

# birmingham archaeology

1-2 Stareton  
Cottages, Stareton,  
Warwickshire:  
An Archaeological  
Watching Brief

**Project No. 1733**  
**1 -2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Warwickshire:**  
**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

By  
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For  
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**1 –2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Warwickshire:  
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

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## **SUMMARY**

*In October 2007 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at 1-2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Warwickshire (NGR SP 3335 7137). The work was commissioned by Paul Underhill in advance of a proposed extension to the rear of the cottages (ref. W07/1150). The site lay within an area of significant archaeological potential, including the site of a possible deserted medieval village (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2915) and post-medieval sites such as a quarry and possible watermill (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2875 and 2903). No archaeological deposits or features were noted during the groundworks however, although a few pieces of animal bone and sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil.*

## **1-2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton Warwickshire: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2007.**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

In October 2007 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at 1-2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Warwickshire (NGR SP 3335 7137, hereafter referred to as the site). The work was commissioned by Paul Underhill in advance of a proposed extension to the rear of the cottages (ref. W07/1150).

This report outlines the results of the watching brief, which was carried out between 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> October 2007, and which was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 1999). The assessment conformed to a brief produced by Warwick District Council (Appendix 1), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2007), which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

### **2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY**

The site is located to the rear of 1-2 Stareton Cottages, and is centred on NGR SP 3335 7137 (Fig. \*). The site lies within the parish of Stoneleigh, south of the village, and east of Stoneleigh Park within the hamlet of Stareton, between the Stoneleigh Road and the Coventry Road.

The underlying geology consists of sandstone.

The site was part of the garden of the cottages, which consisted of a grassy area, surrounded by mature trees on the north and west, the neighbouring garden to the east and the cottages themselves to the south.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aims of the programme of archaeological work were to:

- to monitor all below-ground works.
- to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains affected by the development works.
- to identify any previously unrecorded sites in order to update the SMR.
- to preserve any archaeological deposits 'by record', and recover for long term conservation and future analysis all artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.
- to provide sufficient information to enable any subsequent archaeological works or excavation to be conducted within clearly defined research aim.

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Archaeologists *Code of Conduct*, and in accordance with all relevant IFA Standards and Guidance documents.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

A search of available maps (printed and manuscript), and material held at the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record was undertaken.

All the necessary topsoil and natural subsoil was removed using a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under direct archaeological supervision, down to the required level as set out in the planning application. The exposed stratigraphy was recorded and digital photographs were taken for the purposes of illustrating the report.

All the finds recovered were washed, marked and bagged according to the current IFA Standards and Guidance document for finds, and passed to an appropriate specialist for identification.

#### **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

##### **5.1 Prehistoric**

No evidence of prehistoric occupation is known in the area.

##### **5.2 Roman**

No evidence of Roman occupation is known in the area.

##### **5.3 Medieval**

Stareton is the possible site of a deserted medieval village. An estate map of 1597 shows around 17 houses around Stareton House and Park Farm, and possible house platform earthworks have been noted in the area (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2915). A possible site of a medieval watermill is located 300m to the northwest of Park Farm, and the associated watercourses are still visible as earthworks (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2903). An area of Ridge and Furrow also survives to the east of Stareton.

##### **5.4 Post-Medieval**

The Stareton Cottages themselves are Grade II listed and date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Several other post-medieval monuments are known in the area, including two quarries, one 250m to the west of Stareton shown on maps dating to 1597 and 1766 (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2875) and one 500m to the south of Stareton which is also marked on an estate map of 1597 (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2867). The site and partial remains of two post-medieval footbridges that cross the nearby River Avon are located 200m to the northwest of Stareton, and these are marked on maps of 1685 and 1749 (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2932). The site is also very close to the southern edge of Stoneleigh Deer park, where deer were kept for hunting during the post-medieval and Imperial periods (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2865)

The development lies within an area of significant archaeological potential, and the site therefore had potential to impact on archaeological deposits, including structural remains,

boundary features and domestic refuse pits associated with the occupation of the area from at least the early medieval period.

