieval
MWA 6436	Ridge and Furrow	Medieval/post-medieval
MWA 7136	Findspot	post-medieval
MWA 9681	Ditch	Undated
MWA 7250	Findspot	Medieval pottery
MWA 8462	Brailes House Grounds	Imperial

3.6 Previous archaeological work in the search area includes a negative watching brief which was carried out in the field to the immediate west of the site (HER EWA 3294). Two trial trenches were excavated at Grove End House in 1991 (HER EWA 889). Three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the small scale work.

3.7 Further to the west, an extensive geophysical survey in the area of Henbrook House revealed multi-phased archaeological remains including previously unknown prehistoric activity (HER EWA 9751). During an observation near to this, archaeologists found a prehistoric flint blade (HER EWA 9376).

3.8 The site has been divided into smaller paddocks since the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885-1889, when the fieldscape looks typical of planned enclosure (Landmark 2003). The houses to the east are visible on aerial photographs from 1999 (google earth). The subdivisions of the field are later; occurring in 2006 (*ibid*).

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 Nine trial trenches were excavated using a JCB under direct archaeological supervision. Plough furrows, corresponding to those identified by the geophysical survey were present in most of the trenches (Fig 3). With the exception of Trench 1, linear features were found in all of the trenches.

5.2 In Trench 4, two parallel north-south aligned ditches were recorded (403 and 405). These features appeared to correspond with the positive anomalies depicted in the geophysical survey and the greyscale plot suggests that the features may predate the ridge and furrow (Fig 6). No dating evidence was recovered from the mixed dark yellowish brown and dark greyish brown clay fills (404, 406).

5.3 In Trench 6 19th/20th century pottery was recovered from feature 603 (not fully excavated) which also cut the ridge and furrow and therefore post-dated it. In Trench 2, a stone field drain 204 which lay along a furrow, was also found to be of this date.

5.4 The other 10 linear features did not have a clear relationship with the ridge and furrow (202, 302, 304, 503, 505, 507, 509, 703, 803, 903 and 905). Medieval pottery dating from the 11th-13th century was recovered from ditches 304 and 202.

5.5 A small amount of pottery of Roman, medieval and post-medieval date was recovered from the surface of the field. Fragmentary and largely undiagnostic animal bone was found in a number of ditch or gully fills.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Some of the ditches or gullies on the site are probably part of a field system pre-dating the ridge and furrow. The presence of Roman pottery could suggest a date for this

agricultural activity. Other ditches or gullies are medieval or later in date. The evidence gathered from the evaluation does suggest that the site has been in agricultural use for the last two thousand years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Graham Warmington for commissioning the work and Brian for driving the machine. We would also like to thank Stephanie Ratkai for providing spot dates for the pottery.

REFERENCES

BGS 2014 British Geological Survey Viewer

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (accessed October 2014)

Davies, R, 2014 *Lower Brailes, Warwickshire, Geophysical Survey Report*, Stratascan Sumo J7373

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APPENDICES

A List of contexts

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Depth m or AOD</i>
1	100	Brown silty clay	Topsoil	0.3
1	101	Light brown silty clay	Ploughsoil	0.25
1	102	Yellowish brown clay	Geological Natural	
2	200	Mid brown silty clay	Topsoil	0.2
2	201	Light brown silty clay	Ploughsoil	0.36
2	202	Linear E-W steep sides flat base	Gully	0.33
2	203	Greyish brown silty clay, medieval pottery	Fill of 202	0.33
2	204	Cut of Linear stone drain	Drain cut	
2	205	Roughcut Ironstone?,	Ironstone drain construction	
2	206	Dark yellowish brown with tiny sherds of 19 th century pottery	19 th /20 th century backfill of drain	
2	207	Light brownish yellow	Geological Natural	
3	300	Mid brown silty clay	Topsoil	0.2
3	301	Light brown silty clay	Ploughsoil	0.38
3	302	Linear SSE-NNW, steep sides flattish base,	Gully	0.24
3	303	Mid brown silty clay, Animal bone	Fill of 302	0.24
3	304	Irregular shaped cut – NW-SE linear?	Ditch?	0.3
3	305	Dark greyish brown silty clay, medieval pottery	Fill of 305	0.3
3	306	Brownish yellow and greyish brown clay with gravel patches	Geological natural	
4	400	Dark greyish brown clay	Topsoil	0.32
4	401	Dark yellowish brown clay	Ploughsoil	0.25
4	402	Yellowish brown/Strong brown clay with ironstone patches	Geological natural	

