

# Cock Close Cottage, Church Street, Bloxham, Oxfordshire

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND RECORDING



*understanding heritage matters*

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1693  
OCTOBER 2016



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

**Project:** Cock Close Cottage Bloxham  
**Commissioned by:** Ms L Davis  
**Project Report No.** 1693  
**Site Code:** OBC16  
**Planning Reference:** 16/00589/FUL  
**National Grid Reference:** SP 4307 3561  
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## SUMMARY

Archaeological observation during the excavation of foundation trenches and the reduction of internal areas was undertaken on behalf of Ms L Davis at Cock Close Cottage, Church Street, Bloxham, Oxfordshire. No evidence for significant archaeological remains associated with medieval settlement or earlier activity was observed. Evidence of disturbance caused by previous construction on the site was recorded.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Cherwell District Council for development at Cocks Close Cottage, Church Street, Bloxham, Oxfordshire, OX15 4AA (Ref. 16/00589/FUL). The proposed development site lies within an area of archaeological potential and in the Church area of the Bloxham Conservation Area. The site lies within the supposed extent of the medieval settlement and it was therefore 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 in conjunction with the development.
- 1.2 A brief had been prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority (March 2013). Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake a programme of observation and recording to be undertaken in conjunction with the groundworks phase of the development in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the planning authority.
- 1.3 The fieldwork was carried out in September 2016. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code OBC16, prior to deposition with Oxfordshire Museums.

## 2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is located to the east of Church Street in Bloxham and 50m south-east of St Marys Church. The development is centred on national grid reference SP 4307 3561, in the parish of Bloxham. The proposed development area covers an area of approximately 180m<sup>2</sup>.

- 2.2 The site is on generally level ground with an increasing slope towards pasture fields on the eastern side. The underlying geology of the area is Marlstone Rock Formation with nearby alluvial deposits (British Geological Survey 2016).

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record contains no records indicating pre-Roman activity in the vicinity, though this is likely to be a reflection of the absence of survey rather than absence of evidence.
- 3.2 Romano-British settlement evidence has been found immediately to the west of the village; however human remains have been recorded close to Yew Tree House in the 1950s and these were considered to be of Iron Age or Roman date. Other burials have been recorded in the vicinity of the site to the west of the Church, although their date is uncertain; they are possibly related to a more extensive churchyard.
- 3.3 St Mary's Church is a Grade II Listed Building (LBS 244168) with evidence of 12th century fragments. The substantial parts of the church including the nave chancel and aisles are 13th and 14th century in date (VCH 1969). It is likely that there was a church from the 11th century as indicated in documentary evidence from a charter of 1067.
- 3.4 A stone-built medieval barn or early chapel was recorded immediately to the west of the site and survived to the 19th century.
- 3.5 A 17th-century house, Yew Tree House is a Grade II Listed Building, stands to the west of the site (LBS 244219). A Court House and wall originally dating from the 14th century is a Grade II Listed Building located on Church Street. A 17th century barn is located at Rectory farmhouse on the west side of Church Street.

### **4 AIMS AND METHODS**

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains revealed or disturbed by the development, to collate the records in an archaeological archive and present the significant aspects of the archive in a report for dissemination. The secondary aim was to form an understanding of the remains recorded in terms of their character and date, and to place the evidence in its local and regional context. The

objective of the work was a programme of supervised excavation to development formation levels, or the geological natural, whichever the higher.

- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 An experienced archaeologist was made available for each day of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with WSI. Where potential archaeological deposits were encountered, the supervising archaeologist assessed or recorded these before they were disturbed by the machine.

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The ground disturbance associated with the development included the excavation of foundation trenches, (0.9m to 1.1m below the existing ground level using a toothless bucket 0.9m wide), and the reduction of the internal areas of the proposed building footprint. The groundworks were undertaken with a 12 tonne 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. Excavations were observed by the supervising archaeologist and deposits were removed down to the relevant development formation levels or to significant archaeological remains, where present.

### Deposit sequence

- 5.2 A very simple sequence of deposits was recorded during the observations and these included a series of extensive layers. At the lowest development formation level an extensive geological natural layer of yellowish brown silty sand with ironstone fragments (7, 11) was recorded. This was sealed by a similarly extensive layer of light brown silty sand (6), which contained ironstone, but no other inclusions.
- 5.3 The development formation level within the building footprint was reached at approximately 0.3m below the current ground surface. No significant archaeological remains were revealed.
- 5.4 The earliest archaeological layer evident in the foundation trenches was greyish brown silt clay containing small fragments of coal, ironstone and occasional small

fragments of tile and glass bottle (3). This probable former topsoil deposit was present in most areas.

