

# Dovedale Road, Perry Common, Erdington, Birmingham

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



*understanding heritage matters*

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1589

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*Working for  
Warwickshire*

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<b>Team:</b>	
<b>Project Manager:</b>	Stuart Palmer MCIfA / Caroline Rann BA
<b>Fieldwork:</b>	Caroline Rann BA, Pete Thompson BA, Robert Jones and Kevin Wright
<b>Author:</b>	Caroline Rann BA
<b>Illustrations:</b>	Candy Stevens
<b>Report checked by:</b>	Stuart Palmer MCIfA
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Archaeology Warwickshire

Unit 9

Montague Road

Warwick

CV34 5LW

01926 412278

[fieldarchaeology@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fieldarchaeology@warwickshire.gov.uk)

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

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## SUMMARY

*An archaeological evaluation consisting of 14 trial trenches was undertaken on behalf of Capita, acting for Birmingham City Council, in an area where desk-based assessment had identified the potential for previously unknown prehistoric and Roman archaeological deposits to be present. No significant archaeological finds, deposits or features were found. Alluvial deposits associated with the Hawthorn Brook, a tributary of the River Tame were recorded but no human activity associated with the watercourse was found.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission is being sought by Birmingham City Council for a housing development and associated works at Dovedale Road, Perry Common. The former Archaeological Adviser to Birmingham City Council Dr Mike Hodder had advised that a programme of archaeological work would be required to provide the authority with detailed information regarding the potential of the development to impact on archaeological remains. An archaeological desk-based assessment carried out in 2010 (Benchmark 2010) identified some potential for previously unknown prehistoric or Roman archaeological remains to be present on the site. The presence of a brook on the eastern edge of the site was taken to imply that palaeochannels or features associated with watercourses such as burnt mounds could be present on the site. A programme of archaeological trial trenching was therefore recommended.

1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake a suitable archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted to the planning authority. This report presents the results of that work which was carried out in November 2015. The site archive will be offered to the Birmingham Museum under Site Code BDE15.

1.3 The archaeological Brief required the programme to include an element of community engagement with the Witton Lodge Community Association Heritage Project and local schools. This was undertaken by Pete Thompson BA PGCE and carried out on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

## 2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The development site is located at Perry Common Recreation Ground, Perry Common, Birmingham. It is bounded by Witton Lodge Road to the north, the Hawthorn

Brook to the east, Perry Common Road to the south and Dovedale Road to the west. There is a natural valley slope down from Dovedale Road from the west towards the Hawthorn Brook in the east.

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Wildmoor Sandstone formation but there may also be overlying glacial fluvial deposits (BGS 2015).

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The archaeological background to the work has previously been presented in the desk-based assessment (Benchmark 2010). In summary it did not identify any archaeological remains within the site but described the potential for previously unknown prehistoric or Roman remains to be present.

### 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.

4.4 The 14 trenches were excavated using a 13-tonne, 360° excavator with a 1.8m wide, toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and other plough soils were removed under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist until the geological natural was reached.

### 5 RESULTS

#### **Deposit sequence**

5.1 The deposit sequence across the evaluation area was relatively uniform and simple. Geological natural pale reddish brown sand and gravel was found across the area. No significant archaeological features were identified cutting the natural. In the eastern part of the site a pale grey silty sand and gravel layer alluvial layer corresponding to the former

course and floodplain of the Hawthorn Brook was found overlying the natural. No archaeological material was found within this layer, which therefore remains undated.

5.2 The alluvial layer was overlain by a very dark brown silty sand layer which can reasonably be ascribed as a former ploughsoil. This was sealed under a developed organically rich black silty sand topsoil or in the case of Trench 14 a modern hardcore compound.

## 6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Following liaison with the Witton Lodge Community Association Heritage Project and local schools, a community open day took place on 5th November 2015. This was designed to provide adults from the local community and school children from a local school with an opportunity to visit the site in order to allow them to engage in the practical aspects of archaeological work and to help gain an understanding of the archaeology and history of their local area.

