

Land to the rear of The White House, Ansty Warwickshire

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 2070

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

- Project:** Land to the rear of The White House, Ansty
- Commissioned by:** Vagdia Holmes on behalf of Kalwant Chaggar
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- Planning References:** R17/0777, R19/1484
- Planning Authority:** Rugby Borough Council
- National Grid Reference:** SP 4003 8340
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SUMMARY

A programme of building recording was carried out on former agricultural buildings to the rear of The White House, Ansty on behalf Dhiran Vagdia for Kalwar Chaggar. The buildings are shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888 and the site is thought to lie within the medieval settlement. The north-western building appears to have been constructed as a shelter shed, while the north-eastern building was originally of two stories, but had been modified in the later 20th century to accommodate pigs. The buildings had been altered during the 20th century and in the 21st century had been allowed to fall into disrepair and had had their roofs removed. The south-western building was a 20th-century replacement of the building shown on the First Edition mapping.

Following a change to the planning application to allow demolition of the farm buildings and rebuilding on their former site, an archaeological evaluation was carried out within the footprint of the proposed new build. No features of archaeological significance were recorded and it seems unlikely that the area was developed before the later post-medieval period.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council for the development of agricultural buildings at the rear of The White House, Main Road, Ansty, CV7 9HZ; in 2019 planning permission was applied for the demolition of the buildings and erection of a new building over their former footprints (Planning refs R17/0777, R19/1484). The development site lies within an area of archaeological potential, within the supposed extent of the former medieval settlement of Ansty. It was therefore thought possible that archaeological remains might be disturbed during the development. A condition of planning permission required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out ahead of the development.
- 1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake a programme of historic building recording and evaluation in accordance with Written Schemes of Investigation approved by the planning authority (Steele 2018, Coutts 2020).
- 1.3 This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Codes AW18 and AW20. The work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidelines (2020).

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The application site is located within the settlement of Ansty within the parish of the same name. The site is on the southern edge of the settlement and overlooks the Oxford Canal which is within 30m of the buildings. The ground slopes down from the street to the canal. The site is centred on National Grid Reference SP 4003 8340 (Fig 1).

- 2.2 The geology of the site is Mercia Mudstone – Mudstone Sedimentary Bedrock. This is overlain by Bosworth Clay Member – Clay and Silt (British Geological Survey 2018).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The following is based on a search area with a 500m radius from the centre of the site, using sources within the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record.
- 3.2 The application site is within the suggested extent of medieval settlement at Ansty which has been projected from the extent of the settlement on the Ordnance Survey First Edition mapping of 1888 (MWA 8896). Domesday lists Ansty (along with Foleshill), then *Anestie*, within the Hundred of Bumbelowe as a medium-sized settlement of nineteen households with thirty villagers, six smallholders and two slaves.
- 3.3 The settled area of the village used to extend beyond the current village limits as is apparent by the presence of shrunken medieval village earthworks (MWA 4234) in a field to the north-east of the White House and adjacent dwelling.
- 3.4 The oldest building within the village is the parish church of St James (MWA 4213; Grade II* Listed, NHLE Ref: 1034889), located approximately 270m north of the application site. The chancel is of the 13th century, nave rebuilt in the 14th century and the church was 'restored' in 1876. A chapel at Ansty is recorded in the early 12th century. The site is no longer known, but it is suggested that the present church may include some of the built fabric.
- 3.5 Ansty has a number of other Listed Buildings. The White House and adjacent Wingletang are Grade II Listed (NHLE Ref: 1034890) as a pair of mid-18th-century cottages with thatched roofs. Ansty House Farm on the opposite side of road is another significant, though non-Listed, building having probable 17th-century origins as evidenced by its timber framing, despite having extensive 19th-century alterations (MWA 13164).
- 3.6 The original focus of the settlement may have been around the church and Ansty Hall. Ansty Hall itself is a Grade II* Listed building (NHLE Ref: 1365084) dated by inscription to 1678, although with 18th- and mid/late 19th-century additions; a desk-based assessment was carried out for Ansty Hall in 2012 (EWA 9995). The hall had formal gardens, terracing, parkland with a formal avenue and a drive. A site visit was made by Lovie in 1996 (EWA 9607). Few elements of the designed landscape survive apart from some of the established plantings and drive.