5.5 Topsoil (1) extended over much of the observed area. This topsoil layer appeared to extend across much of the site and relate to the garden areas and previous residential use of site. Occasional small fragments of 19th and 20th century tile and pottery were identified, but these were not retained.

5.6 Across the western part of the footprint the topsoil was absent and an extensive demolition layer of mixed rubble (2), including brick, tile and concrete fragments was apparent.

5.7 Various concrete foundations (4, 10) extended across the development area. These were 0.6m to 0.9m wide and the previous foundations had been cut down to the natural geological sequence. Several drain trenches (5) also crossed the area and these cut through the topsoil deposits and into lower deposits. These all appear to relate to the previous building on the site.

### Deposit sequence summary

Deposit description	Foundation trenches	Internal reduction	Interpretation
Grey brownish silty loam	1	1	Topsoil/garden soil
Rubble layer	2	2	Modern demolition layer
Greyish brown silty sand	3	-	Soil horizon
Yellowish brown clay	6	-	Natural
Light yellowish brown clay with stone	7, 11	-	Geological natural

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Observation of the groundworks for the development resulted in no significant archaeological deposits or remains being revealed. No evidence associated with the medieval settlement at Bloxham or of any earlier activity associated with Roman or prehistoric period was revealed.

6.2 The groundworks in the internal areas were of insufficient depth to reveal any potential archaeological remains. Whilst the foundation trenches revealed evidence of the localised impact of the construction of the previous building on any potential archaeological remains.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Ms Laura Davis for commissioning the work and to Richard Walker, Walker Graham Architects for initiating the work.

## REFERENCES

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1 Ground reduction of internal footprint



2 View of the east end of the proposed building



3 South facing section showing deposit sequence



4 West facing section showing pit 10

## APPENDICES

### A Table of contexts

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Thickness (m)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1	Grey brown silty loam		0.2m to 0.25m	Topsoil
2	Rubble layer		0.2m to 0.3m	Demolition debris
3	Grey brown silt sand			
4	Concrete foundation			Modern foundation
5	Drain cut			Modern
6	Light yellowish brown sandy clay		0.3m	Natural
7	Yellowish brown silty sand		>0.35m	Geological natural
8	Fill of 9			
9	Pit			Modern pit
10	Concrete foundation			Modern foundation
11	Limestone in yellowish brown sand			Geological natural

