

Griff Lane Nuneaton Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1846

JUNE 2018



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Evaluation Griff Lane Nuneaton, Warwickshire
Commissioned by: CgMs Heritage
Site Code: NG18
Planning Reference: N/A
Planning Authority: Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
National Grid Reference: SP 35003 88854
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Date: June 2018
Report reference: Kleisoura, E, 2018 *Griff Lane, Nuneaton,
Warwickshire: Archaeological Evaluation,*
Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1846

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, comprising sixteen 55m by 1.6m trial trenches, was carried out on land to the northwest of Griff Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, on behalf of CgMs Heritage.

The trial trenching revealed two isolated areas of archaeological activity. A globular bead in turquoise glass of late Iron Age or early Roman date was exposed by the machine. It seemed to be associated with a curvilinear gully which produced two poorly preserved prehistoric pottery sherds. The gully was truncated by an east-west aligned ditch containing fragments of ceramic building material.

A large irregular clay-lined pit was exposed in Trench 16. No finds were recovered to determine the date or function of the feature, but its morphology suggests that it may have either held water for stock or have been intended for an industrial process.

Evidence of medieval or post-medieval ploughing trends was encountered in nearly all the trenches. It was more visible in the southern field as the ridges survived as earthworks. A service trench and modern disturbance were exposed along the west side of the southern field.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning consent has been granted from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council for development on land off Griff Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 7SE.
- 1.2 A planning condition attached to the consent requires the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the planning authority.
- 1.3 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site in accordance with a WSI submitted by CgMs Heritage and approved by John Robinson on behalf of the planning authority. The fieldwork took place between 13th and 18th June 2018. This report presents the results of that work.
- 1.4 This work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and guidance for field evaluation (2014).

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is located to the southwest of Nuneaton, on land northwest of Griff Lane, Warwickshire and is centred on SP 35003 88854 (Fig 1). The study site comprises an area of approximately 4.0 hectares. To the south the site is delimited by Griff Lane, while to the north, east and west is development and access roads. The study area is subdivided into two parcels by a hedgerow. Ridge and furrow earthworks are visible across the southern field.

- 2.2 The underlying geology is Halesowen Formation sandstone and mudstone. The superficial deposits comprise Wolston Clay in the southwest of the site, and Glacial Till in the centre of the site. No superficial deposits are recorded within the eastern part of the development site (BGS 2018).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The archaeological background to the site was detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Price 2018) and is summarised below:
- 3.2 The site has not been subject to any previous archaeological investigations.
- 3.3 The site of a Roman pottery kiln (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 1659) and evidence for a possible building (MWA 1791) has been recorded approximately 800m north of the proposed development.
- 3.4 The application site is likely to have been in agricultural use since at least the medieval period.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The aims of the archaeological programme of work are:
- To determine the presence or otherwise of buried remains of archaeological interest ('heritage assets') and/or palaeoenvironmental remains within the development site
 - To provide detailed information regarding the date, character, extent, integrity and degree of preservation of any identified palaeoenvironmental/archaeological assets
 - To provide sufficient information to enable a reasoned decision to be made about the need for any further archaeological measures
 - To produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Warwickshire HER
- 4.2 Sixteen trenches were opened up by a 360 excavator fitted with a 1.60m wide toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were each 55m long and located in the positions specified in the WSI (Fig 2). Trenches 8 and 16 were extended after consultation with the Planning Archaeologist.
- 4.3 Topsoil and other plough soils were removed under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist until either the top of archaeological remains or geological natural was reached.

5 RESULTS

Geological Natural

- 5.1 The geological natural across much of the site consisted of yellowish brown and reddish brown sandy clay interbedded with grey clay and gravel. Brownish red sandstone was encountered in Trench 16. The natural was revealed at a depth of 0.27 - 0.59m below present ground surface in all trenches (Photos 1-4).

Deposit Sequence

- 5.2 Ploughing trends were evident in almost all trenches. Ridge and furrow were most visible in the southern field and were spaced at approximately 8m intervals (Fig 2). No dating evidence was recovered from the furrows but they are assumed to be medieval or post-medieval. In the southern field, they were associated with a plough zone of dark greyish brown silty loam varying between 0.17 to 0.30m in depth. In the northern field the furrows were barely distinguishable against the underlying geology and the overlying plough zone (varying between 0.10 and 0.16m in depth). The topsoil across the site was greyish brown loam up to 0.40m thick.
- 5.3 All features recorded were cut through the natural geology. The only archaeological features that seemed to be of pre-medieval date were exposed in Trenches 8 and 16.