## **6 RESULTS**

No archaeological features or deposits were noted in any of the groundworks, although two sherds of post-medieval pottery and three pieces of animal bone were recovered from the topsoil.

The first piece of groundwork was the footings for the extension to the rear of the existing cottages. These footings were almost all 1.20 metres deep, although patches of softer sandy natural caused a few parts of the trenches to be dug deeper, to a depth of 1.50m. In these trenches the natural sandy subsoil was overlain by the modern topsoil, which was 100 – 120mm deep.

The footings for the two double garages were excavated in the gardens of the existing cottages. As with the footings for the extension, the natural subsoil was overlain by a 100 – 120mm thick layer of topsoil and grass.

## **7 THE FINDS – POTTERY IDENTIFICATION BY STEPHANIE RÀTKAI**

Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the topsoil during excavation of the footings for the extension. One sherd was a coarseware bowl rim of probable 18<sup>th</sup> century date (WCTS code CW), and the other sherd was identified as a coarseware jar base of 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century date (WCTS code MPCW).

Two pieces of animal bone which were also recovered from the topsoil during the excavation of the footings for the extension were identified as vertebrae from a neonate mammal, probably a pig (D. Brown, pers. comm.)

## **8 DISCUSSION**

The absence of archaeological features and deposits on the site suggests that the site remained unoccupied prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century date of the construction of 1 –2 Stareton Cottages. It is possible that any evidence of archaeological features and deposits directly underneath the original footprint of the Cottages may have been obliterated during construction. The pottery is likely to have been discarded by the occupants of the Cottages in the 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the neonate bones may stem from the rural practice of keeping a pig in the garden to fatten up to provide meat for the occupants. In this case it is possible that this animal was stillborn and was therefore discarded.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The project was commissioned by Paul Underhill. Thanks are due to Paul Underhill and his team for their co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks also go to Anna Stocks, who monitored the project on behalf of Warwick District Council. The watching brief was undertaken by Erica Macey-Bracken, who also produced the written report which was illustrated by Helen Moulden, and edited by Chris Hewitson, who also managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

## **10 References**

Birmingham Archaeology 2007 *Written Scheme of Investigation for a Watching Brief at 1 & 2 Stareton, Warwickshire*

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*

Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*, rev. edn.



# Appendix 1 - Brief for Archaeological Work

**Location:** 1 & 2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Stoneleigh, CV8 2LL.

**Proposed:** Erection of single storey rear extensions and two detached double garages.

## **Summary**

Planning permission has been granted by Warwick District Council for the erection of single storey rear extensions and two detached double garages at 1 & 2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Stoneleigh, CV8 2LL (ref. W07/1150).

It is likely that some archaeological deposits of interest may be disturbed or exposed by the development. It is a condition of the planning permission that, before the development commences, the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. This is in line with government advice as set out in the DoE Planning Policy Guidance on Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16). This brief sets out the requirements for that programme of archaeological works.

## **1. Location.**

1.1 The site is centred around national grid reference SP 3335 7137, in the parish of Stoneleigh.

## **2. Archaeological Background**

2.1 The proposed development is located within an area of significant archaeological potential. Stareton is the possible site of a deserted medieval settlement. An estate map from 1597 shows about 17 houses around Stareton House and Park Farm, and possible house platform earthworks have been noted in this area (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2915). The Stareton Cottages, which are Grade II Listed, date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There is therefore a potential for the proposals to impact upon archaeological deposits, including structural remains, boundary features and domestic refuse pits, associated with the utilisation of this area from at least the early post-medieval, if not earlier period.

