

Harefield House, High Street, Fenny Compton Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 19112
SEPTEMBER 2019



Working for Warwickshire

Project: Watching Brief at Harefield House
Commissioned by: Mr and Mrs Hill
Site Code: FC18
Planning Reference: 19/00712/FUL
Planning Authority: Stratford on Avon District Council
National Grid Reference: SP 4184 5251
Project Manager: Caroline Rann MCI fA
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SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches and the reduction of internal areas for new extensions to a dwelling located at the edge of the medieval settlement of Fenny Compton on behalf of Mr and Mrs Hill.

No medieval remains were revealed, but a very small amount of medieval pottery was recovered from later deposits.

Post medieval pits and deposits associated with post medieval horticultural activity or former plough soils were revealed.

The results suggest that the location was agricultural or horticultural land at the edge of the village until the construction of Harefield House.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford on Avon District Council for the construction of new rear extensions and a replacement ancillary building at Harefield House, High Street, Fenny Compton, CV47 2YG (Planning ref 19/00712/FUL). An archaeological assessment of the site had previously established that it was within the supposed extent of the former medieval settlement of Fenny Compton, but that the potential to impact on significant archaeological deposits was low (Steele 2018). A recommendation for a Watching Brief during the groundworks phases was subsequently made a condition of planning permission.
- 1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire were thereafter commissioned to carry out a watching brief during ground reductions and foundation trenching in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the planning authority in 2018.
- 1.3 The fieldwork took place in July 2019 and as no further ground works have been undertaken this report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code FC18.
- 1.4 The work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidelines (2014).

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is located on the western side of High Street close to the centre of Fenny Compton. The site lies within the village Conservation Area in the parish of Fenny Compton and is centred on National Grid Reference SP 4184 5251 (Fig 1).
- 2.2 The site is generally level, but is slightly higher than the field to the north. The western boundary lies adjacent to the brook which flows through the village and is a tributary to the River Itchen.
- 2.3 The underlying geology of the area is Charmouth Mudstone. No superficial deposits are recorded (British Geological Survey 2018). The new extension is located in the current garden to the side and rear of the property.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The archaeological background to the site was reported in the Archaeological Assessment (Steele 2018) and is summarised below.
- 3.2 No evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity is recorded within the vicinity of the site. Fenny Compton is thought to have early medieval origins and was recorded as a pre-conquest manor called '*Contone*' in the Domesday Survey of 1086 (AOC 2012). The supposed extent of the medieval village has been extrapolated from the roads and boundaries depicted on 19th century mapping (MWA 8983), which suggest the village probably developed between the church of St. Peter and St. Clare (MWA 664) in the south and the manor house (MWA 646) to the north. If correct, the main settlement would have been along Church Street in the south, along Back Street and part of High Street and extending to Brook Street in the north.
- 3.3 Areas of earthworks recorded on the north (MWA 668) southeast (MWA 667) and east (MWA 13513; EWA9990) edges of the village suggest that the area of settlement has subsequently shrunk from a medieval optimum, and this is supported by the visible limits of the earthwork ridge and furrow fields around the village (MWA 19617).
- 3.4 A possible medieval structure (EWA 5805; MWA 7458) has been archaeologically recorded in Church Street and 13th–14th century domestic rubbish and a medieval ditch were examined in High Street (EWA 897).
- 3.5 Enclosures and fields boundaries identified by geophysical survey to the west of Station Road (EWA 10937) were later evaluated but remained undated (MWA 20499, EWA 10400).
- 3.6 The current village morphology is a consequence of its post-medieval development, with most of the houses in the core of the village dating from the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 3.7 The original elements that form part of Harefield House are not listed, but the house may date from the late 17th century based on the surviving upper floor hooded stone mullioned windows on the street facade. The rear gable end shows a stonework

scars suggesting a reconfiguring of the roof line. The steepness of the earlier roof line would suggest the original building was thatched.