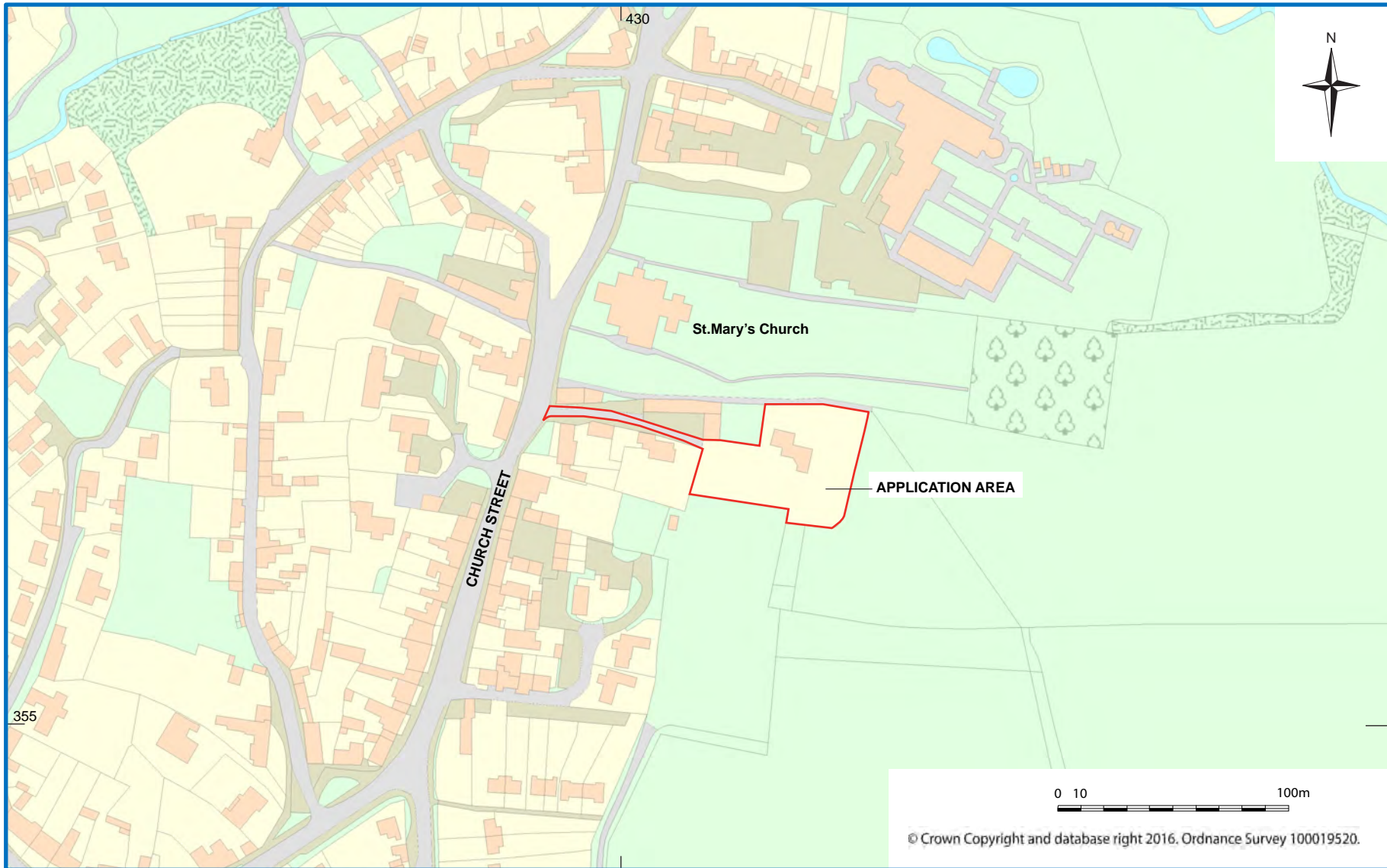


Fig 1: Location of application area

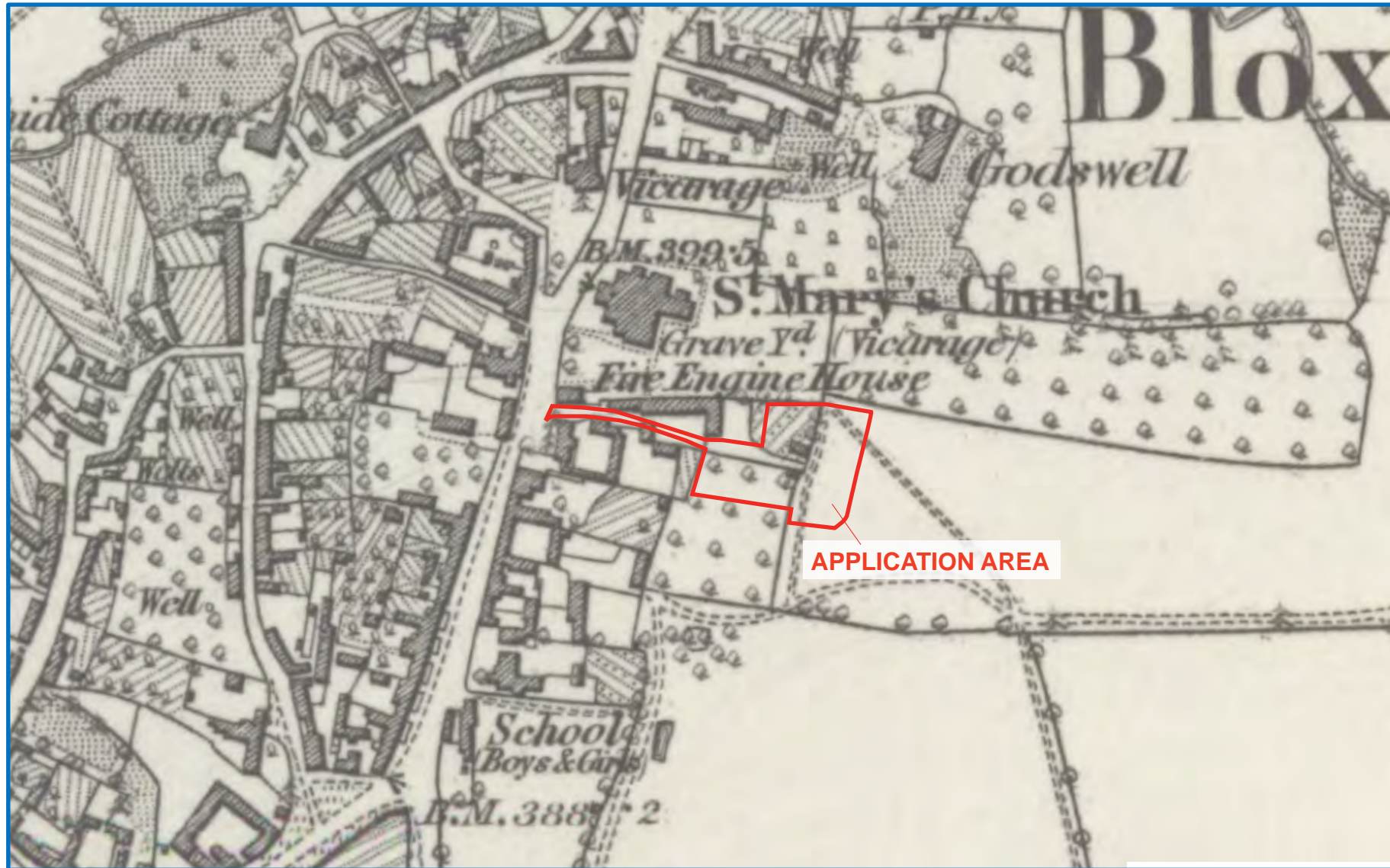