2.2 Further details of archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed development can be obtained from the County Historic Environment Record, Warwickshire Museum Field Services Office, The Butts, Warwick, CV34 4SS. (Please note that the online version of the HER may not contain comprehensive or up to date information on individual sites and is not suitable for use in the preparation of specifications, desktop appraisals or other commercial applications).

## **3. Requirement for archaeological work**

3.1 The proposed development together with associated service trenches and access routes would severely damage or destroy any archaeological remains which may be present on the site. It is a condition of the planning permission that the applicant should secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.

3.2 The objective of the work should be to obtain an adequate record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed by work associated with the development.

3.3 The whole of the area to be disturbed should be examined.

3.4 The project is to comply with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Conduct* and all relevant IFA Standards and Guidance documents.

## **4. Techniques**

Land use at the time fieldwork is carried out will influence the methods used. The techniques chosen should be selected to cause the minimum amount of destruction and should comply with all relevant health and safety regulations. It is envisaged that the following work would be required:

4.1 Examination of any available maps (printed and manuscript), aerial photographs and other relevant background material including the County Historic Environment Record;

4.2 Observation of all ground disturbance by archaeological staff in order to identify any deposits of archaeological importance; the archaeologists must have the authority to halt any earth moving activity if necessary to define and record areas of archaeological interest;

4.3 Investigation and recording of all archaeological contexts and artefacts disturbed or exposed;

4.4 A programme of sampling of appropriate materials for environmental and/or other scientific analysis. Special attention should be paid to any waterlogged deposits encountered;

4.5 In the event of significant archaeological deposits being identified they should either be recorded and then protected from any further disturbance or, if that is not practical, be excavated and recorded as soon as possible.

## **5. Excavation Guidelines**

Where excavation is to be by machine the following guidelines should be observed:

5.1 The health and safety implications of any use of earth-moving machinery on the site should be taken into account;

5.2 A representative sample of any archaeological features or deposits which are identified must be excavated by hand. The site stratigraphy should be recorded even where no archaeological deposits have been identified;

5.3 Any human remains which are encountered must initially be left in situ. If removal is necessary this must comply with the relevant Home Office regulations.

5.4 Contractors may find it convenient to produce digital photographs for ease of dissemination; however, conventional (silver halide) photography should be undertaken for inclusion within the project archive.

## **6. Proposal**

6.1 A detailed proposal, including the following, should be prepared by potential contractors and submitted to the County Archaeologist or Planning Archaeologist for approval on behalf of the planning authority:

6.2 A description of the proposed methods of excavation and recording system;

6.3 An explanation of the sampling strategies to be used;

6.4 A projected timetable for work on site, including machine hire time and staff structure and numbers, and for all post excavation work, including staff numbers and specialist sub-contractors.

6.5 Any significant variations to the proposal must be agreed by the County Archaeologist or Planning Archaeologist in advance.

## **7. Site Monitoring**

7.1 The Warwickshire Museum will be responsible for monitoring the archaeological work. A minimum of one week's notice of the commencement of fieldwork must be given by the archaeological contractor to the Museum so that arrangements for monitoring can be made;

## **8. Reporting Requirements**

8.1 The archaeological work should result in a report including a description of the methodology employed; plans showing survey areas; plans and sections at an appropriate scale showing location and position of trenches dug and features located; section drawing should include heights OD; plans should include OD spot heights for all principal strata and features; a list of and spot date for any significant finds recovered and a description and interpretation of the deposits identified.

8.2 The objective account of the archaeological evidence recovered should be clearly distinguished from the interpretation of those features. The methodology used should be critically reviewed.

8.3 Pottery reports will be expected to refer to the appropriate type series, including the Warwickshire type series for Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery.

8.4 Four copies of the report should be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record, on the understanding that it will be made available as a public document after an appropriate period (not exceeding 6 months from the completion of fieldwork); a further copy to be sent to the relevant Local Planning Authority Planning Officer.

8.5 The results of the work should be published in an appropriate journal or other publication and should include an account of any structures located and full details of significant finds, illustrated as appropriate. Details of the place and date of publication must be notified to the County Historic Environment Record.