Prehistoric / Roman

- 5.4 In Trench 8, a turquoise glass bead was exposed by the machine. It seemed to be associated with a north-south aligned curvilinear gully 803 which contained a single fill of light grey silty sand with red mottling and occasional small pebbles (804; Photo 5; Fig 3 Section C). A poorly preserved prehistoric pottery fragment was recovered from the fill. A small pit or post hole 807 was recorded in the extension of the trench to the south along the eastern side of gully 803 (Photo 6; Fig 3 Section E). It contained a sterile light grey fill of silty sand and may have been associated with the gully.

Undated but probably prehistoric

- 5.5 Clay-lined pit 1605 in Trench 16 was 2.20m in diameter and 0.78m deep (Photo 9; Fig 3 Section F). It had steep-sides and a rounded-base with evidence for a grey clay lining up to 0.10m thick (1606) at the base and lower walls of the pit. It contained a

single sterile fill of grey clayey sand with red mottling (1607). The fill incorporated occasional pebbles and two large flat stones close to the base of the pit.

Undated but possibly Roman

- 5.6 East-west ditch 805 cut through gully 803. It was up to 1.20m wide and 0.06m in depth. The terminus had gentle asymmetrical sides and an uneven base (Photos 7 and 8; Fig 3 Section A, B, D). Two small fragments of undatable CBM were retrieved from its light yellowish brown clayey silt (806) but they could easily have been intrusive. The terminus precludes this from being a plough furrow.

Post-medieval / Modern

- 5.7 Sub-circular pit 1503 at the eastern end of Trench 15 contained 18th or 19th century bricks. Two stone capped drains were aligned east-west in Trench 16 and seemed to be contemporary.
- 5.8 An area of modern disturbance 1305 was noted in Trench 13 where a service trench 1303 was present.

6 FINDS

Small find

Sf1

- 6.1 Globular bead in turquoise glass. 10mm diameter. This type cannot be recognised as Anglo- Saxon, therefore a Late Iron Age or Late Roman date has been suggested (Penelope Walton- Rogers pers. comm) (Photo 10).

Pottery

- 6.2 Very abraded fragments in grey with black core in likely prehistoric fabric (804).

CBM

- 6.3 Two very small fragments of orange fired clay (806).

Environmental Evidence

- 6.4 No contexts exhibited any potential for meaningful environmental analysis. No samples were taken.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The archaeological evaluation has established the presence of two foci of archaeological activity within the application area. The activity was represented by a small number of features which unfortunately are not securely dated.
- 7.2 The globular bead in turquoise glass recovered from the top of the fill of a narrow curvilinear gully in Trench 8 is broadly consistent with the possible date of two poorly preserved pottery fragments recovered from the fill of the gully. That the gully is cut by an east-west aligned ditch demonstrates that the remains represent at least two phases of occupation in the area. The date of the ditch remains uncertain but the presence of CBM suggests it could be Roman or later.
- 7.3 A large pit lined with clay was exposed in Trench 16. The pit failed to produce any finds or other dateable evidence. It may have been used for the storage of water for stocks or for some kind of an industrial process. This kind of pit is not uncommon in the region and could be expected to date from the later prehistoric period, or less likely the Roman period.
- 7.4 The evaluation identified the vestiges of a ridge and furrow system which demonstrates that the area was part of an undeveloped agricultural landscape from at least the medieval period. The post-medieval pit in Trench 13 containing 18th or 19th century bricks could possibly indicate the site of a small quarry which was backfilled with debris when it fell out of use.
- 7.5 Modern disturbance and a service trench were located at the western side of the application area. This part is characterised by shallow horizons and disturbed soils.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank CgMs Heritage for commissioning the work.

REFERENCES

BGS 2018 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?>
British Geological Survey Accessed June 2018

Price, S, 2018, *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation: Griff Lane Nuneaton Warwickshire*, Unpublished CgMs Heritage report.



