

Charlecote Park Ha-ha, Charlecote, Warwickshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



understanding heritage matters

Report No 1321
April 2013



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Charlecote Park ha-ha 2

Commissioned by: The National Trust

Project Report No. 1321

Site Code: CP13

NGR: SP 2599 5650

Planning Reference: S12/02727/FUL

Staff:

Project Manager: Catherine Coutts
 Fieldwork: Laurence Jones
 Author: Laurence Jones
 Illustrations: Candy Stevens

Report checked by: Catherine Coutts

Date: April 2013

Report reference: Jones, L. 2013 *Charlecote Park Ha-ha, Charlecote, Warwickshire, Archaeological Watching Brief*, Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1321.

Archaeology Warwickshire
Historic and Natural Environment
The Butts
Warwick
CV34 4SS

Tel: 01926 412278
Fax: 01926 412974

fieldarchaeology@warwickshire.gov.uk
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/archaeology



Contents

	Summary
1	Introduction
2	Location
3	Methods and aims
4	Archaeological and historical background
5	Watching Brief
6	Conclusions
	Acknowledgements
	Bibliography

Appendix

A	List of contexts
---	------------------

Figures

1	Site location
2	Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886
3	East-facing elevation of ha-ha walls 100, 102-104 and north-facing section of ha-ha walls 100 and 103
4	View of east-facing elevation of ha-ha walls 100, 102-104
5	Detail of construction joint between 102 and 103
6	View on north-facing section of ha-ha walls 100 and 103

Summary

In April 2012 part of the ha-ha wall at Charlecote Park, Warwickshire, collapsed, revealing the remains of the original 18th-century wall behind the collapsed later brickwork. In March 2013 a 21m stretch of the partially collapsed later ha-ha wall was dismantled by building contractors so that it could be rebuilt, and the earlier brickwork was recorded during an archaeological watching brief. The crude nature of the construction of the original 18th-century wall suggested this earlier brickwork may not have been visible at the time. It is likely that it was covered by a contemporary brick skin which was subsequently replaced by the later ha-ha wall, which appeared to be of 19th- or 20th-century date. The difference in the form of construction, together with the variation in brick coursing, also suggested that the 18th-century ha-ha wall had been the subject of successive episodes of repair, presumably resulting from previous collapses.

1 Introduction

1.1 Heavy rains in April 2012 caused the collapse of a short length of the ha-ha wall at the Charlecote Park, revealing evidence for earlier brickwork behind the existing wall. An initial appraisal by Frank W. Haywood & Associates, Consulting Structural Engineers for the National Trust, noted that at the point of collapse a later brick skin had been built in front of the original ha-ha wall but not tied to it, and that over time debris and water had entered the void between the two sections resulting in the outer skin moving away and eventually failing. The later brick wall is evident for a distance of about 8m either side of the breach (Haywood Assocs 2012). This could be seen on the ground as a slight divergence from the line of the rest of the wall.

1.2 Haywood & Associates carried out a test-pit survey to confirm the cause of the collapse and assess the condition of the rest of the ha-ha. This was accompanied by a programme of archaeological recording.

1.3 In March 2013 a stretch of wall was dismantled by building contractors so that it could be rebuilt and this was the subject of an archaeological watching brief. The work was carried out on March 25th and 26th, and this report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code CP13.

2 Location

2.1 The ha-ha is located at Charlecote Park in the parish of Charlecote, Warwickshire and surrounds a garden area to the north-east of the main house, approximately centred on National Grid Reference SP 2599 5650 (Fig. 1).

2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Second Terrace River Gravels (British Geological Survey 1963).

3 Methods and aims

3.1 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the *Institute for Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance: archaeological watching brief* and the *Archaeology Warwickshire Procedures Manual*. The specific objectives were set out in a written scheme of investigation (Coutts 2013) approved by the Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire Council Council. The main objective was to inspect, draw and record any of the original ha-ha wall that was exposed.