6.2 On a very inclement day a group of fourteen adults visited the site and were introduced to the nature of the archaeological work and given the opportunity to undertake archaeological excavation and recording tasks. Unfortunately the trench revealed no significant archaeological remains so there were fewer opportunities than were hoped for. Nevertheless, adults were able to undertake a variety of activities including soil horizon descriptions, archaeological context recording, defining an archaeological feature (in this instance a post-medieval field drain) and section cleaning. A question and answer session completed the visit.

6.3 In the continuing wet weather a group of 18 mixed aged Key stage 2 school children were able to undertake some activities in pairs or as a group during a visit to the site. The group had an introduction to the archaeological work, and were then able to engage in some section measurements, cleaning and defining an archaeological feature (previously mentioned post-medieval field drain) and handling archaeological finds derived from the region. Children were encouraged to engage with the archaeologists in an archaeological working environment.

6.4 The local press were present to help record the school children's visit to the site.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The evaluation has successfully established that no significant archaeological remains will be disturbed by the proposed development. The occurrence of an alluvial layer in the southeast part of the site may imply that periodic flooding has dissuaded anything other than temporary activity on the floodplain.

7.2 Although the work did not reveal any significant archaeological deposits, the inclusion of a community benefit aspect has enabled members of the local community to see first-hand how the archaeological prospection process works and, ironically, how very often the results are negative.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## REFERENCES

BGS 2015 British Geological Survey Viewer  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed October 2015.



1. Trench 1



2. Supervising machine





3. Trench 10



4. Trench 14

## APPENDICES

### A List of contexts

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Depth or height above OD</i>
1	100	Very dark grey silty sand	Topsoil	0.22
1	101	Yellow sand and gravel	Layer (redeposit)	0.18
1	102	Black silty sand	Old topsoil	0.55
1	103	Yellow sand and gravel	Layer	0.23
1	104	Yellow sand with patches of sand and clay	Geological natural	109.20 aOD
2	200	Pale light brown gravel	Redeposited natural	0.25
2	201	Black silty sand	Topsoil	0.21
2	202	Light grey sand and gravel	Alluvium	0.46
2	203	Yellow sand and gravel	Geological natural	108.20 aOD
3	300	Black silty sand	Topsoil	0.33
3	301	Light grey sand and gravel	Alluvium	0.55
3	302	Pale reddish brown sand and gravel	Geological natural	107.47 aOD
4	400	Black silty sand	Topsoil	0.28
4	401	Very dark brown silty sand	Old plough soil	0.08
4	402	Light grey sand and gravel	Alluvium	0.55
4	403	Light reddish brown sand and gravel	Geological natural	
5	500	Black silty sand	Topsoil	0.25
5	501	Very dark brown silty sand	Old plough soil	0.10
5	502	Pale brown/grey silty sand	Alluvium	0.70
5	503	Pale reddish brown sand and gravel	Geological natural	
6	600	Greyish brown sand	Topsoil	0.37
6	601	Dark grey sand	Layer	0.10
6	602	Reddish brown sand and gravel	Geological natural	
6	603	Grey sand and gravel	Alluvium	0.19
7	700	Very dark grey silty sand	Topsoil	0.34
7	701	Dark grey silty sand	Layer	0.05
7	702	Reddish brown sand and gravel	Geological natural	
7	703	Grey sand and gravel	Alluvium	0.40
8	800	Very dark brown silty sand	Topsoil	0.52

8	801	Grey sand and gravel	Alluvium	0.40
8	802	Pale reddish brown sand and gravel	Geological natural	105.46 aOD
9	900	Black silty sand	Topsoil	0.28
9	901	Brown silty sand	ploughsoil	0.09
9	902	Reddish brown sand and gravel	Geological natural	
10	1000	Black silty sand	Topsoil	0.30
10	1001	Dark yellowish brown silty sand	Ploughsoil	0.20
10	1002	Strong brown sand and gravel, reddish brown clay	Geological natural	109.62 aOD
11	1100	Black silty sand	Topsoil	0.38
11	1101	Pale brown silty sand	Ploughsoil	0.09
11	1102	Strong brown and pale reddish brown sand and gravel	Geological natural	108.73 aOD
12	1200	Black silty sand	Topsoil	0.31
12	1201	Dark yellowish brown silty sand	Layer	0.16
12	1202	Strong brown sand and gravel, with patches of dark brown root disturbance	Geological natural	109.26 aOD
13	1300	Very dark grey sandy loam	Topsoil	0.22
13	1301	Black sandy loam		0.40
13	1302	Light yellowish brown sand and gravel	Geological natural	
14	1400	Bricks, concrete, metal fragments	Modern hardcore layer	0.37
14	1401	Black silty loam with bricks, concrete slabs and plastic	Layer of old garden soil with demolition rubble	0.44
14	1402	Dark yellowish brown sand and gravel with patches of dark brown sand	Geological natural	