1: Trench 2 looking southwest



2: Trench 6 looking southwest



3: Trench 10 looking southwest



4: Trench 15 looking east



5: Gully 803 looking northeast



6: Gully 803 and post hole 807 looking northwest



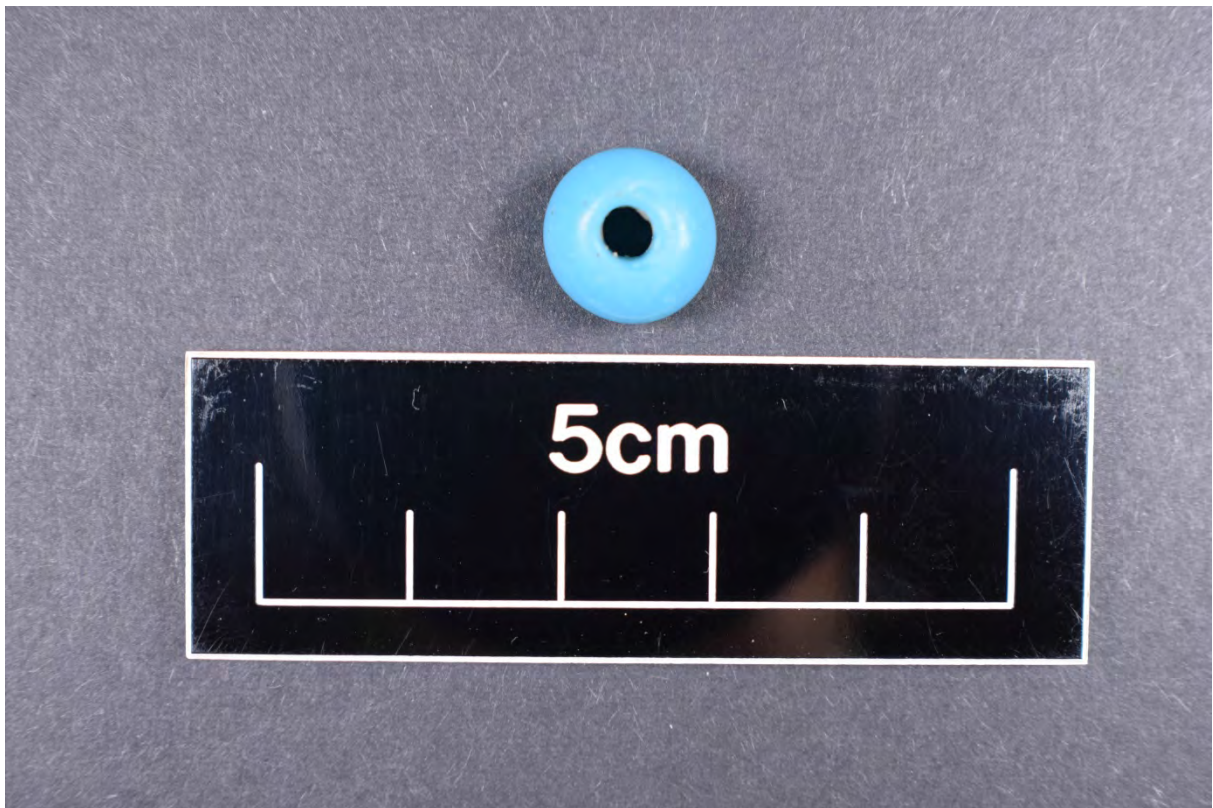
7: Terminus ditch 805 looking east



8: Relationship between gully 803 and ditch 805



9: Pit 1605 looking southeast



10: Glass bead (Sf1)

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

Trench	Context	Description	Depth (m)	Comment
1	100	Greyish brown silty loam	0.27	Topsoil
1	101	Dark brown silty loam	0.12	Old plough soil
1	102	Yellowish brown sandy clay with gravel		Geological natural
2	200	Greyish brown silty loam	0.32	Topsoil
2	201	Dark brown silty loam	0.12	Old plough soil
2	202	Reddish or yellowish brown sandy clay		Geological natural
3	300	Greyish brown silty loam	0.33	Topsoil
3	301	Dark brown silty loam	0.16	Old plough soil
3	302	Yellowish brown sandy clay		Geological natural
4	400	Greyish brown silty loam	0.26	Topsoil
4	401	Dark brown silty loam	0.13	Old plough soil
4	402	Yellowish brown sandy clay		Geological natural
5	500	Greyish brown silty loam	0.27	Topsoil
5	501	Dark brown silty loam	0.12	Old plough soil
5	502	Yellowish brown sandy clay		Geological natural
6	600	Greyish brown silty loam	0.31	Topsoil
6	601	Dark brown silty loam	0.12	Old plough soil
6	602	Yellowish brown sandy clay		Geological natural
7	700	Greyish brown silty loam	0.29	Topsoil
7	701	Dark brown silty loam	0.11	Old plough soil
7	702	Yellowish brown sandy clay with grey clay		Geological natural
8	800	Greyish brown silty loam	0.29	Topsoil
8	801	Dark brown silty loam	0.10	Old plough soil
8	802	Yellowish brown sandy clay with brownish red sand (NE end)		Geological natural
8	803	Linear	0.27	Gully cut
8	804	Grey clayey sand with red mottling	0.27	Gully fill
8	805	Linear	0.06	Ditch terminus cut
8	806	Light yellowish brown sandy clay	0.06	Ditch terminus fill
8	807	Rounded	0.25	Post hole cut