3.2 An experienced archaeologist was made available for each day of dismantling of the wall c in order to identify and record any deposits or finds of archaeological importance. Should it have been necessary, an additional archaeologist would have been made available to help locate and record archaeological deposits. The archaeologist had the authority to halt any earth moving activity, if necessary, in order to define and record areas of archaeological interest.

3.3 The work included observation of archaeological deposits and remains, the recording of archaeological remains in plan and in section, by a suitably experienced archaeologist. Any machine used for ground reduction in the area of the development was able to be fitted with a wide toothless ditching bucket.

3.4 Archaeological deposits and features were recorded using the Archaeology Warwickshire's standard archaeological recording system (Archaeology Warwickshire Procedures Manual 2010). Plans and cross sections were drawn at appropriate scales. Plans and sections were located in relation to national Ordnance Survey grid.

3.5 Details of the deposit sequence/site stratigraphy were recorded and had any significant artefacts been recovered, these would have been collected with a record of their contexts and locations. Archaeology Warwickshire's recording system was used including *pro forma* context sheets with standardised descriptions following Soil Survey soil texture terminology and Munsell colour descriptions.

4 Archaeological and historical background

4.1 At the heart of Charlecote Park is Charlecote Hall which was rebuilt from an earlier house by Sir Thomas Lucy, the work commencing in 1588. It was restored and enlarged c.1829 and c.1847-67. Its ancillary buildings include the gatehouse, 16th-century stables, brewhouse, lodges and a 19th-century orangery (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 7586; VCH 1949, 34). It was originally surrounded by formal gardens and a deer park (HER 1112). A water garden was added in the late 17th century (HER 4653).

4.2 Soon after George Lucy inherited the estate in 1744 work began on alterations to the grounds. Capability Brown was involved by 1757, and was commissioned in 1760. He removed most of the formal elements, re-routed roads, planted groups of trees and created features including a lake and a lodge. The water garden was removed, and the re-modeled area surrounded by a ha-ha. The 19th century saw the addition of parterres and terraces, but much of the garden was reduced to lawn by the 1950s. The National Trust took over the property in 1946, and since 1956 substantial garden restoration has taken place (HER 7112).

4.3 To the south-east of the house is a deserted medieval settlement, represented by house platforms, a hollow way and the field name 'Old Town' (HER 1123). There is a second

possible deserted medieval settlement around St Leonard's church (HER 6270).

4.4 St Leonard's church, some 200m to the east, dates to the medieval period (HER 5179) and has a font of 12th-century date, but was rebuilt in 1851 by John Gibson (HER 1125). The barrel-vaulted ceiling above the organ dates to the 15th-century and must have been reused from the earlier church.

4.5 The ha-ha is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (Fig 2), which shows the relationship between house, gardens and church. Other archaeological work at Charlecote Park includes building recording during alterations to the north wing of the house (Coutts 2001). A watching brief carried out to the south-east of the church in 2009 revealed two phases of ditch with medieval pottery in one of the fills (Palmer 2009). The ditches were probably associated with the former village.

4.6 Four test-pits were excavated and recorded on the edge of the ha-ha in 2012 after its collapse (Greig 2012). This revealed the original ha-ha wall and its foundation, with evidence for previous repair work. In some area the brick walling, in stretcher bond, was capped by stonework. Finds included a complete medieval floor tile, part of a 16-tile design. Pottery in the make-up layer dated from the 15th/16th century to the 19th century and included German Stoneware, Slipware, creamware and pearlware, as well as black-glazed coarseware.