8.6 A summary account of the work should be submitted to the editor of *West Midland Archaeology* and any relevant period journals (e.g. *Medieval Archaeology*) no later than March 31<sup>st</sup> of the year following completion of fieldwork..

## **9. Deposition of Archive and Finds**

9.1 The archaeological archive arising from the work should be deposited in the appropriate local institution, in a format to be agreed with that institution. The County Historic Environment Record must be notified of the arrangements made. Any finds of archaeological interest should be appropriately conserved and deposited in an appropriate institution: any finds which cannot be so deposited should be fully analysed and published.

Warwickshire Museum  
September 2007

## **APPENDIX 2 - WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT 1 AND 2 STARETON COTTAGES, STARETON, STONELEIGH, WARWICKSHIRE.**

### **1.0: PLANNING BACKGROUND**

Planning permission has been granted by Warwick District Council for the erection of a single storey rear extension and two detached double garages at 1 and 2 Stareton Cottages, Stareton, Stoneleigh. As part of the condition of the planning permission a programme of archaeological monitoring is to be undertaken on the proposed development. This is in line with government advice set out in the DoE Planning and policy Guidance on Archaeology and Planning (PPG16).

### **2.0: LOCATION**

1 and 2 Stareton Cottages (to be known as the site) lies within the parish of Stoneleigh, south of the village and east of Stoneleigh Park within the hamlet of Stareton, between the Stoneleigh Road and the Coventry Road (NGR: SP 3335 7137).

### **3.0: ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The proposed development lies within an area of significant archaeological potential. Stareton is the possible site of a deserted medieval village. An estate map of 1597 shows about 17 houses around Stareton House and Park Farm, and possible house platform earthworks have been noted in the area (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 2915). The Stareton Cottages are grade II listed and date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There are also several Post-medieval monuments listed in the local area that suggest continuity from the earlier period. The site therefore has potential to impact on archaeological deposits, including structural remains, boundary features and domestic refuse pits, associated with occupation of the area from at least the early-medieval period.

### **4.0: SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

The proposed development will disturb below-ground deposits. Therefore a programme of archaeological monitoring will be required on all foundation trenches, service trenches, proposed access routes and any work that will involve excavation below the level of the topsoil.

The objective of the work is to obtain an adequate record of archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed by work associated with the development.

The whole of the area to be disturbed will be examined.

### **5.0: STAFFING**

The project manager will be Chris Hewitson and the watching brief will be maintained by an experienced archaeologist.

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:

Dr Lawrence Barfield- Flint artefacts, freelance consultant lithics specialist.

Dr Ann Woodward- Prehistoric pottery, Research Fellow, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham.

Dr Jeremy Evans- Roman pottery, Honorary Research Fellow, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham.

C. Jane Evans- Roman pottery, freelance consultant pottery specialist

Stephanie Rátkai- Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery, Honorary Research Associate and Finds Researcher, University of Birmingham.

Erica Macey-Bracken- Small finds, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham

Dr Andrew Howard– Archaeo-Geomorphology, Lecturer in Archaeo-Geomorphology and Remote Sensing, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Dr James Greig- English Heritage Archaeological Scientist - pollen and plant macro-fossils.

Dr Wendy Smith- Charred plant remains, Honary Research Fellow in Archaeo-Botany, University of Birmingham.

Matilda Holmes- Animal bone, freelance consultant archaeozoologist.

Dr David Smith- Micro-fauna, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Dr Megan Brickley- Human Bone, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Dr Roger White- Coins and brooches, Project Manager, Lecturer and Assistant Director (Development), Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Jane Cowgill- slag and industrial residues, freelance consultant.

Rowena Gale- charcoal and wood. freelance consultant.

