Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological strip, map and recording action on

land off Harry Weston Road, Binley, Coventry

May - September 2007

Danny McAree

November 2007

Report 07/177

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Archaeological strip, map and recording action on land off Harry Weston Road, Binley, Coventry	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology conducted an archaeological strip, map and recording action on land off Harry Weston Road, Binley, Coventry in April and May 2007. Remnant earthwork remains of a medieval field system and ridge and furrow cultivation were uncovered together with post holes from a fence alignment, a large pond and a number of pits that may represent the remains of dew ponds. A crude medieval hearth with at least two phases of use, the latter containing a large quantity of charred cereal grains may be the remains of a malting oven.	
Project type	Archaeological strip, map and recording action	
Previous work	Trial Trenching 2007, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Current Land use	Waste, previously school playing fields	
Future work	None	
Monument type/ period	Medieval	
Significant finds		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Coventry	
Site address (including postcode)	Land off Harry Weston Road, Binley	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	1083sq m	
OS Easting & Northing (use grid sq. letter code)	SP 3786 7851	
Height OD	81m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Coventry City Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Danny McAree	
Project Manager	Paul Mason	
Sponsor or funding body	DL Property and Development Strategies	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	17/04/07	
End date	04/09/07	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		
Digital		
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title		
Serial title & volume		
Author(s)		
Page numbers		
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT

HARRY WESTON ROAD, BINLEY, COVENTRY

MAY 2007

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Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology conducted an archaeological strip, map and recording action on land off Harry Weston Road, Binley, Coventry, between April and September 2007. Remnant earthwork remains of a medieval field system and ridge and furrow cultivation were uncovered together with postholes from a fence alignment, a large pond and a number of pits that may represent the remains of dew ponds. A crude hearth with at least two phases of use, the latter containing a large quantity of charred cereal grains may be the remains of a medieval malting oven.

1 INTRODUCTION

Danny Lynch Property Development Strategies (DLPDS) and Pettifer Estates have been granted planning permission by Coventry City Council for development of about 1100sqm of land off Harry Weston Road, Binley, Coventry. The development comprises a two-story office block with associated plant room, access roads and car parking. A public footpath is being re-located to the north of the site and the remaining boundaries all have retained open space for landscaping (Application Reference 53784).

The site is bounded to the north and west by Brinklow Road, to the east by the Harry Weston Road business development and to the south by the rear of hoses and development along Brandon Road (NGR SP 3786 7851, Fig 1). It is currently an open expanse of waste ground through which pass two public rights of way.

As a condition of the planning process and in response to an historic environment assessment and trial trenching carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Mason 2007a), a further phase of archaeological mitigation works was required. These were set out in a written scheme of investigation (Mason 2007b) and undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between 17th April and 4th September 2007.

The works entailed monitoring and recording of soil stripping during the pre-construction preparation of the site and the monitoring, recording and excavation of any exposed archaeological features within the development area.

The strip, map and recording action was carried out in accord with the written scheme of investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Mason 2007b) and approved by Chris Patrick, Planning Archaeologist, Coventry City Council.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical and archaeological background

Place name evidence

The name Binley seems to derive from an Anglo Saxon personal name '*Billa*' coupled with either the Anglo Saxon '*leah*' meaning forest clearing or perhaps from the less common Anglo Saxon '*eg*' meaning island or well watered land. The location of Binley between a large loop of the River Sowe to the west and north and the Warwickshire Avon to the south may justify the attribution of the origin as "Billa's island" in the sense of "well watered land" (Poulton-Smith 1996, 29).

Domesday records

Binley is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. It is recorded first as *Bilnei* and located within the Stoneleigh Hundred.

The land of the Church of Coventry: The church itself holds BINLEY. There are 3 hides. There is land for 8 ploughs. In demesne is 1 plough; and 4 slaves, and 10 villans and 6 bordars with 5 ploughs. There are 8 acres of meadow, and woodland half a league long and 1 furlong broad. TRE, as now, worth 60s. Ealdgyth wife of Gruffydd held this land. The abbot bought it from Osbern fitzRichard.'

A second entry records additional lands in *Bilneie* in the Marton Hundred.

The land of Thorkill of Warwick: From Thorkill, Eadwulf holds 2 hides in BINLEY. There is land for 3 ploughs. In demesne is 1 [plough] and 5 villans and 7 bordars with 2 ploughs. There are 2 slaves and a mill rendering 40d, and 8 acres of meadow, [and] woodland 4 furlongs long and 2 furlongs broad. It was worth 20s, now 35s. The same man held it who now holds it (Williams and Martin 2002, 653, 662).