5 Watching Brief

5.1 A 21m stretch of the existing ha-ha wall (100) was dismantled by building contractors and was recorded during the watching brief. An earlier ha-ha wall (Figs 3 and 4), 1.0m high and 0.45-0.50m wide, was revealed behind it, and consisted of a core of mortared brick rubble, faced with roughly coursed red bricks, average size 210mm x 100mm x 60 mm (8 ¼ x 4 x 2 ¼ inches), bonded with a beige mortar. Two structural elements to this earlier wall were identified, separated by a construction joint (Fig 5). The northern structural element (102) consisted of a well-preserved stretch of brickwork laid in what appears to have been a rough English Garden Wall bond. The first and second course of brickwork recorded at the base of the wall projected out by 0.10m. Brickwork 102 showed signs of previous collapse. Abutting 102, to the south of the construction joint, was another structural element (103), comprising roughly-coursed brickwork of non-uniform construction incorporating soldier coursing. The south part of this (104) was in poor condition and in a state of partial collapse. Occasional surviving fragments of roughly-coursed brickwork of non-uniform construction, again incorporating soldier coursing and reused green sandstone blocks was visible in places, along with the mortared brick rubble core mixed with a brown sandy loam. Brickwork 102-4 was overlain by a layer of topsoil, 0.20-0.30m deep.

5.2 Brickwork 102-104 was sealed by the existing ha-ha wall 100 (not illustrated in detail), 1.2m high and 0.11m wide, which was made of red bricks, average size 230mm x 110mm x 60mm (9 ⅙ x 4 ⅓ x 2⅓ inches), topped with sandstone capstones of rectangular profile. It was laid in English Garden Wall bond and bonded with an off-white mortar. There was no bond between wall 100 and earlier brickwork 102-104. A void between the existing ha-ha wall 100 and the earlier brickwork 102-104, up to 0.15m wide, was infilled, in places, with concrete and brick fragments (105, Figs 3 and 6).

5.3 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The size and nature of the bricks used in the construction of the earlier ha-ha wall are compatible with an 18th-century date for the wall. The crude nature of its construction suggests this brickwork would not have been visible at the time. It is likely that it was covered by a contemporary brick skin which may have been subsequently replaced by the current ha-ha wall, which appears to be of 19th- or 20th-century date.

6.2 The ha-ha wall revealed in Test Pit 3 in 2012 (Greig 2012), some 35m to the south of the stretch of wall recorded during the current watching brief, was well-constructed in stretcher-bonded brickwork, with an elliptical-topped sandstone capping, and showed no sign of disturbance. This was in contrast to the crudely constructed length of wall revealed during the current watching brief. The difference in the form of construction together with the variation in brick coursing either side of the construction joint recorded during the watching brief also suggests that the 18th-century ha-ha wall has been the subject of successive episodes of repair, presumably resulting from previous collapses.

Acknowledgements

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank the National Trust (Keith Challis and Lisa Topham) for commissioning the work, and also the Trust's staff at Charlecote for their help during the fieldwork. The fieldwork was carried out on behalf of Archaeology Warwickshire by Laurence Jones, who wrote this report. The illustrations are by Candy Stevens. The report was checked by Catherine Coutts, who managed the project.

Bibliography

British Geological Survey 1963 Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), Solid and Drift Geology, Banbury, Sheet 201.

Coutts, C. M. 2001 *Archaeological Observation of alterations to The North Wing, Charlecote Park, Warwickshire*, Warwickshire Museum Report 0105, Warwick.

Coutts, C. M. 2013 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief at Charlecote Park Ha-ha*, Archaeology Warwickshire.

Greig, I. 2012 *Emergency Recording of a collapsed Ha-ha at Charlecote Park, Charlecote, Warwickshire*, Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1220, Warwick.

Haywood Assocs 2012 Letter to National Trust (Lisa Topham, Park & Garden Manager, Charlecote Park) dated 9th May 2012, Frank W. Haywood and Associates, Consulting Structural Engineers.

Palmer, S. C. 2009 *Archaeological Watching Brief at Charlecote Park, Charlecote, Warwickshire*, Warwickshire Museum Report 0935, Warwick.

VCH 1949 *Victoria County History of Warwickshire, Volume V, Kington Hundred*, London.