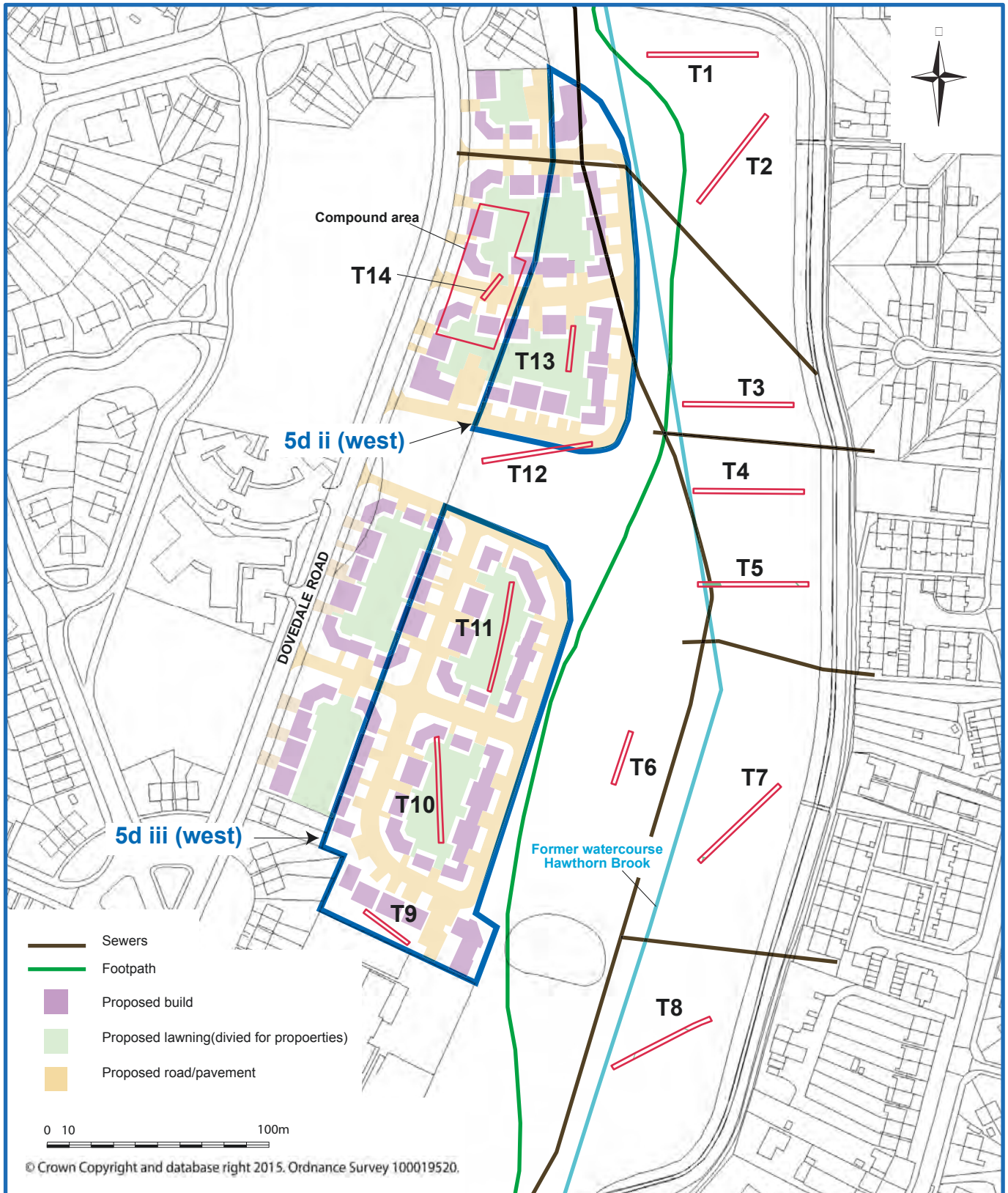


Fig 1: Location of proposed development and