Sites and monuments in the search area recorded on the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record

MWA	Description	Date
2444	Wesleyan Chapel, High Street	Imperial
2445	Primitive Methodist Chapel, Fenny Compton	Imperial
9292	Pound in Fenny Compton	Imperial
19978	Fenny Compton Village Bridge	Imperial to Modern
13019	Fenny Compton Villa Group Gardens	Modern
6196	Site of former house known as "The Hall" with landscape gardens. It was in decay by 1746.	Post-medieval
6197	Post medieval fishpond surviving as an earthwork	Post-medieval

Previous archaeological works (Events) recorded on the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record

EWA	Description
10186	Watching brief at 2 Church Street. No medieval features were located, although two deposits were recorded which probably represent late medieval ploughing
10327	Archaeological Evaluation at A W Freemans and Sons, High Street, 2013. No significant archaeological features were identified.
10399	Desk Based Archaeological Assessment in advance of a proposed housing development.
10633	An archaeological evaluation carried out on land adjacent to Applegarth, Church Street in 2016. The evaluation showed that the site had been used for horticultural activity during the post-medieval period.
6816	Negative archaeological watching brief during groundworks in advance of a development at 2 Northend Road
9334	Archaeological watching brief at Old Rectory, Church Street. No significant archaeological finds were recorded.
945	A watching brief carried out and an evaluation trench excavated in advance of the construction of a new dwelling at land adjacent 1 Church Street. A Victorian building and a ditch were recorded
9901	Site visit to Fenny Compton Villa Group Gardens by J Lovie in 1997.
9994	Geophysical survey carried out as part of an archaeological field evaluation of a proposed development site.

Cartographic Regression

- 3.8 A building in the same location as Harefield House is depicted on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition mapping of 1886. Outbuildings in roughly the same locations as the garden store and workshop are also present. Later map editions (1906, 1955, 1975) show the arrangement essentially unaltered.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any significant archaeological deposits revealed by the development, to collate the fieldwork records into an archaeological archive and present the results of the fieldwork in this report for dissemination.

- 4.2 An experienced archaeologist was present for each period of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with WSI. Where potential archaeological deposits were encountered, the supervising archaeologist assessed and recorded them before they were disturbed.

- 4.3 The foundation trenches for the new extensions were excavated by a machine using a toothless bucket. The trenches were up to 0.70m wide and excavated to a depth of 2m.

5 RESULTS

Geological Natural

- 5.1 Geological natural was recorded as light grey or greyish brown (Lias) clays (4, 5).

Medieval

- 5.2 Three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered during the watching brief. These were derived from probable ploughsoil deposits or later post-medieval deposits (8, 11). No archaeological remains were revealed that could be related to the medieval settlement of Fenny Compton.

Post-medieval

- 5.3 On the western side of the house a circular pit (10) was revealed in a foundation trench and partially revealed during further groundworks. The fill (9) contained charcoal fragments and several fragments of 18th/19th century pottery. The pit had a rough diameter of 1.2m and was approximately 0.4m deep.
- 5.4 A deposit (11) was recorded in a small foundation pit at the western end of the proposed building. This contained several sherds of 18th century pottery. No limits to the deposit were revealed which most likely formed an extensive layer or spread, although, it could be the fill of another post-medieval pit that was not identifiable in the restricted area.
- 5.5 Modern drainage trenches and manholes associated with existing dwelling were revealed during the works, these may have had an impact on the survival of any potential remains.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The programme of archaeological work provided evidence of the history of the site within the curtilage of Harefield House. Whilst the building is not listed the visible external elevations of the original structure include 17th century architectural features, such as surviving stone mullions, hood moulds as well as additional blocked in openings. The later extension of the house undoubtedly impacted upon remains immediately adjacent to the original dwelling.
- 6.2 The watching brief revealed evidence of at least one post-medieval pit and possibly a second reflecting the use of the immediate external area around the dwelling in the late 17th to 19th century period. This area undoubtedly included gardens or yards.
- 6.3 The medieval activity on the site was less clear as only three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered. Although the scale of the work was limited in scope, and the recovery of archaeological data from within narrow foundation trenches is notoriously more difficult than in wider, purposely excavated, archaeological trenches, the absence of remains associated with settlement activity might suggest that the site was not developed in the medieval period.
- 6.4 Concerted archaeological work in many Warwickshire villages since the early 1990s has demonstrated that organically developed villages such as Fenny Compton were not only polyfocal, but could incorporate a sporadic distribution of dwellings, such as cottages and farmhouses with areas of agricultural activity extending into the core of the village.
- 6.5 The exact limits of the medieval settlement (MWA 667) are currently defined by a combination of archaeological evidence, the extent of known or surviving ridge and furrow cultivation and indications provided by post medieval mapping. Whilst evidence of ridge and furrow to the west and east provide a good indication of the likely extent of the settlement, evidence of ridge and furrow survives less well to the north where modern development or farming is likely to have removed it.
- 6.6 It seems most likely that the site was agricultural or horticultural land at the edge of the village until the construction of Harefield House.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr and Mrs Hill for commissioning the work and for the archaeological programme.