## **A: AIMS**

The general aims of an archaeological watching brief is to identify and record archaeological features and deposits uncovered during hand-cleaning of excavations in advance of construction or infrastructure projects, and to prepare a brief report summarising the findings.

## **B: METHODOLOGY**

A search of available maps (printed and manuscript), aerial photographs and other material held at the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record will be undertaken.

An experienced archaeologist will attend site to monitor construction groundworks, as required in the Design Brief.

Groundworks to be observed will include the stripping of topsoil, B-horizon subsoils, and trenches cut into the natural subsoil.

Following the stripping of topsoil the machined surface will be inspected, and sufficient hand-cleaning will be undertaken to facilitate the definition of archaeological, or possible archaeological features and deposits.

Where it is safe to do so, the archaeologist will enter construction trenches for the purpose of undertaking hand-cleaning of the trench sides and base for the better definition of any archaeological features or deposits present. No excavation of archaeological features, other than hand-cleaning, would be undertaken. Where it is unsafe to enter deep trenches archaeological recording will be confined to photography and the completion of pre-printed pro-formas.

*Should significant, or potentially significant groups of archaeological features be uncovered the Planning Archaeologist and Archaeological Consultant (if any) will be consulted immediately so that an alternative strategy for more detailed investigation can be devised, in consultation with the developer.*

### Human remains

No excavation of human remains would be undertaken until a Home Office Licence has been obtained, and the Planning Archaeologist, the local Coroner, the Police, the Archaeological Consultant (if any) consulted.

### Recording

Recording would be by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate) and sections (1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate), and 35mm monochrome print and colour slide photography.

### Finds

Finds would be recovered by context would be washed, marked and bagged. Appropriate conservation work would be undertaken.

### Environmental sampling

All datable features would be sampled objectively for the recovery of charred or waterlogged plant remains, pollen and insect remains.

## **C: REPORT FORMAT**

The archaeological watching brief report will comprise:

- Description of the development and archaeological background
- Details of the archaeological results, set within their context.

- Spot-dating of datable finds, and brief finds and environmental reports
- A discussion of the watching brief results.
- Plans showing the locations and extent of the development site subjected to the watching brief, supported by historic map extracts to place the watching brief results in the wider context.
- Simplified feature plans and sections, where applicable.
- A selection of colour photographs, where applicable.

A summary account of the work will be submitted to the editor of *West Midland Archaeology* by the year following the fieldwork.

#### **D: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

- Birmingham Archaeology is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (RAO) with the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA)
- All Birmingham Archaeology staff will follow the Code of Conduct of the IFA at all times.
- The watching brief will be undertaken in accordance with the standards laid down in the 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs' (1999)
- The archaeological watching brief will follow the specific guidelines and requirements laid down in the Design Brief prepared by the relevant Planning Archaeologist, and the particular requirements set down in this document, which will be followed by all project staff. All variations will be agreed in advance with the relevant Planning Archaeologist and Archaeological Consultant (as appropriate).

#### **E: HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- A Risk Assessment will be undertaken before commencement of the archaeological watching brief.
- Birmingham Archaeology staff will follow the Health and safety guidelines contained in the Birmingham Archaeology Health and Safety Manual. This follows the requirements of the SCAUM Health and Safety Manual, and is approved by the Health and Safety Unit of the University of Birmingham.

#### **F: PROGRAMME**

The watching brief programme will follow that of the general contractor undertaking construction groundworks, with regular liaison between Birmingham Archaeology and the general contractor to ensure that regular archaeological attendance is maintained during the groundworks sufficient to ensure that the requirements of the Design Brief are fulfilled.

A suitable time allowance for hand-cleaning and recording of archaeological features and deposits should be made by the developer and their construction groundworkers. The archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will maintain regular liaison with the site manager/foreman to keep disruption of the construction programme to a minimum.