4	403	<i>N-S linear, very steep sides and flat base</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	0.45
4	404	<i>Mixed dark yellowish brown and greyish brown clay</i>	<i>Fill of 403</i>	
4	405	<i>N-S linear steep sides and curved base</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	0.16
4	406	<i>Mixed dark yellowish brown and greyish brown clay</i>	<i>Fill of 405</i>	0.16
5	500	<i>Greyish brown silty clay</i>	<i>Topsoil</i>	0.3
5	501	<i>Light-brown clay</i>	<i>Plough</i>	0.2
5	502	<i>Yellowish brown clay</i>	<i>Geological Natural</i>	
5	503	<i>NE-SW linear, u-shaped profile</i>	<i>Drainage Gully</i>	0.18
5	504	<i>Mixed yellowish brown/greyish brown silty clay, Large stones</i>	<i>Fill of 503</i>	0.18
5	505	<i>NE-SW linear, V-shaped profile</i>	<i>Gully</i>	0.28
5	506	<i>Mixed yellowish brown/greyish brown silty clay</i>	<i>Fill of 505</i>	0.28
5	507		<i>Ditch</i>	0.35
5	508	<i>Mid greyish brown silty clay</i>	<i>Fill of 507</i>	0.35
5	509	<i>Mixed yellowish brown/greyish brown silty clay</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	0.46
5	510	<i>Mid greyish brown silty clay</i>	<i>Fill of 509</i>	0.22
5	510	<i>Dark brown silty clay</i>	<i>Fill of 509</i>	0.24
6	600	<i>Dark greyish brown clay, medieval pottery sherd</i>	<i>Topsoil</i>	0.25
6	601	<i>Dark yellowish brown clay</i>	<i>Ploughsoil</i>	0.23-0.25
6	602	<i>Yellowish brown clay</i>	<i>Geological Natural</i>	
6	603	<i>E-W linear, not fully excavated as 19th century or later</i>	<i>Ditch</i>	>0.2
6	604	<i>Very dark greyish brown clay, lots of animal bone</i>	<i>Fill of 603</i>	>0.2
7	700	<i>Dark brown clay</i>	<i>Topsoil</i>	0.28-0.4
7	701	<i>Dark yellowish brown clay</i>	<i>Ploughsoil</i>	0.2-0.38
7	702	<i>Yellowish brown clay</i>	<i>Geological Natural</i>	

7	703	SW-NE linear irregular edges	Gully	0.16
7	704	Very dark greyish brown clay with frq.charcoal	Fill of 703	0.09
7	705	Dark yellowish brown clay occ.charcoal	Fill of 703	0.07
8	800	Very dark greyish brown clay	Topsoil	0.25-0.3
8	801	Dark yellowish brown clay	Ploughsoil	0.3-0.32
8	802	Yellowish brown clay	Geological Natural	
8	803	NW-SE linear, Steep sides irregular base	Ditch?	0.18
8	804	Mid Greyish brown silty clay	Fill of 803	0.18
9	900	Greyish brown silty clay	Topsoil	0.3
9	901	Mid brown silty clay	Ploughsoil	0.25
9	902	Yellowish brown clay	Geological natural	
9	903	NW-SE linear, flat based	Gully	0.08
9	904	Mid brown silty clay	Fill of 903	0.08
9	905	N-S linear u shaped profile	Gully	0.26
9	906	Greyish brown silty clay	Fill of 905	0.26
9	907	Circular post-hole?, straight sides	Post-hole or burrow	0.10
9	908	Grey silty clay	Fill of 907	0.10