REFERENCES

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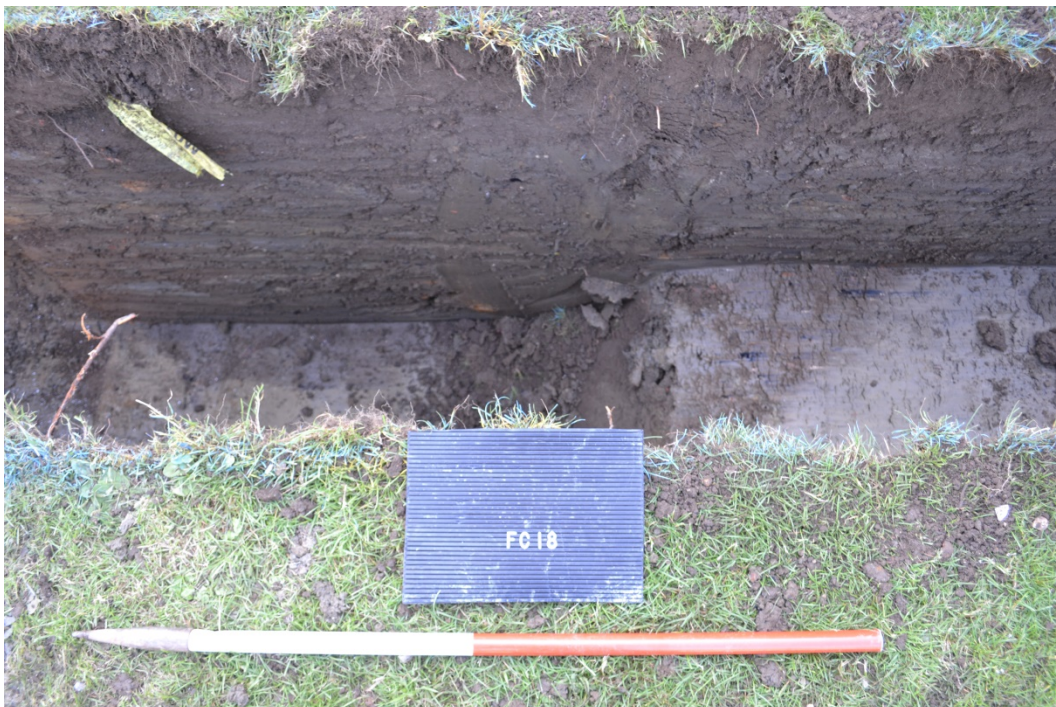
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1: Observed trenches and gable end of the house



2: Pit 10 looking east



3: Observed trenches to north of the house showing pre-existing services

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thickness (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	Dark brown silty clay loam	0.10- 0.15			Topsoil
2	Grey brown silty clay	0.30			
3	Grey brown silty clay				
4	Light grey silty clay				Natural geological clay
5	Grey clay				Natural geological clay
6	Concrete foundation				
7	Back fill for concrete foundation				
8	Greyish brown silty clay				
9	Fill of pit 10				Post-medieval
10	Pit				Post-medieval
11	Layer/?fill				18th/19th century
12	Foundation				

B List of Finds

Context	Material	Quantity	Date/Comments
8	Pottery	3	medieval
9	Pottery	2	18th/19th century (not retained)
11	Pottery	3	18th century