- 3.7 The Oxford Canal was constructed through Ansty in the 1770s (MWA 4348). Six records on the Warwickshire HER relate to the canal or associated features. The Oxford Canal was the main canal artery carrying trade between the industrial Midlands and London via the River Thames, carrying coal, as well as salt, stone, and lime and agricultural products. The canal saw its heyday between 1790 and 1805, after which the Grand Junction canal provided a faster route to London.
- 3.8 The threat from more direct routes and development of a railway network encouraged the canal company to straighten loops in the canal from the 1820s. Sometimes entire long loops were abandoned, whilst many shorter sections were bypassed. Two such abandoned canal arms or loops are present to the west and north-east of the village (MWAs 4349; 30127). The sites of two canal bridges are also present within the search area: one at Brinklow (MWA 19895) and one to the rear of the Rose and Castle Public House (MWA 30722, demolished between 2009 and 2012), the latter of which had a boat yard located nearby (MWA 30803).
- 3.9 Further potential industrial activity is evidenced by the Tithe apportionment (1850) place-name 'Kiln knob' (MWA 4216) although no further evidence has been found to confirm the present of a kiln in the vicinity.
- 3.10 An L-plan earthwork located next to a disused canal arm in farmland to the west of the village which shows up on aerial photographs is of uncertain status (MWA 4215).

Cartographic Regression

- 3.11 The earliest map of the area is the Ordnance Survey drawing of c.1813 (OSD 260 Rugby), which shows buildings occupying both sides of the main street, but the detail is not fine enough to establish whether the farm buildings were in existence at this date. The Tithe map of 1852 shows the fields, but not the settlement itself.
- 3.12 The subject buildings are present on the First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping of 1888 in their current U-plan layout, surrounding a rectangular yard which is divided down the middle. This arrangement is unaltered at the time of the National Grid edition of 1959.

3.13 This basic layout persists on the aerial photographs available on Google Earth for 1999 (earth.google.com). Some of the buildings appear to have mono pitch roofs which are at odds with the local vernacular pitched tile or slate roofs to be expected on 19th-century buildings, suggesting partial re-roofing of the range or perhaps rebuilding. Aerial photographs from 2006 onwards show the gradual deterioration of the buildings with loss of roof cover over the western range and part of the northern range. By the time of the building survey (August 2019) none of the buildings were roofed and the area surrounding the buildings was heavily overgrown.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the historic building recording work was to record the buildings prior to conversion work being undertaken (this was subsequently changed to demolition). 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 included 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 area was evaluated by means of 20m of trial trenching. Two 10m long trenches were excavated within the footprint of the proposed new buildings. Work took place on July 30th 2020.
- 4.5 Topsoil, former ploughsoils and demonstrably modern overburden were removed by an appropriate machine using a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Ground reduction was carried out in shallow spits until the uppermost archaeological horizon, or the geological natural was reached (whichever the higher).
- 4.6 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications.

5 RESULTS

Building Recording

- 5.1 The farm buildings were subject to a Historic England Level 1 Survey, which took place on 5th August 2019. Photographs were taken using an Olympus OM1 camera with Ilford FP4 film professionally processed. Digital images were also taken using a Nikon D3400 camera. The photographic archive will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record for subsequent deposition with Warwickshire County Record Office.
- 5.2 The farm buildings were in a somewhat ruinous state, having lost their corrugated iron roofing over the preceding years. The buildings were being encroached upon by vegetation, particularly the north-western one (Building 2; Photo 1). However, the walls were standing, allowing some rudimentary analysis to be undertaken. The remains of three buildings exist on the site, in positions shown on the 1880s Ordnance Survey map. One of these buildings (Building 3, the south-western one) is an entirely modern construction with a concrete floor and timber uprights which appear to be cut-down railway sleepers; this building has been constructed in the footprint of an earlier structure.
- 5.3 The two remaining buildings have elements of historic fabric but have been subject to alterations in the 20th century. The north-eastern building (Building 1) which backs on to the side access road, appears to have been originally two stories, but the original roof had been lowered to a mono-pitch roof, sloping down from the courtyard side. The rear wall has two small inserted windows, and later buttressing on both rear and front walls (Photo 2). Some original features include a small rectangular window with a segmental brick arch (Photo 3). The lean-to that formerly stood against the gable is no longer in place but can be located from its footprint and wall scar (Photo 4). The room at this end of the building was not accessible at the time of the survey. The lower part of the building is constructed in Flemish Stretcher Bond, with bricks measuring 220mm x 110mm x 62mm (this bond consists of three rows of stretchers between rows of alternating headers and stretchers). The upper part of the building has been rebuilt.
- 5.4 The south-west elevation of Building 1 has a glazed window and a doorway opening into the upper part of the building (Photo 5). A relieving arch was recorded low on the wall (Photo 6). The interior had been whitewashed and subdivided with a part-height