excavated trenches

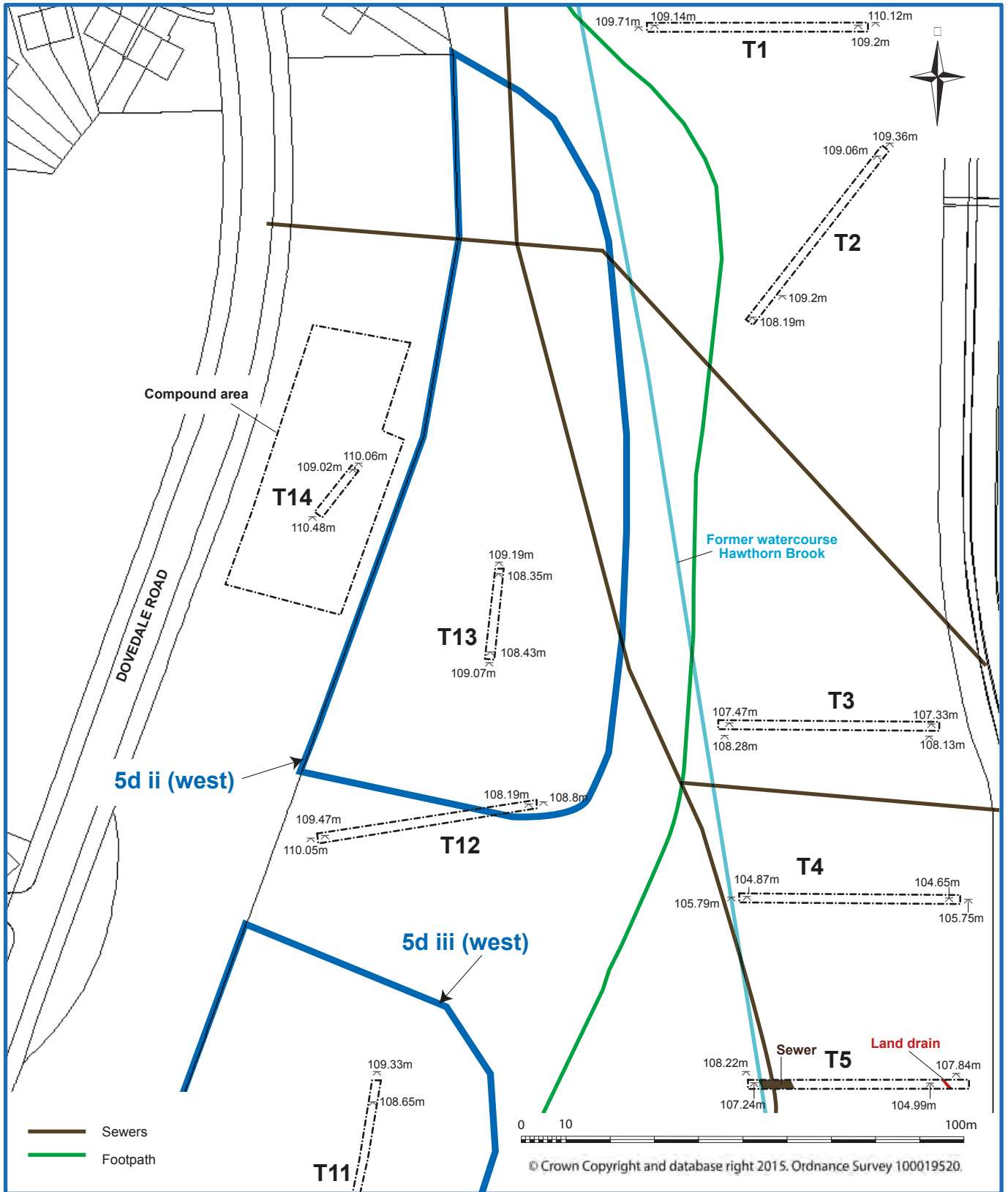


Fig 2: Location of excavated trenches