B List of Finds

Context	Type	Number	Comments
000	Pottery	7	2 Roman, 3 medieval, 2 post-medieval sherds
203	Pottery	1	Oolitic tempered pottery 11 th -13 th century
203	A.Bone	15	Undiagnostic with 3 cattle bones
206	Pottery	2	19 th /20 th century
303	A.bone	14	Undiagnostic with 1 frag of ungulate bone
305	Pottery	1	Wychwood type CO01.1 later 12 th -13 th century
305	A. Bone	17	Cattle and ungulate fragments and horn cores
404	A.Bone	8	Undiagnostic with ungulate teeth
600	Pottery	1	Severn Valley ware O Roman
704	A. Bone	4	Undiagnostic fragments
804	A.bone	6	Undiagnostic fragments



Photograph 1. Gully 202



Photograph 2. Gully 302



Photograph 3. Ditch 304



Photograph 4. Gully 405 and gully 403



Photograph 5. Gully 503



Photograph 6. Gully 505



Photograph 7. Gully 507 and gully 509



Photograph 8. Gully 703



Photograph 9. Gully 803



Photograph 10. Gullies 903, 905 and post hole 907

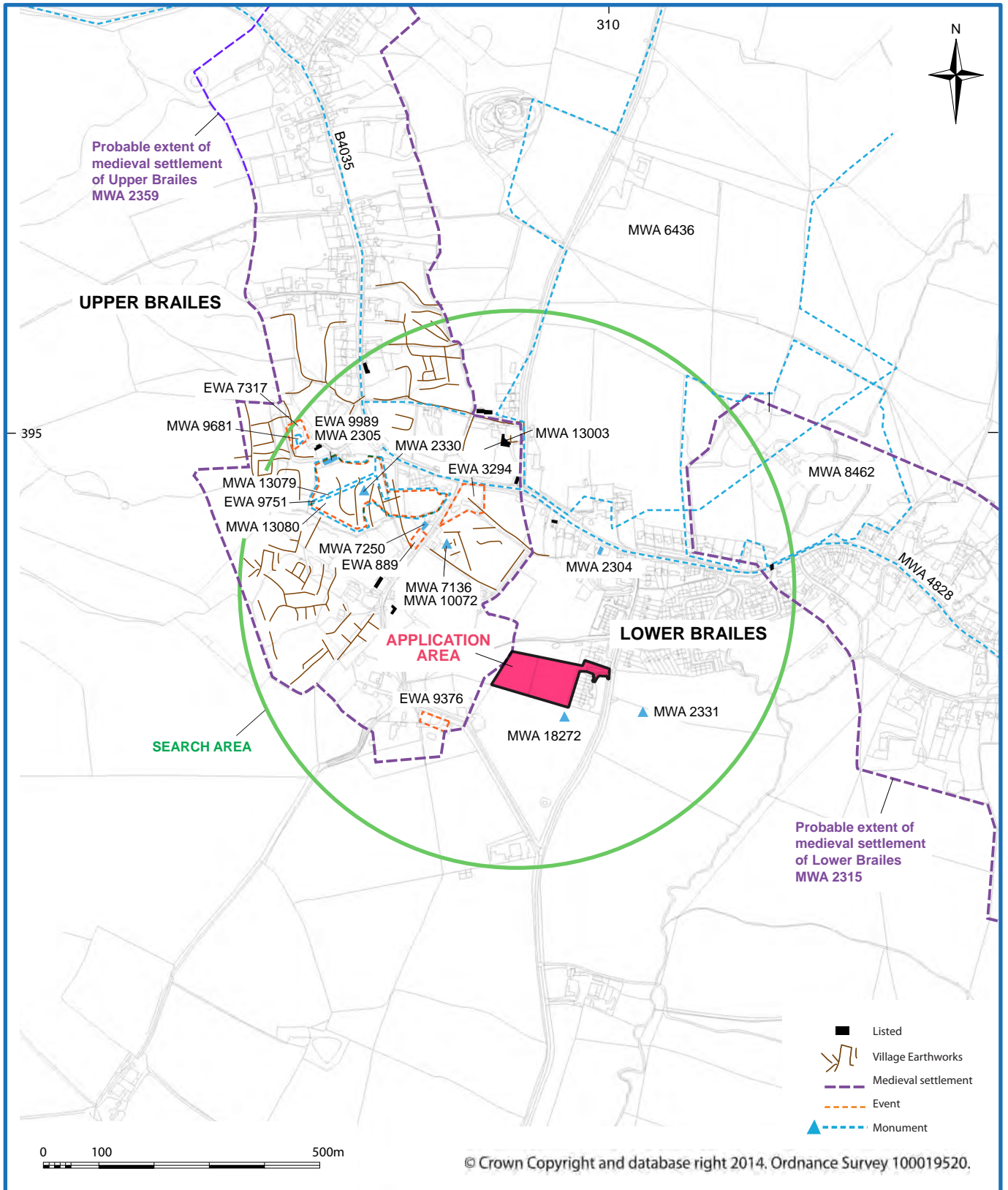


Fig. 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment Information