brick cross wall with feed troughs on its south-east side (Photo 7). The brick feed chute on the other side of the wall strongly suggests that this was for pig feed, and that the latter use of the building was as a pigsty (Photo 8). Such chutes were used for pouring pigswill and would have protected the feeder from the over-enthusiastic rush at feeding time (Brunskill 1982, 76). A 1962 inscription on the interior gable wall may give us a clue to when this building was used as a pigsty (Photo 9). The floor in the northern bay is brick; it may well be brick throughout, below the modern concrete (Photo 10).

- 5.5 The north-western building (Building 2) backed onto the garden at the rear of The White House and that side was not accessible. The south-west gable end was still standing, with a pitching window suggesting there may have been high-level hay storage within the building (Photo 11). The lower part of the building is constructed in Flemish Garden Wall bond (also known as Sussex Bond), with bricks measuring 230mm x 115mm x 60mm. The upper part of the gable appears to have been rebuilt, with five rows of stretchers alternating with a row of headers (English Garden Wall Bond/Scottish Bond). The front of much of the building was obscured by vegetation with significant Buddleia growth in the northern part (Photo 12). The First Edition mapping suggests part of the building may have been open fronted, possibly a shelter shed, and two of these panels have been infilled, one with wooden boards and another with concrete (Photos 13 and 14). A rough blue brick wall has been constructed within the building.
- 5.6 The south-western building (Building 3) appears to be an entirely modern construction, made using old railway sleepers, concrete floors and cement-mortar bonded cross walls (Photos 15 and 16). The building formerly had a pitched roof covered in corrugated metal.
- 5.7 The pole barn footprint was heavily overgrown. The barn roof, extant in 2007, had collapsed by 2012 (Google Earth images used in Vagdia and Holmes Planning Statement, 2019). Only two poles remained upright (Photo 17).

Evaluation

- 5.8 Following clearance of the vegetation on the site, and demolition and clearance of the remaining parts of the buildings, two evaluation trenches were excavated in July 2020.

- 5.9 Trench 1 ran west to east, with the western part located over part of Building 2 and the eastern end in Building 1. Geological natural clay (103) was recorded at a depth of 0.50m below current ground level. This was overlain by 0.20m of dark yellowish brown silty clay (102) and this was in turn overlaid by 0.20m of hardcore, sand etc (101). In the western end of the trench a layer of large cobbles was recorded (104), which lay immediately below the brick flooring of the former building (100). Brick flooring was also noted in the eastern part of the trench, within the former Building 1 (105). No finds were recorded.
- 5.10 Trench 2 ran NNE-SSW, with its northern part lying in the outer part of Building 2 and the majority of the trench under the footprint of Building 3. The 20th-century concrete slab of Building 3 had already been removed. Geological natural brown clay (202) was recorded at a depth of 0.40m below ground level and was overlain by 0.20m of brown silty clay (201), in turn overlaid by 0.10m of grey silty clay loam (100). Traces of where the modern creosoted posts of Building 3 had stood had penetrated the natural clay. No evidence for the building shown on the First Edition map of 1888 in the area of Building 3 were recorded and no finds were recovered.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The farm building recording suggested that Building 1 had formerly been a two-storey structure that was partly altered, the 1960s, to house pigs. The roof had been altered to a mono-pitch roof at some time. Building 2 had probably been an open-fronted shelter shed. Building 3 was an entirely modern construction on the footprint of a building that had stood in the same position in the late 19th century.
- 6.2 The evaluation did not record anything that pre-dated the former buildings, suggesting that this area may not have been developed before the later post-medieval period. The brick flooring recorded in Building 2 had been preceded by a cobbled floor, both of which are common in cattle shelter sheds