8	808	Grey clayey sand with red mottling	0.25	Post hole fill
9	900	Greyish brown silty loam	0.29	Topsoil
9	901	Dark brown silty loam	0.11	Old plough soil
9	902	Yellowish brown sandy clay with grey clay		Geological natural
10	1000	Greyish brown silty loam	0.29	Topsoil
10	1001	Dark brown silty loam	0.12	Old plough soil
10	1002	Yellowish brown sandy clay with grey clay		Geological natural
11	1100	Greyish brown silty loam	0.17	Topsoil
11	1101	Dark brown silty loam	0.10	Old plough soil
11	1102	Yellowish brown sandy clay with red clay		Geological natural
12	1200	Greyish brown silty loam	0.30	Topsoil
12	1201	Dark brown silty loam	0.20	Old plough soil
12	1202	Yellowish or reddish brown sandy clay with gravel		Geological natural
12	1203	Modern	Not excavated	Ditch cut
12	1204	Dark brown clayey loam with iron fragments and brick	Not excavated	Ditch fill
13	1300	Greyish brown silty loam	0.29	Topsoil
13	1301	Dark brown silty loam	0.30	Old plough soil
13	1302	Yellowish or reddish brown sandy clay with gravel		Geological natural
13	1303	Modern	Not excavated	Pit cut
13	1304	Clay and mixed up topsoil	Not excavated	Pit fill
13	1305	Modern	Not excavated	Ditch cut
13	1306	Clay and mixed up topsoil	Not excavated	Ditch fill
14	1400	Greyish brown silty loam	0.40	Topsoil
14	1401	Dark brown silty loam	0.18	Old plough soil
14	1402	Reddish brown clay with gravel		Geological natural
15	1500	Greyish brown silty loam	0.40	Topsoil

15	1501	Dark brown silty loam	0.17	Old plough soil
15	1502	Yellowish red sandy clay		Geological natural
15	1503	Post-medieval	Not excavated	Pit cut
15	1504	19th century bricks within dark brown loam	Not excavated	Pit fill
16	1600	Greyish brown silty loam	0.39	Topsoil
16	1601	Dark brown silty loam	0.19	Old plough soil
16	1602	Yellowish or reddish brown sandy clay		Geological natural
16	1603	Linear	Not excavated	Drain cut
16	1604	Stone slabs	Not excavated	Drain fill
16	1605	Sub-circular	0.78	Pit cut
16	1606	Grey clay	0.10	Clay lining
16	1607	Grey clayey sand	0.78	Pit fill

B List of finds (not retained)

Context	Type	Quantity	Comment
804	Glass	1	Turquoise glass bead
804	Ceramic	2	Prehistoric pottery
806	Ceramic	2	Ceramic building material