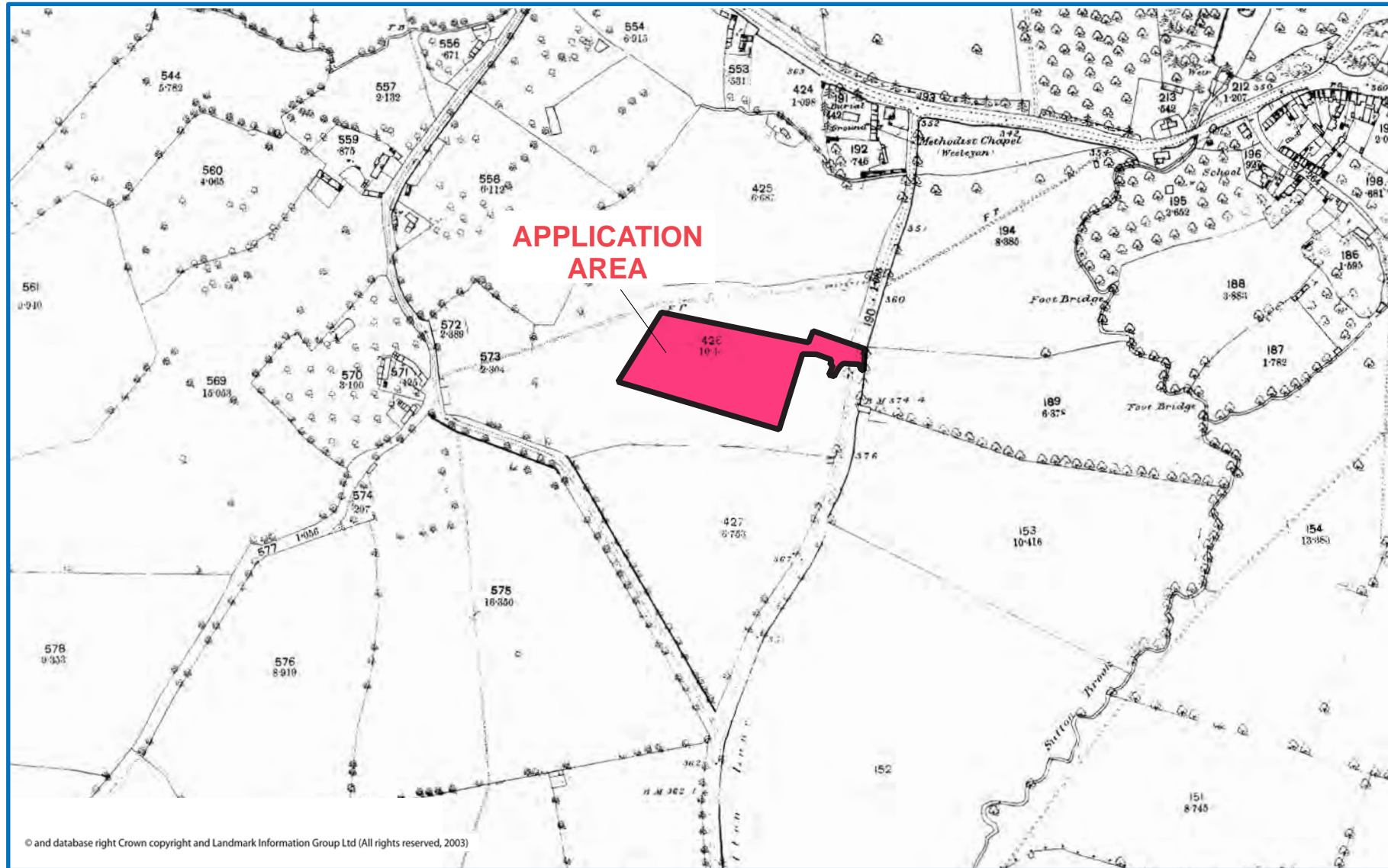


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885-8

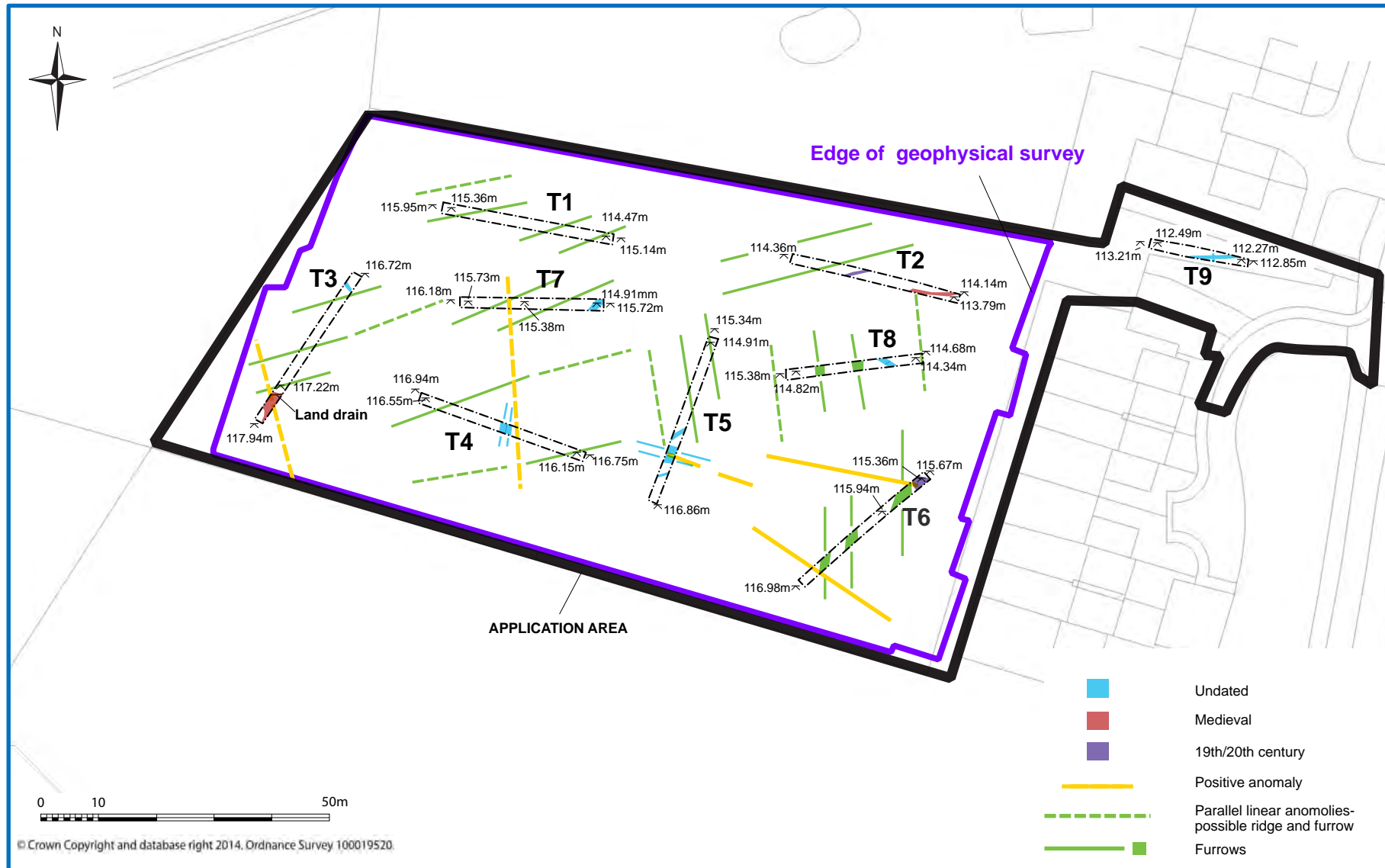


Fig 3: Location of excavated trenches

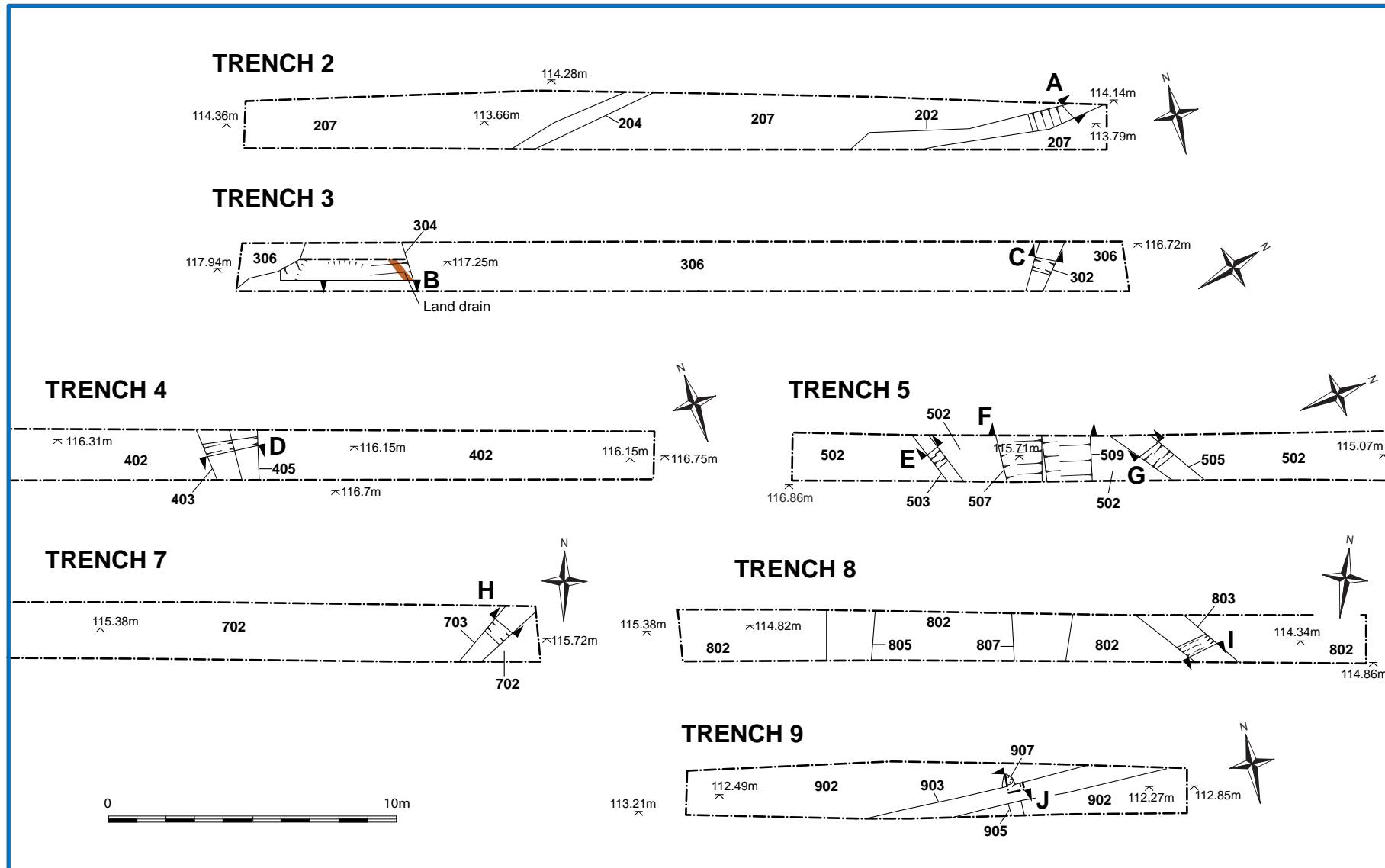