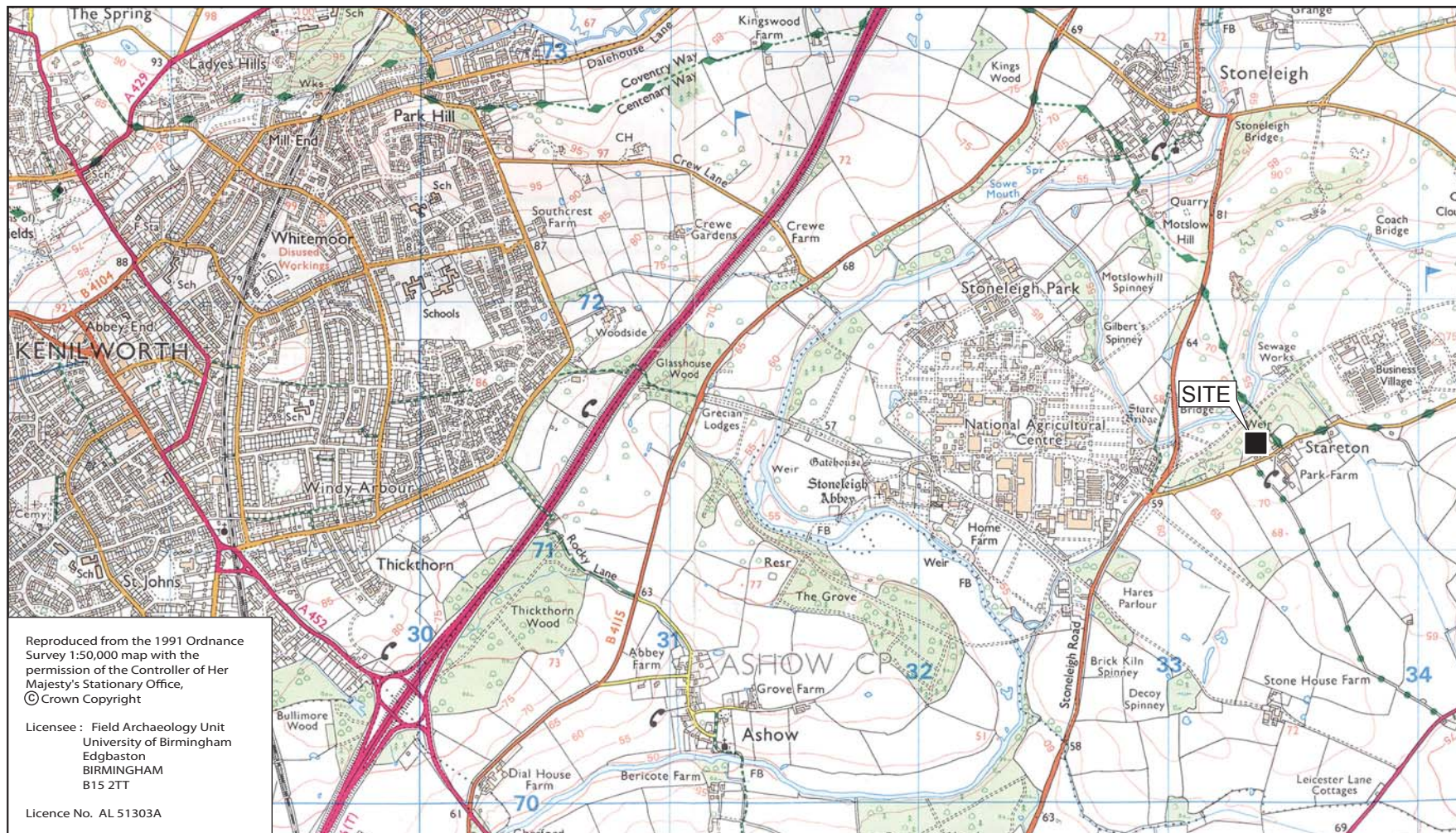


Fig.1