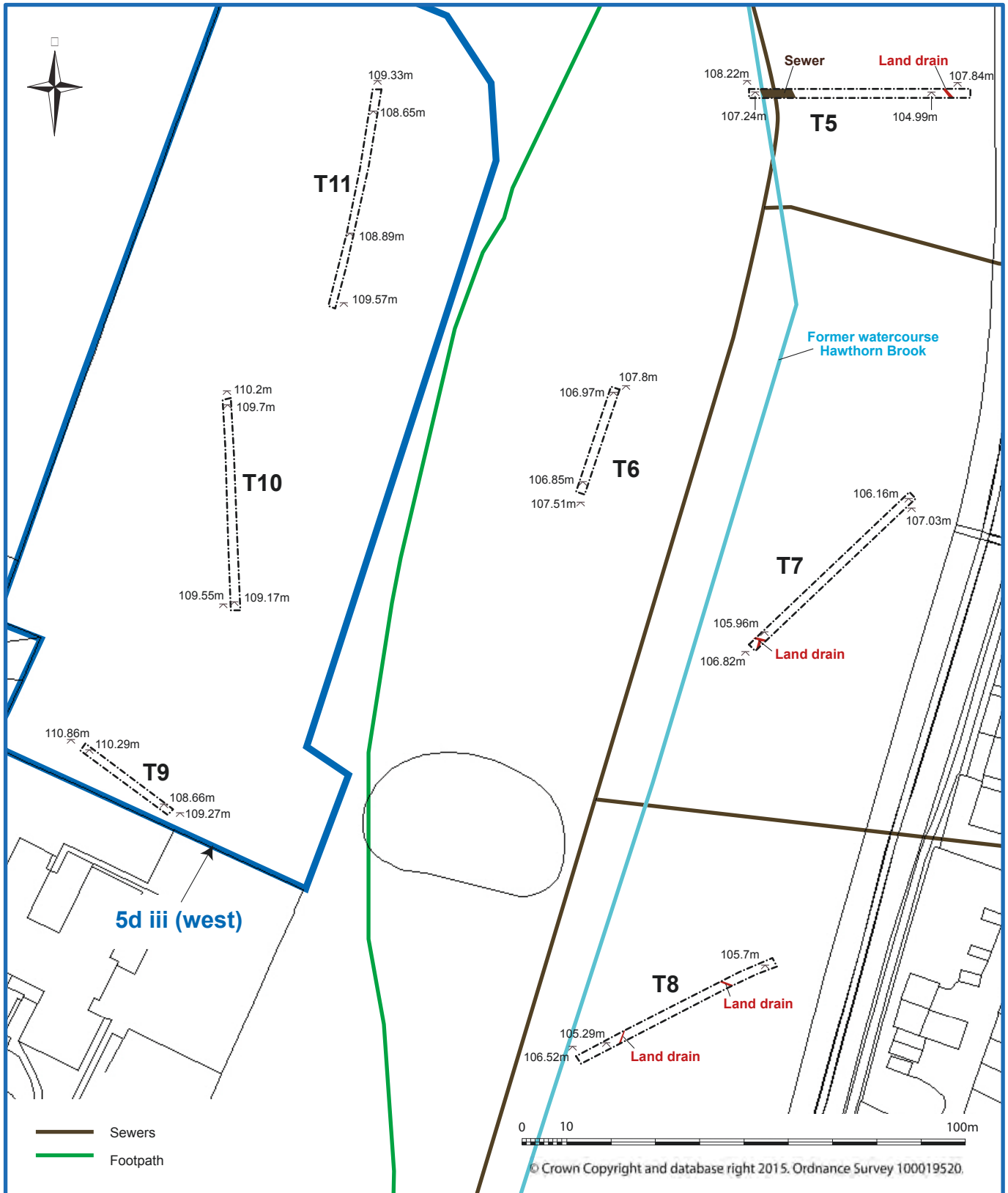


Fig 3: Location of excavated trenches