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Dhiran Vagdia for commissioning the work on behalf of Kalwar Chaggar and for Vagdia and Holmes Architects co-ordinating the archaeological programme. Thanks to Mr Singh and his team for their interest and help on site.

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WCRO CR569-7 *Tithe map of part of the Parish of Anstey, Warwickshire, 1852*.
Warwickshire County Record Office.

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

Context	Description	Depth
Trench 1		
100	Brick flooring in W end of trench, in what was formerly Building 2	75mm
101	Hardcore and levelling material	0.20m
102	Dark yellow brown silty clay layer	0.20m
103	Brown clay natural	
104	Layer of large cobbles below brick floor 100, former floor Building 2	0.12m
105	Brick flooring in E end of trench, floor of Building 1	
Trench 2		
200	Layer of grey silty clay loam	0.10m
201	Layer of brown silty clay	0.20m
202	Brown clay natural	

B Table of HBR Photos

Digital	Photo	B&W	Description
333	1		Looking NW up at buildings from canal
334	2	1/1	Looking down side of Building 1, buttresses
335	3	1/2	Building 1 NE side, door and buttress
336	4	1/3	Building 1 NE side, window and buttress
337	5	1/4	Building 1, NE side, window opening and buttress
338	6	1/5	Building 1, NE side, looking NW
339	7	1/6	Building 1, E corner
340	8	1/7	Building 1, SE wall
341	9	1/8	Building 1, S corner, looking north
342	10	1/9	Building 1, SW wall, courtyard side
343	11	1/10	Building 1, detail of stable door
344	12	1/11	Building 1, NW part of exterior with door opening and buttress
345	13	1/12	Building 1, detail of low relieving arch on SW wall
346		-----	Digital deleted
347	14	1/13	Building 2, looking NW (modern building behind)
	15	1/14	Building 3, looking west
348	16	1/15	Building 3, courtyard side
349	17	1/16	Building 3, looking NE
350	18	1/17	Extant poles of pole barn, looking NE
351	19	1/18	Gable end of Building 2
352	20	1/19, 1/20	Gable end of Building 2, with Building 1 to right
353	21	1/21	Building 3 interior
354	22	1/22	Building 3, detail of timber with creosote
355	23	1/23	Building 3, detail of internal wall
356	24	1/24	Building 2, concrete infill and internal brick wall, looking north
357	25	1/25	Building 2, concrete infill and internal brick wall, looking north
358	26	1/26	Buddleia in Building 2, looking north
359	27	1/27	Internal view of gable of Building 2, with wood infill of front of bay
360	28	1/28	Building 1 interior, feed troughs and low dividing wall, looking NW
361	29	1/29	Building 1 interior, looking north
362	30	1/30	Building 1 interior, looking NW
363	31	1/31	Building 1 interior, looking south
364	32	1/32	Building 1, 'DT 20/5/62' on mortar
365	33	1/33	Building 1, feed chute, looking SE
366	34	1/34	Building 1, NW room, looking NE
367	35	1/35	Building 1, floor of NW room
368	36		Building 1, feed chute
369	37		Building 1 feed chute from side
370	38		Building 1, concrete drain pipe into upper part of wall
371	39	1/36	Building 1, drainpipe into wall
372	40	1/37	Canal bridge
373	41		View of canal from south of buildings



1: The farm buildings from the canal



2: The north-east elevation of Building 1



3: Original window and later buttress on NW side of Building 1



4: Building 1, looking north



5: Building 1, SW elevation



6: Relieving arch on SW wall



7: Interior of Building 1 with inserted part-height wall fronted with shallow troughs