Fig 2: Detail from Six Inch Ordnance Survey map of 1885

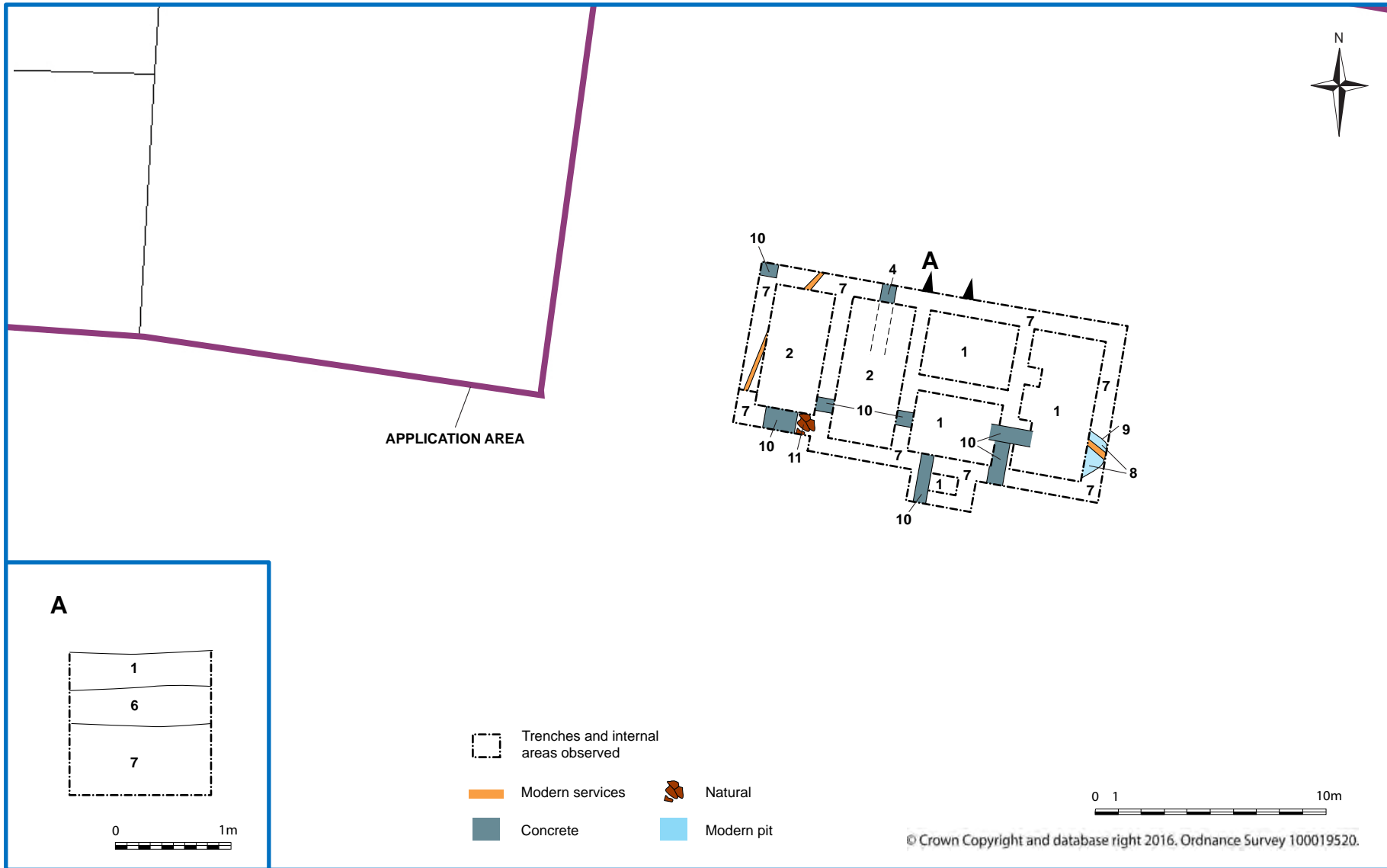


Fig 3: Location of trenches and internal areas observed