C oasis form

PROJECT DETAILS	OASIS No
Project name	Land off Griff Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire
Short description (250 words max)	<p><i>An archaeological evaluation, comprising sixteen 55m by 1.6m trial trenches, was carried out on land to the northwest of Griff Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, on behalf of CgMs Heritage.</i></p> <p><i>The trial trenching revealed two isolated areas of archaeological activity. A globular bead in turquoise glass of late Iron Age or early Roman date was exposed by the machine. It seemed to be associated with a curvilinear gully which produced two poorly preserved prehistoric pottery sherds. The gully was truncated by an east-west aligned ditch containing fragments of ceramic building material.</i></p> <p><i>A large irregular clay-lined pit was exposed in Trench 16. No finds were recovered to determine the date or function of the feature, but its morphology suggests that it may have either held water for stock or have been intended for an industrial process.</i></p> <p><i>Evidence of medieval or post-medieval ploughing trends was encountered in nearly all the trenches. It was more visible in the southern field as the ridges survived as earthworks. A service trench and modern disturbance were exposed along the west side of the southern field.</i></p>
Project type (Eg DBA, Eval etc)	Eval
Site status (None, NT, SAM etc)	None
Previous work	No
Current land use	Grassland
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown
Monument type / period	Gully- Late Iron Age or Roma Ditch- Unknown Pit-Unknown Furrows-Post medieval Pit- Post medieval
Significant finds (artefact, type, period)	Glass bead Pottery CBM
Methods & techniques	
Development Type	Car park
Prompt	
Position in planning process	
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Warwickshire
Site address (inc postcode)	CV10 7SE, Griff Lane, Nuneaton
Study area (sq.m or ha)	4 ha
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq letter code)	SP 35003 88854
Height OD	

PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Archaeology Warwickshire	
Project brief originator	Caroline Rann	
Project design originator	Caroline Rann	
Director/supervisor	Ed Pearson	
Manager	Caroline Rann	
Sponsor or funding body		
PROJECT DATE		
Start date /end date	13-18/06/2018	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		