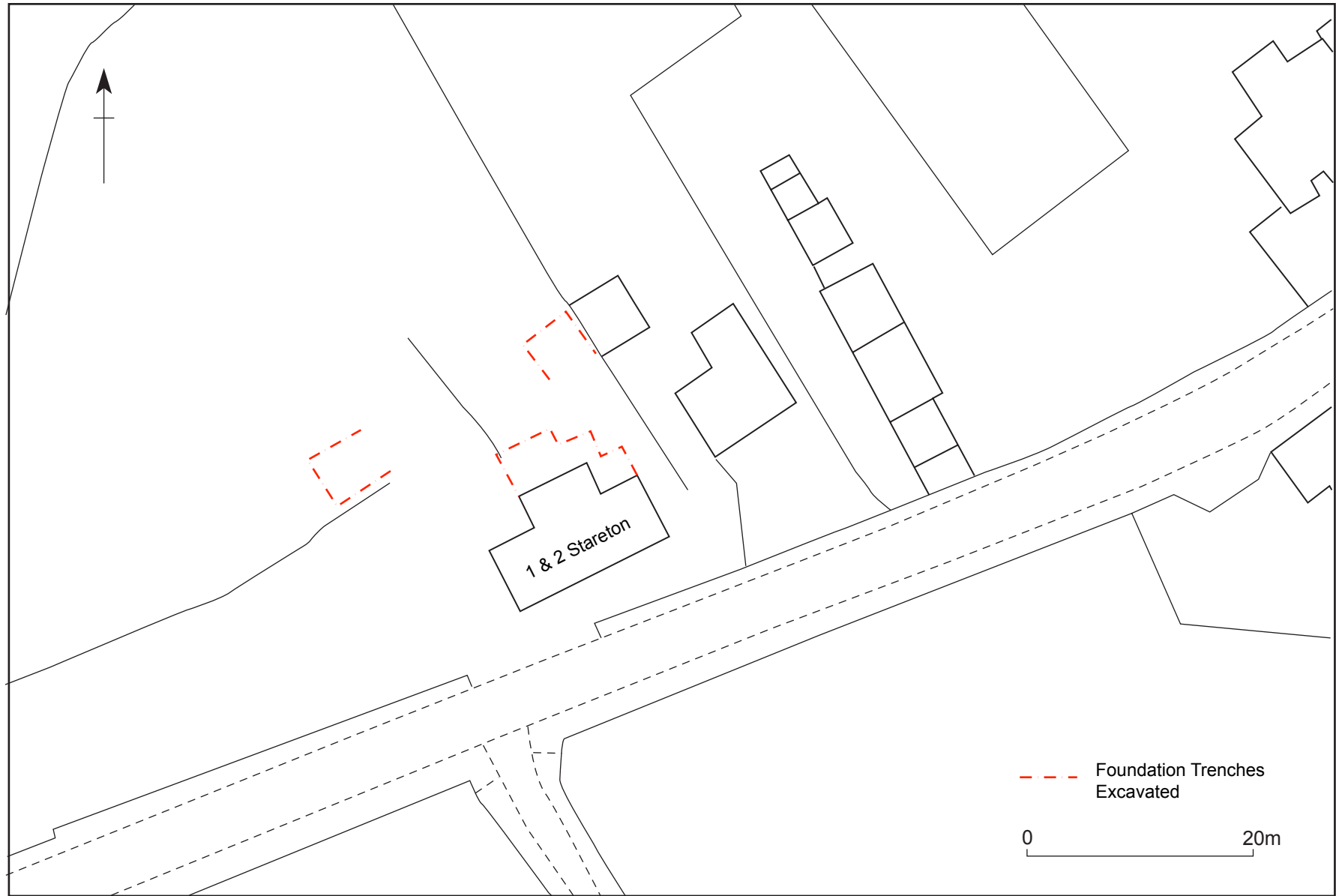


Fig.2