C Oasis Form

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS No	archaeol27-366339
Project name	Harefield House, Fenny Compton		
Short description (250 words max)	Watching brief undertaken during the construction of new extension to Harefield House, Fenny Compton area of archaeological potential.		
Project type (Eg DBA, Eval etc)	Field Evaluation		
Site status (None, NT, SAM etc)	Conservation Area		
Previous work	No		
Current land use	Other 5- Garden		
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	unknown		
Monument type / period	SETTLEMENT Medieval		
Significant finds (artefact, type, period)	None		
Methods & techniques			
Development Type			
Prompt	Planning Condition		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Warwickshire		
Site address (inc postcode)	WARWICKSHIRE STRATFORD ON AVON FENNY COMPTON Harefield House		
Study area	c. 150 sq m		
OS Easting & Northing	SP 4184 5251		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	Archaeology Warwickshire		
Project originator brief			
Project originator design	Caroline Rann		
Manager	Pete Thompson		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date /end date	01/07/2019 to 03/07/2019		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no)	NA	
Physical	Warwickshire Museum	NA	
Paper	Warwickshire Museum	Report	
Digital	Warwickshire Museum	Report, photos	

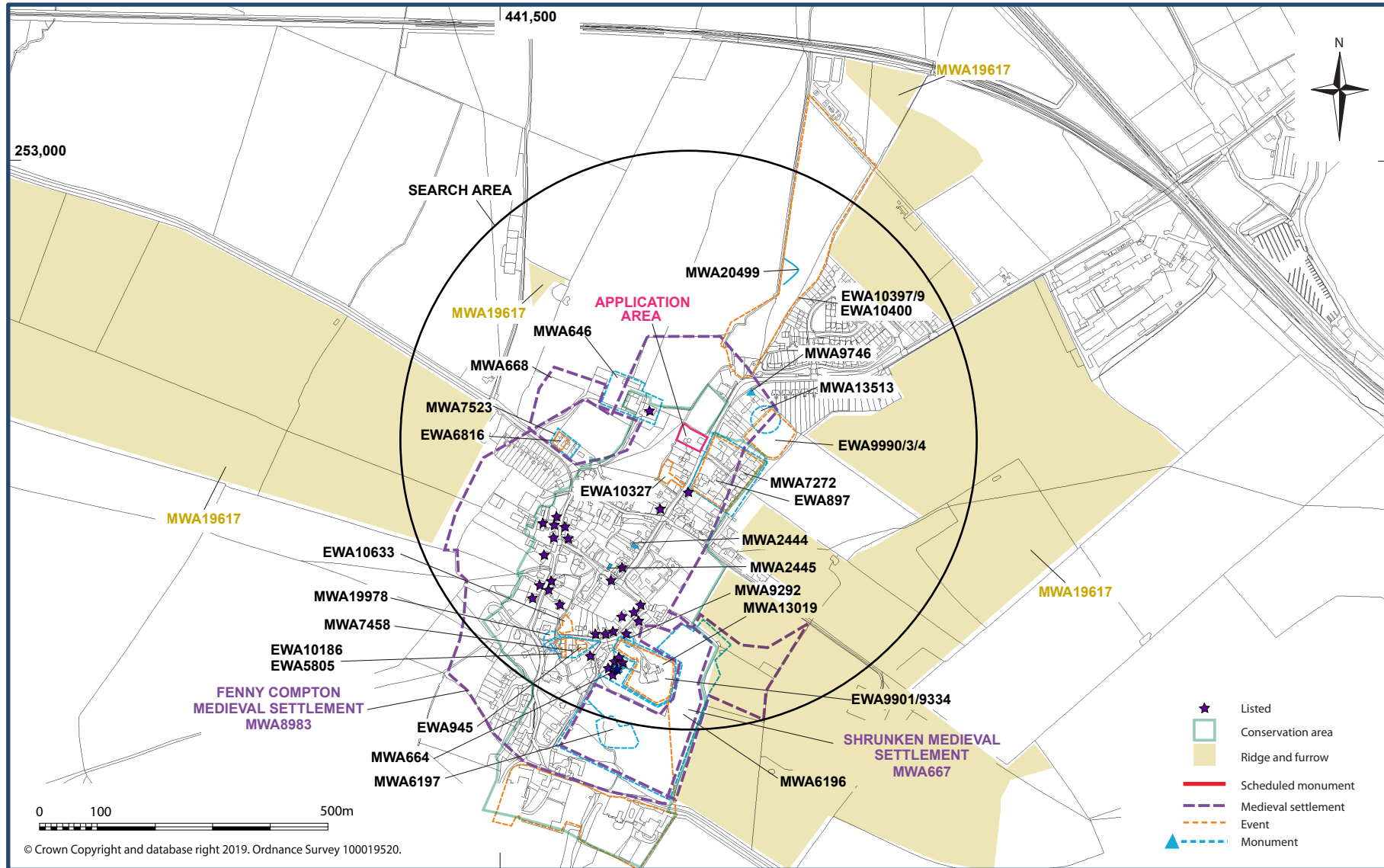


Fig 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment information

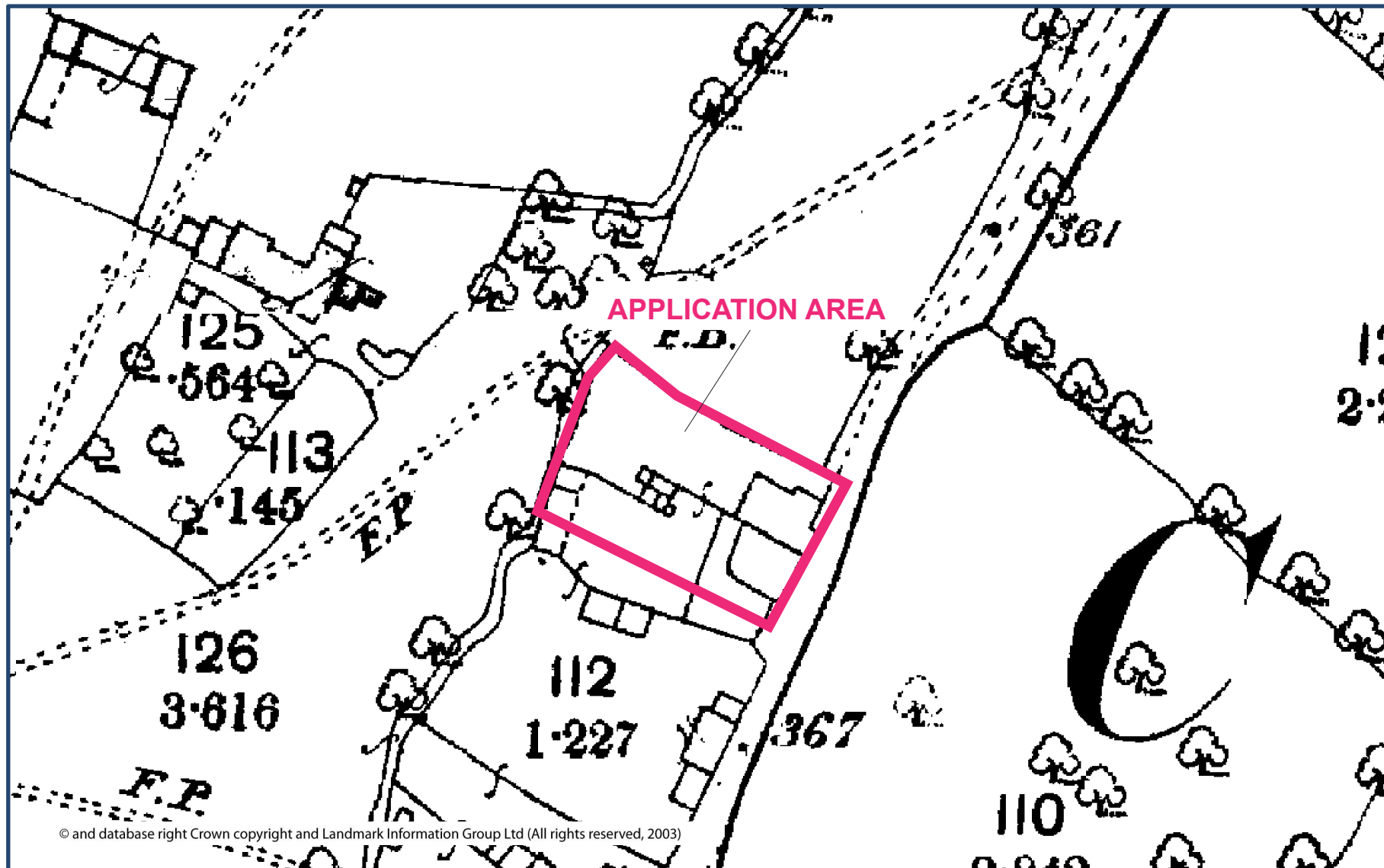


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886



Fig 3: Location of trenches observed and sections A to C