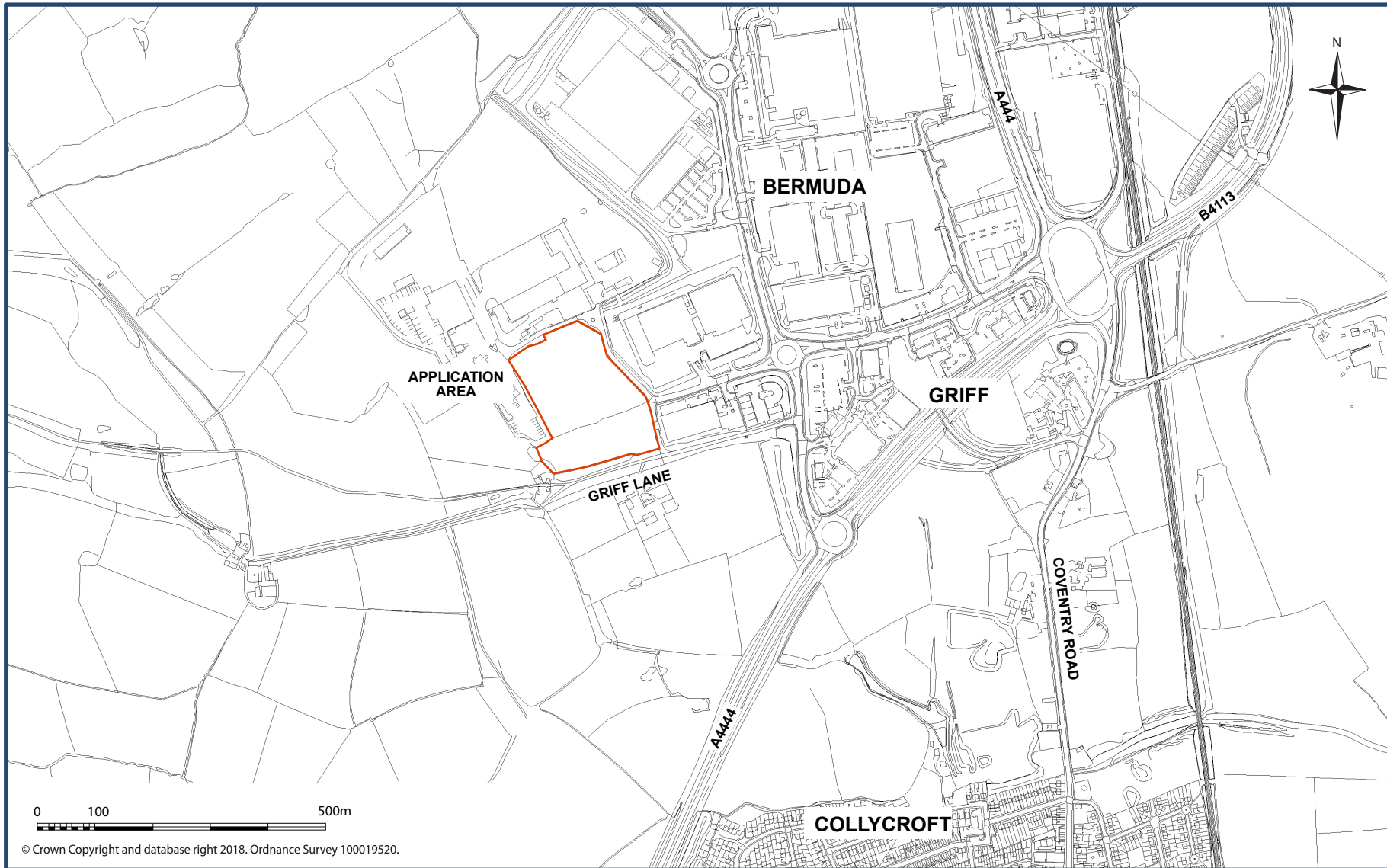


Fig 1: Location of application area

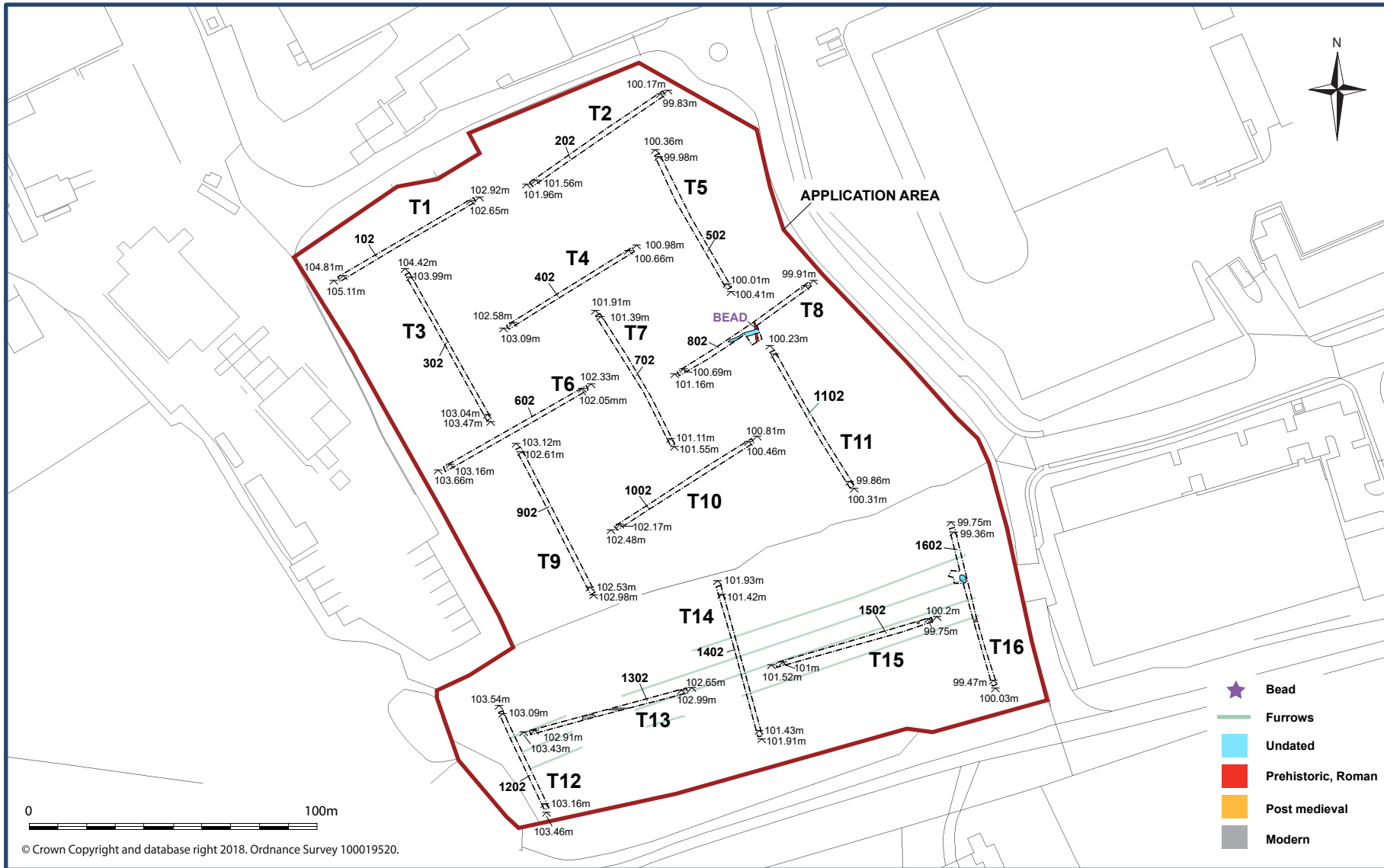