Appendix A: List of contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>
100	Existing brick ha-ha wall
101	Topsoil
102	Earlier brick ha-ha wall
103	Earlier brick ha-ha wall
104	Partly collapsed earlier brick ha-ha wall
105	Concrete and brick infill between ha-ha walls 100 and 102-104

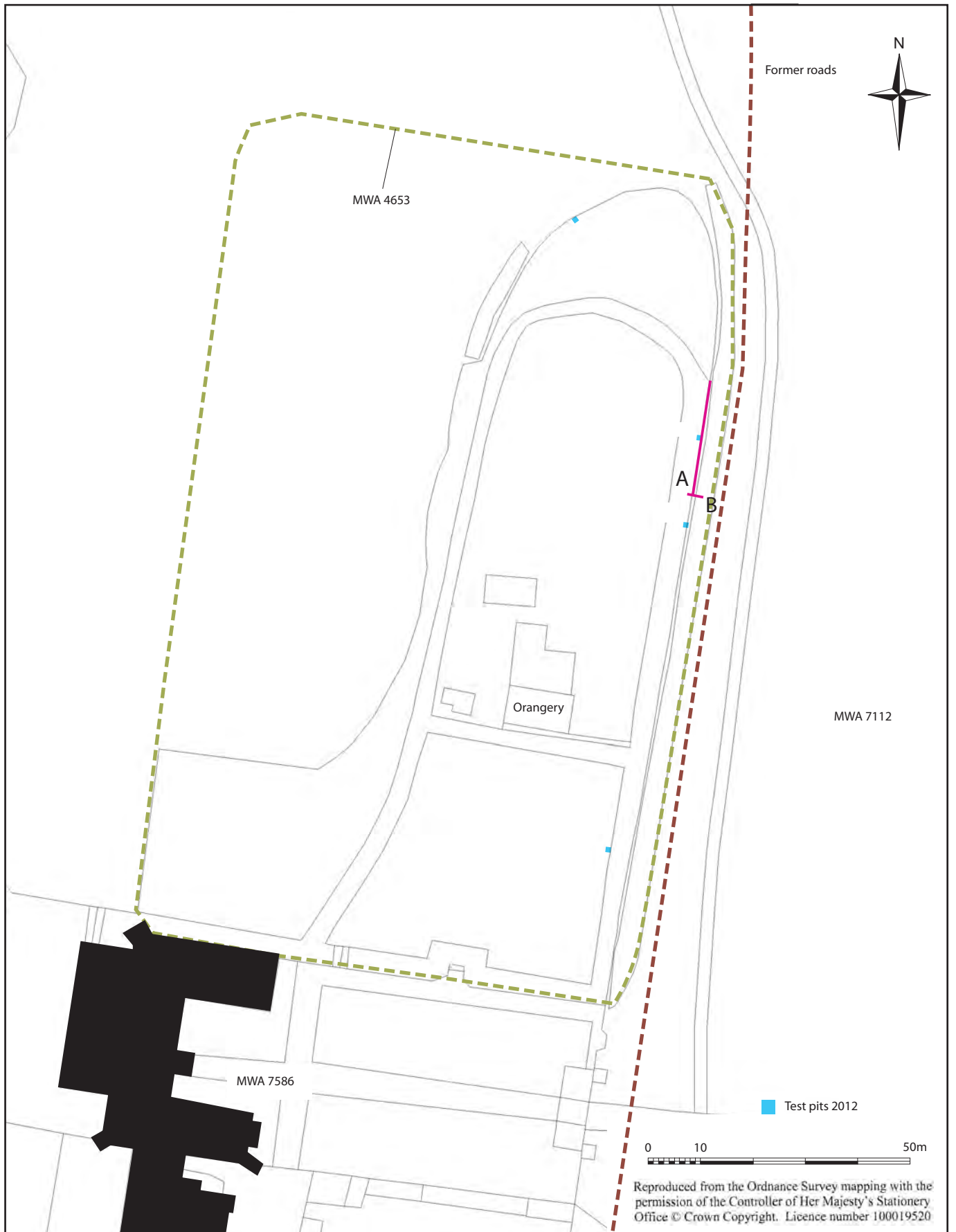


Fig 1: Site location

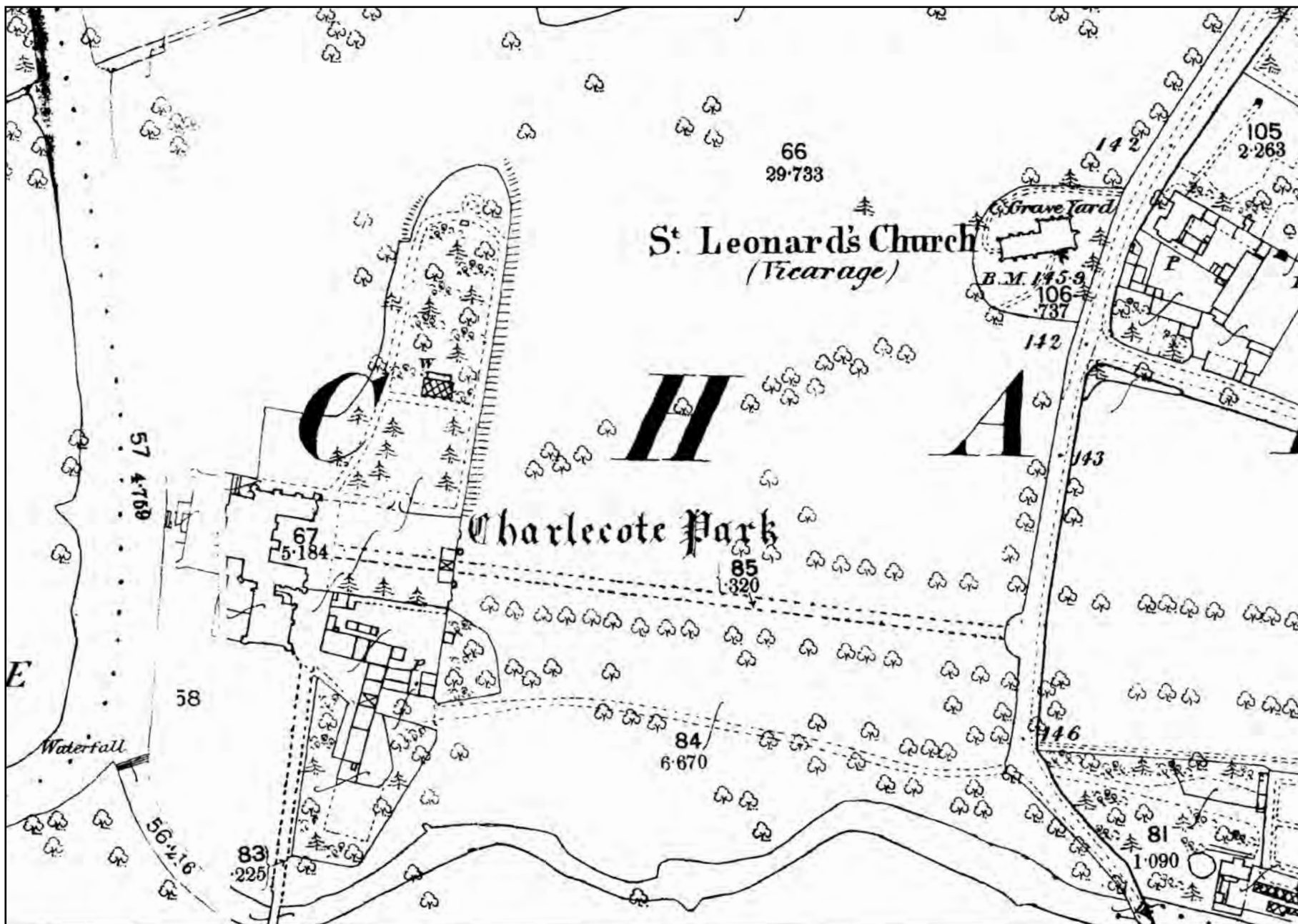


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886

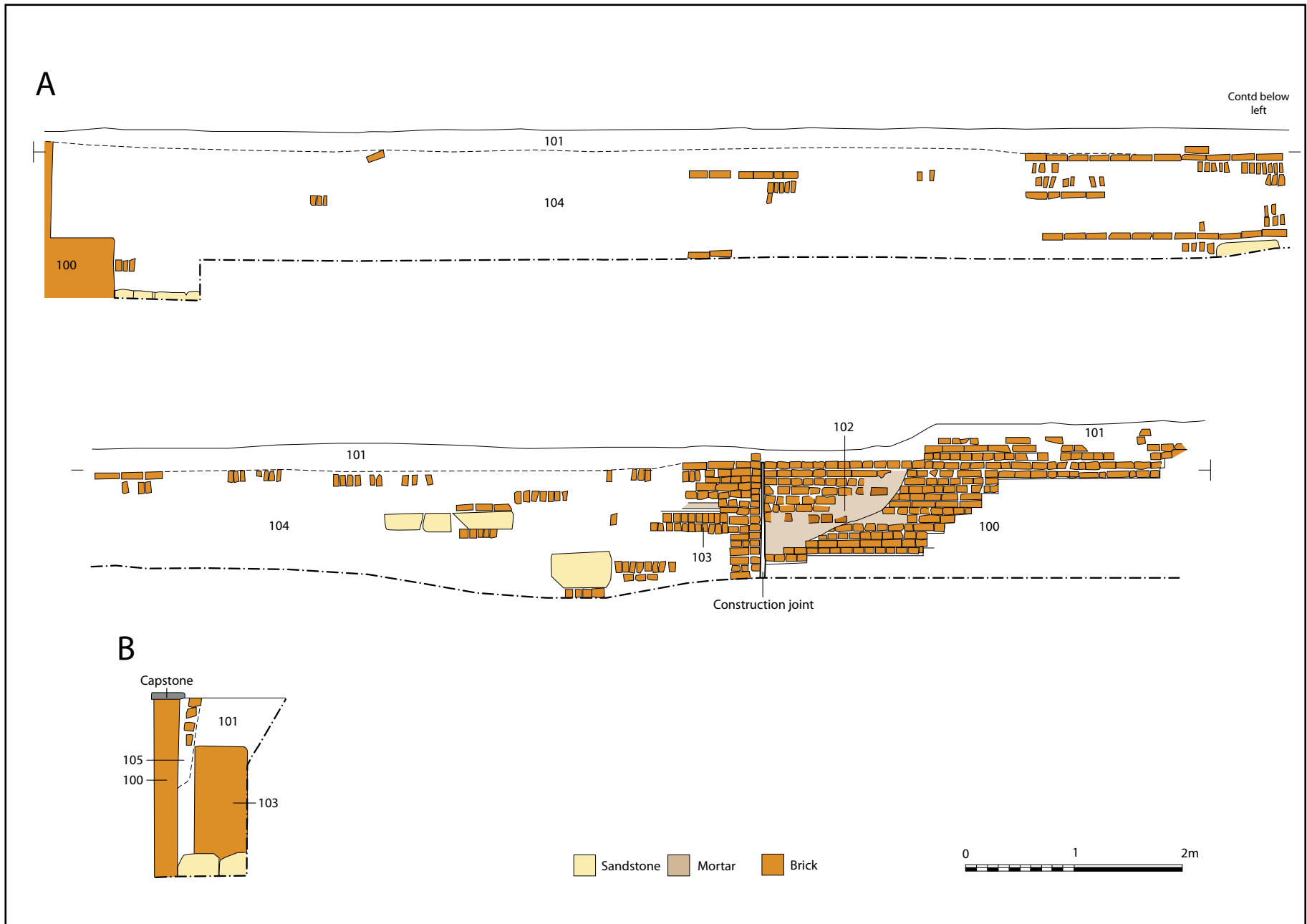


Fig 3: East-facing elevation of ha-ha walls 100, 102-104 and north-facing section of ha-ha walls 100 and 102



Fig. 4: View of east-facing elevation of ha-ha walls 100, 102-104



Fig. 5: Detail of construction joint between 102 and 103



Fig.6: View on north-facing section of ha-ha walls 100 and 103