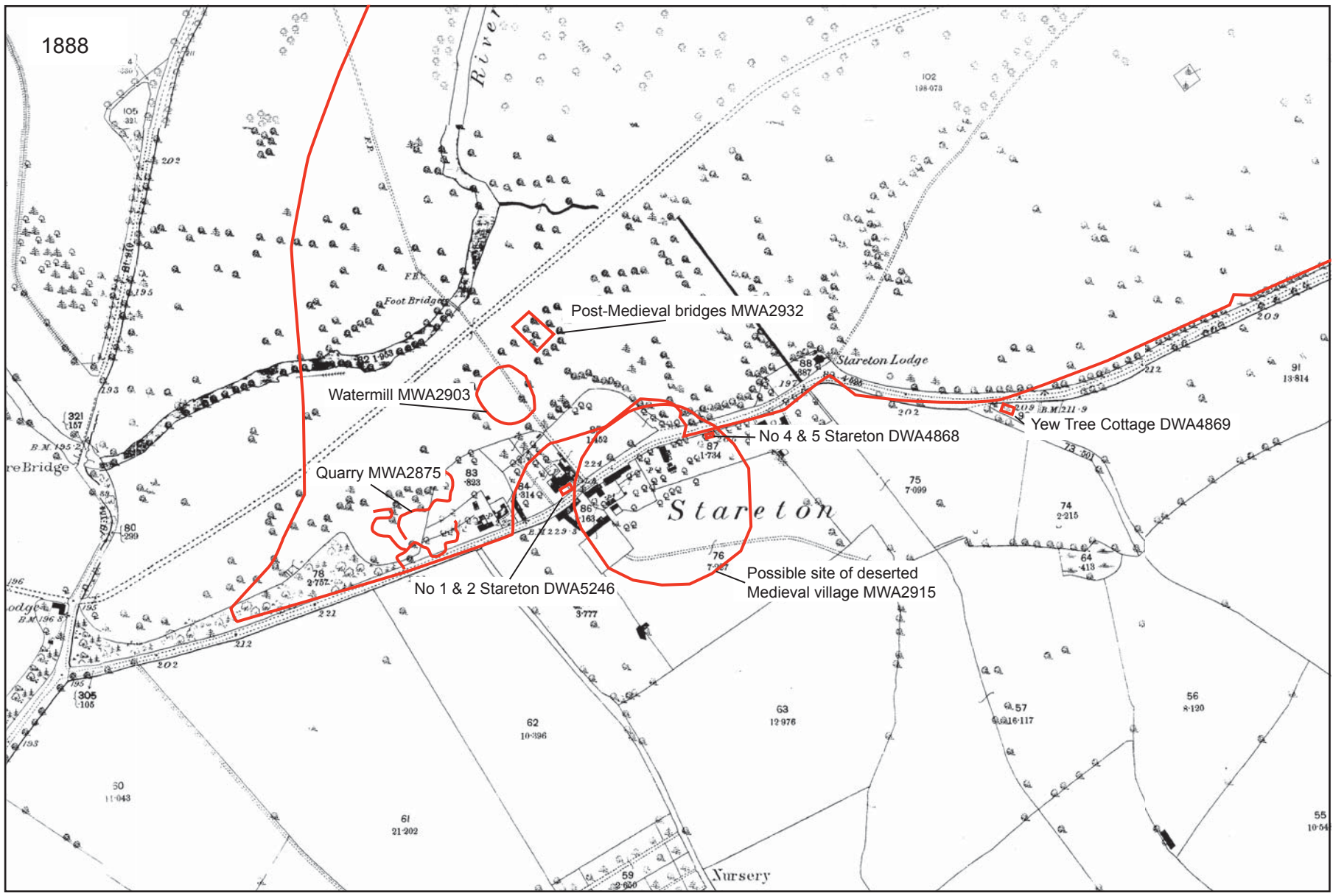


Fig.3



Plate 1



Plate 2