Fig 2: Location of excavated trenches

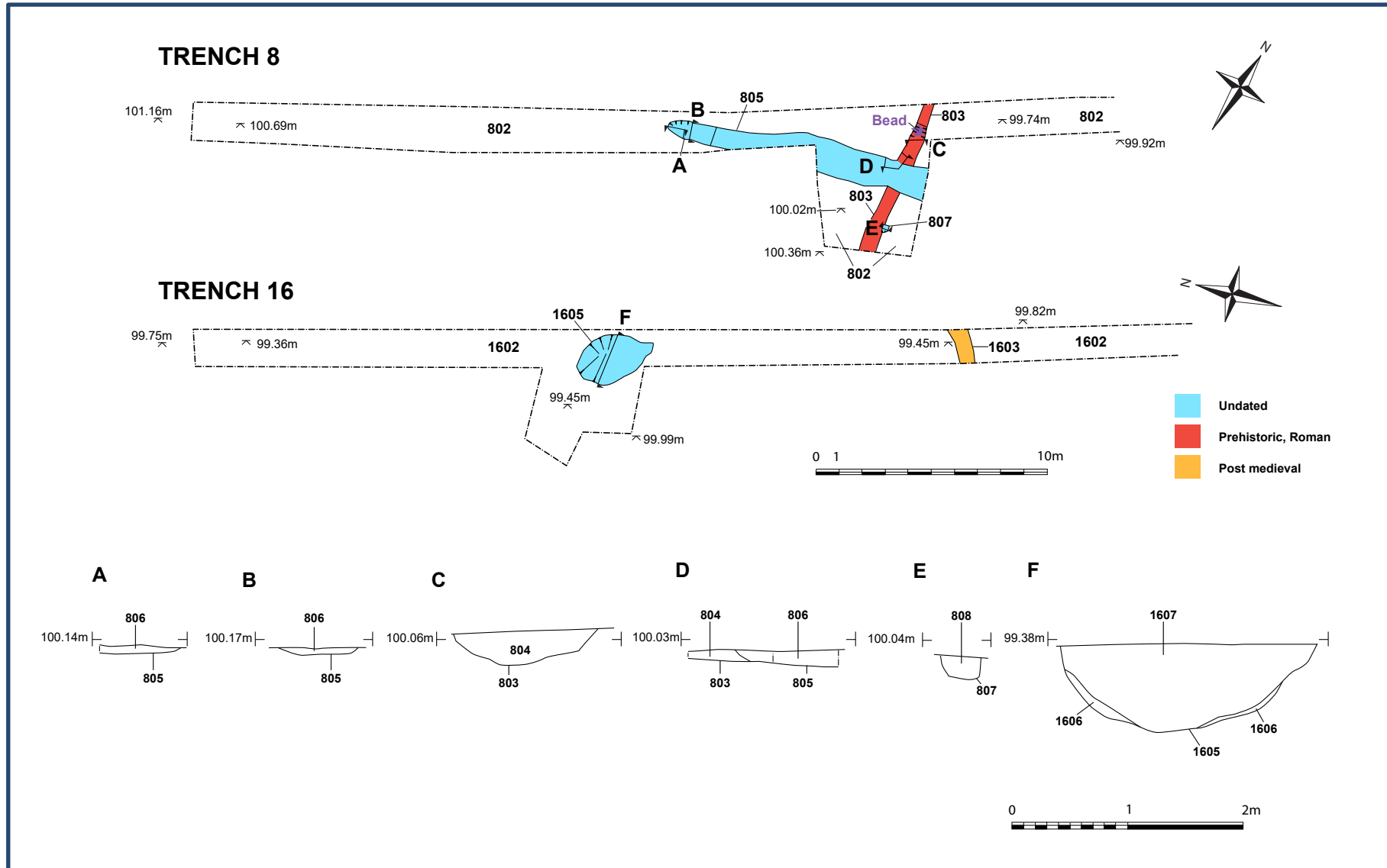


Fig 3: Detail of trenches 8 and 16 with associated sections A to C