Fig 4: Detail of trenches 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9

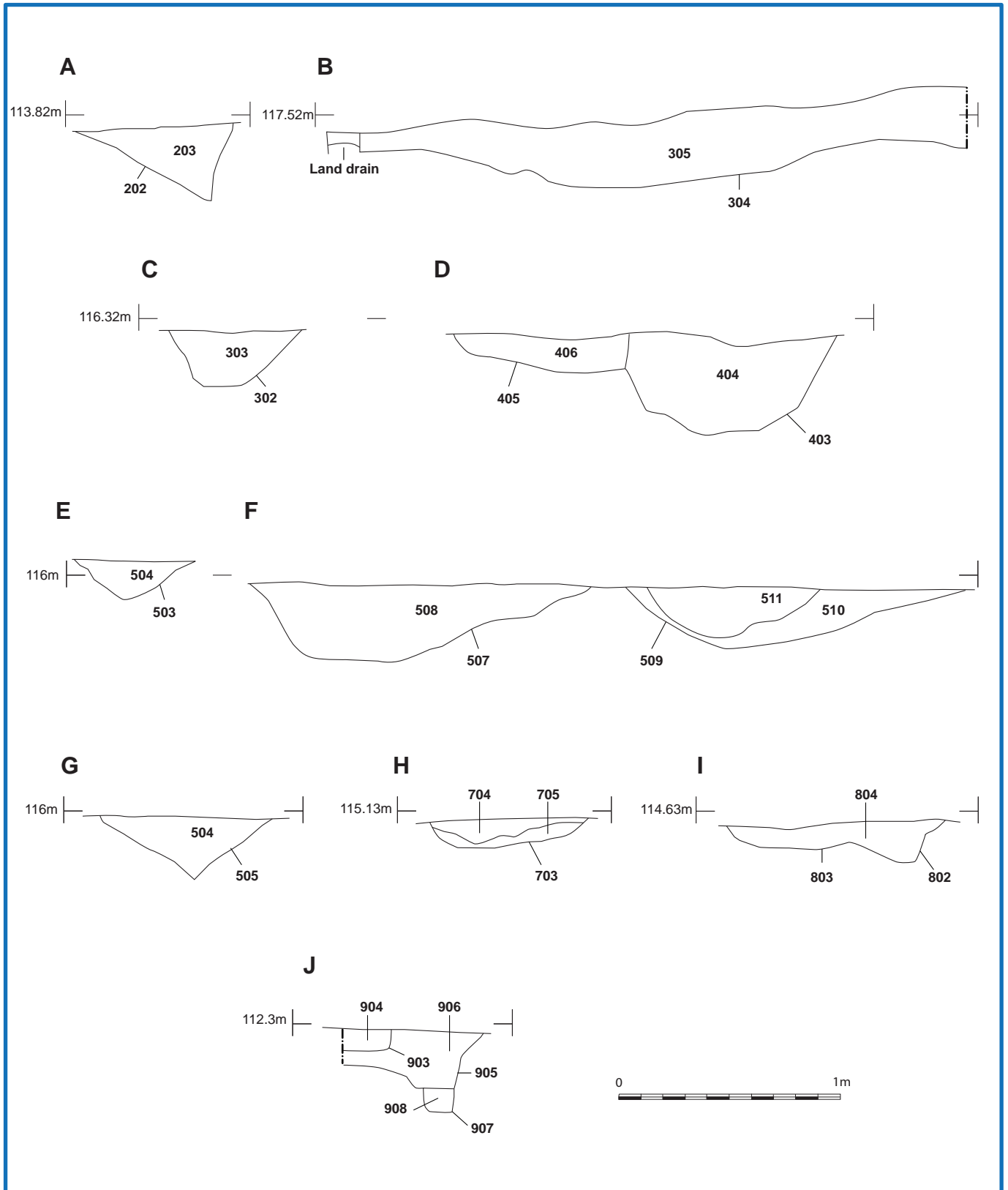


Fig 5: Sections A to J

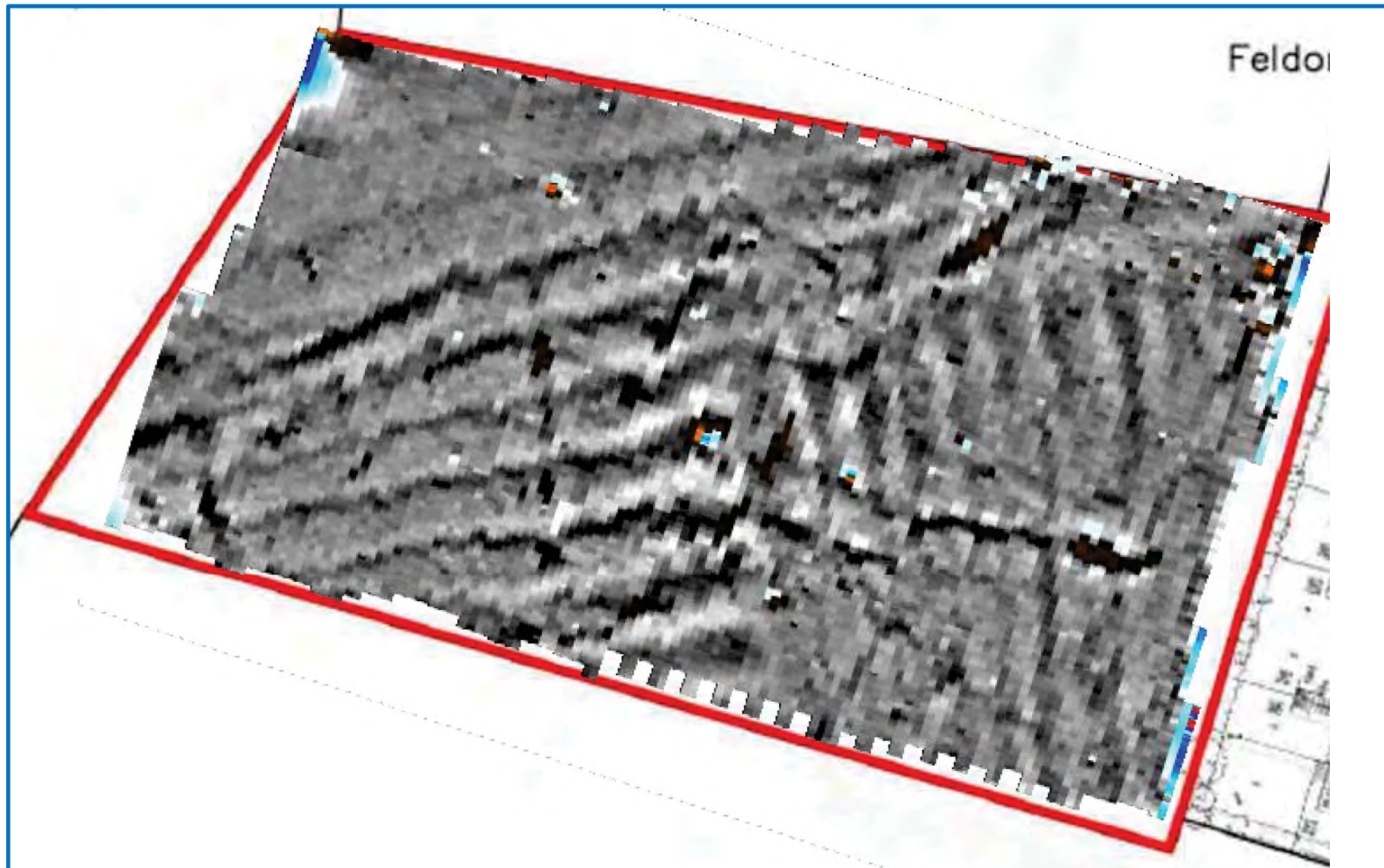


Fig 6: Geophysical survey - greyscale plot