8: Rear of wall with brick feed chute



9: DT 20/5/62 on mortar



10: Brick floor in north-western room



11: Gable of building 2



12: Front of Building 2, obscured by vegetation



13: Wooden boards used to infill SW bay of Building 2



14: Concrete infill and blue brick cross-wall within Building 2



15: Railway sleeper posts of Building 3



16: Concrete floor and brick cross-wall in Building 3



17: Two poles of the pole barn, with Building 1 beyond



18: Trench 1



19: Brick and cobble floors of Building 2



20: Trench 2

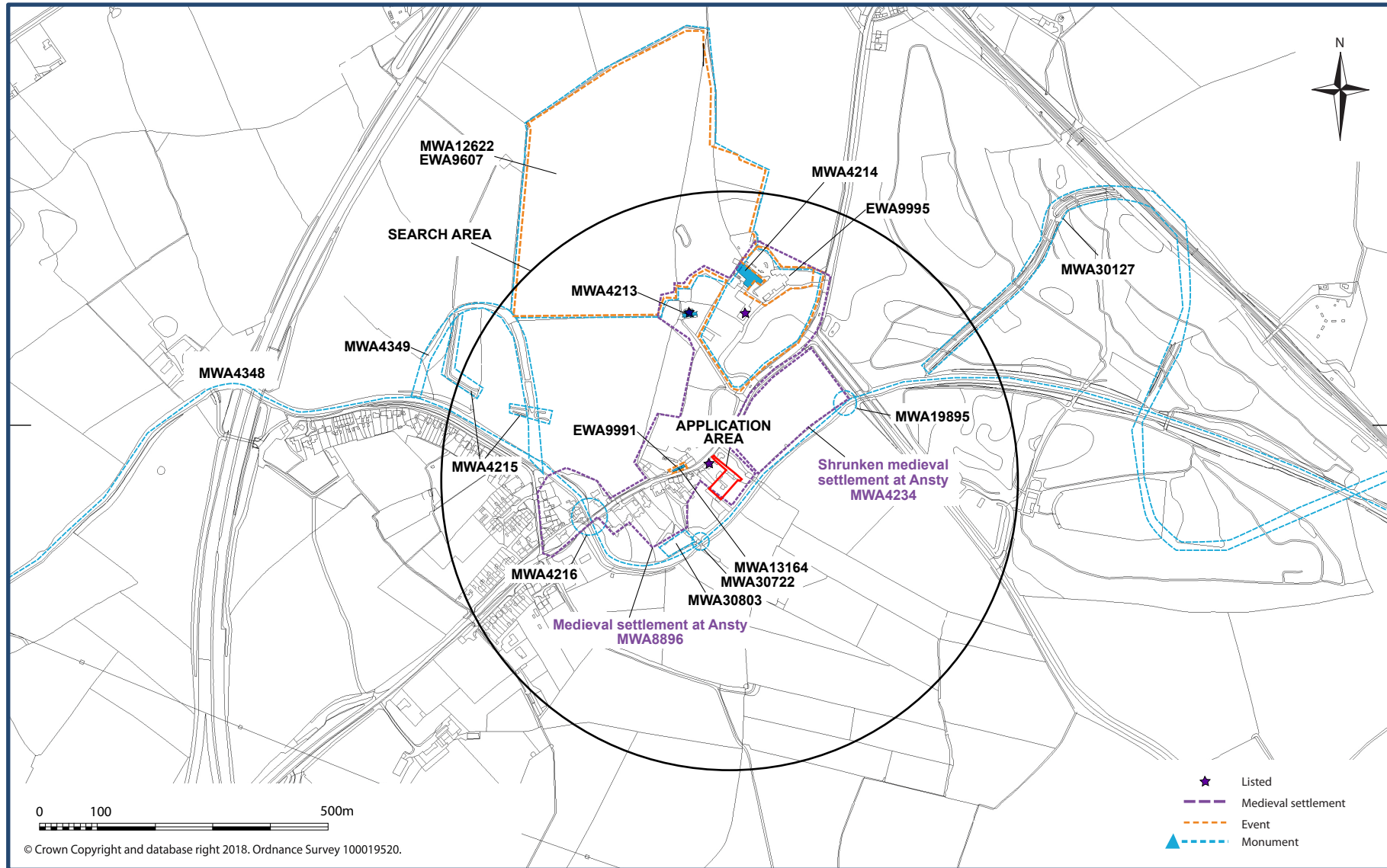


Fig 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment information

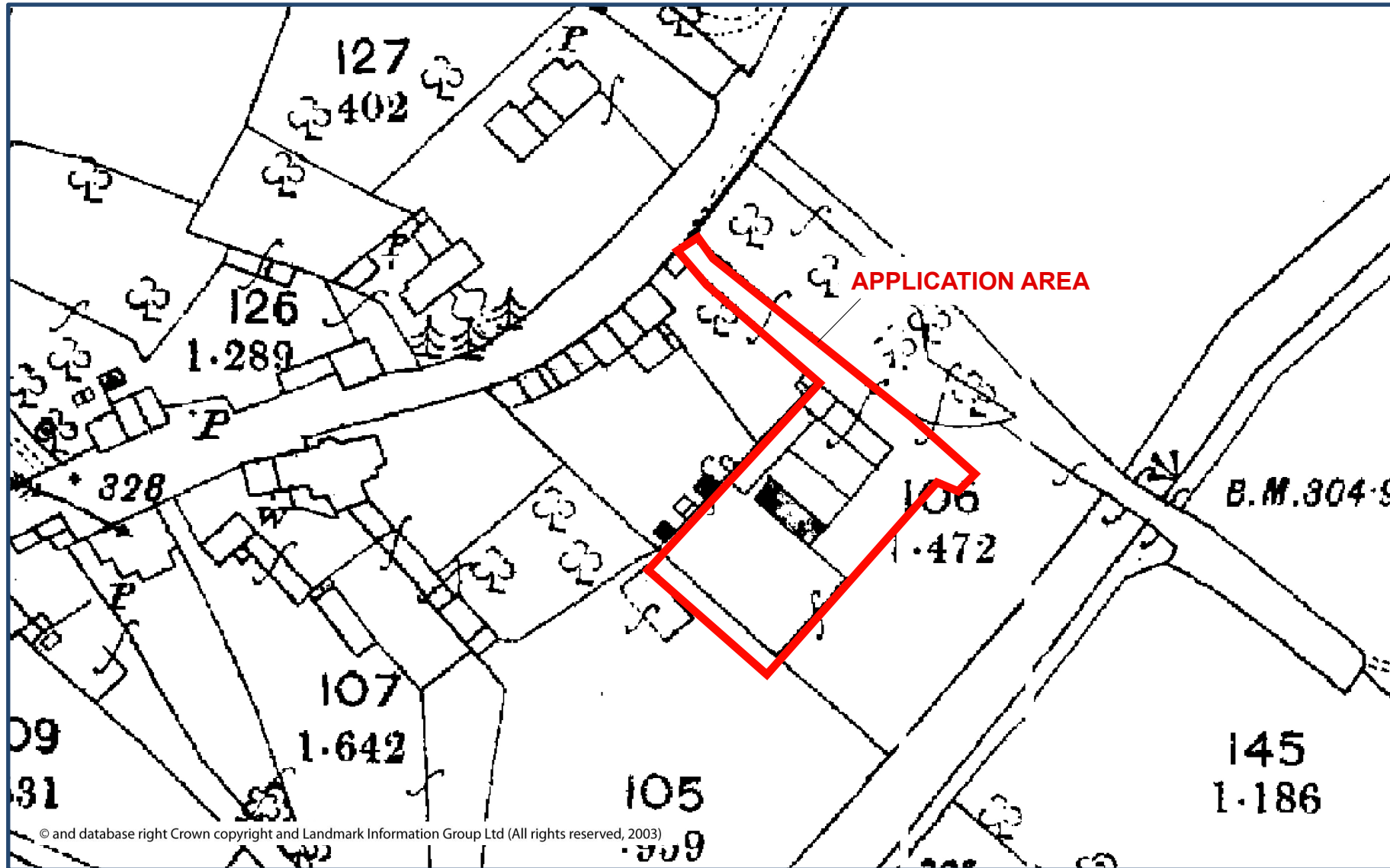


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1888

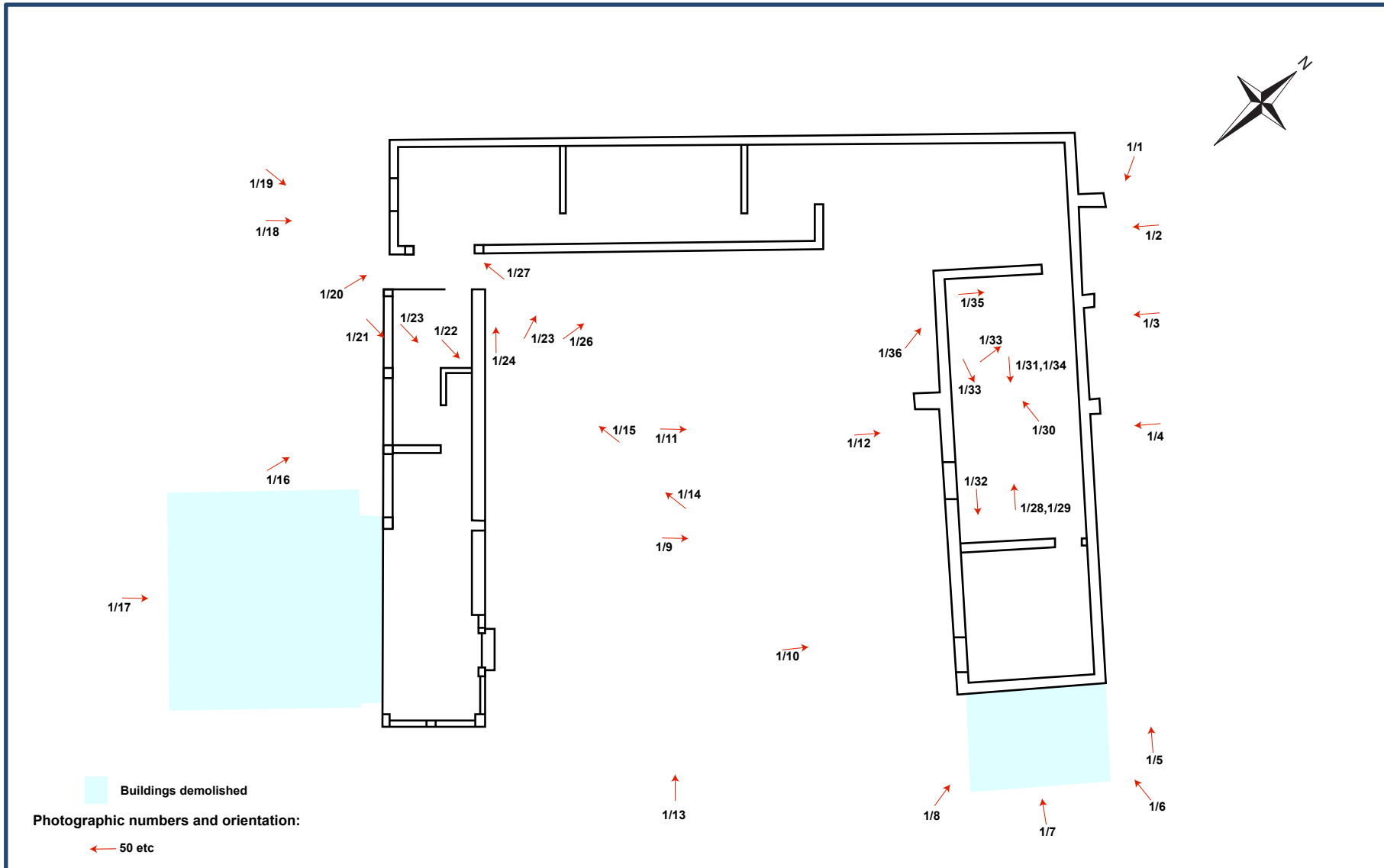


Fig 3: Location of photographs



Fig 4: Location of excavated trenches