A hide was notionally the area that could support a family each year. It could be sub divided into four virgates. Elsewhere in lieu of the hide, terms such as caracute, ox-gang or ploughland were used as equivalents for tax assessment of the value of land and its potential to produce crops. A rough rule of thumb is that a hide (or caracute) was the equivalent of 120-150 acres of land, depending on the yield of the soil.

The lands held by Coventry Church would thus equate to between 360-450 acres (145-182 ha). Eadwulf held just 2 hides or about 240-300 acres (97-122 ha) of arable plough land. Both the church and Eadwulf held 8 acres of meadow. Meadowland was of particular value as it provided pasture and more importantly hay to over-winter animals.

Woodland was often measured by reference to linear length and breadth rather than by area (acreage). In medieval England, there were 8 furlongs in a mile, 12 furlongs in a league. Each furlong equates to 40 perches (a medieval measure that could vary between 14-18 feet (5-6m)). The woodland attached to the church holdings would have amounted to about 60 acres (24 ha). Eadwulf's woodland was about 80 acres (32 ha). Woodland provided shelter and pannage (acorns, beech mast or nuts to feed animals, particularly pigs, in autumn) as well as wild game, birds, fruit and berries. It was essential to provide firewood, sticks, staffs, staves and light timber for daily use. Woodland was intensively managed and was treated as a crop to be tended and harvested like any other.

In addition to the land available for arable, meadow and woodland, there would have been rough pasture, common land, waste and scrub that could amount to as much as half the total area of the estate.

A 'ploughland' was generally the amount of land a single ox-plough team could cultivate each ploughing season as this dictated the notional yield from the land. A 'plough' indicated the presence of not just the implement, but of the team of eight oxen necessary to draw the plough. The land for a given number of ploughs (eight in the church holdings, three for the land held by Eadwulf) refers to land actually cleared, fenced and available for ploughing and crops.

The church lands actually only had five plough teams available so there was spare capacity, the Eadwulf holding had three ploughs that matched the amount of ground prepared for arable farming.

Only heads of household were recorded in the survey so the villeins and bordars listed in the church holdings represent twenty families working the land. Between them they had access to five eight-ox plough teams to till the available arable land. On Eadwulf's holding, there were fourteen families as well as the mill that probably indicates another family milling the produce from the surrounding arable land.

The demesne land was worked on behalf of the feudal lord or tenant, the remainder was held in return for a rent paid in labour or a proportion of crops, produce or livestock.

The initials TRE are shorthand for the Latin *Tempore Regis Edwardi* – in the time of King Edward. This was used to indicate the tax assessment of an estate or holding before the Conquest, and that at the time of the Domesday Survey (the reign of King Harold was ignored by the Normans as they considered he had usurped the throne).

The church holding had been worth 60 shillings in the reign of King Edward the Confessor, it was judged to be worth 60 shillings at the time of the Domesday Survey. This may reflect on the availability of land but insufficient ploughs to exploit the estate potential. Eadwulf's land had been worth 20s, it was now worth 35s, clearly his continued tenancy had seen improved returns from the estate.

The mill mentioned in the return almost certainly relates to a water mill on the nearby River Sowe (windmills were not introduced until almost a century after the Domesday Survey). Mills were used to grind cereal grain for flour and were an important capital investment on an estate. A mill is recorded on the river to the west of the development site in the later medieval period and may be a later replacement for the one recorded in the Domesday Survey.

Aerial photographs of the site have revealed evidence of extensive ridge and furrow, in the surrounding area indicating that it was probably under arable cultivation during the medieval period.

Historic mapping

The earliest available map of the development area is the Binley Craven Estate Map of 1746 that shows the area corresponding with the site to be an agricultural field. Two small buildings are shown in the south east corner of the field set within a looping enclosure (Fig 2).

The settlement at Binley is obviously rural and agrarian with buildings focused around the junction of Brinklow Road at its junction with Brandon Road. To the north Brinklow Road bends to the east with Clifford Bridge Road continuing north towards Walsgrave (on Sowe). At this junction Mill Lane leads downhill to the west to the site of the mill with the mill race and mill pool clearly defined (Fig 2).

At its junction with Brandon Road, Binley Road extends to the west towards Ernsford, Biggen Hall and Coventry. More buildings are shown along the south side of Binley Road. To the north of Binley Road, a lane is shown extending north behind the parish church of St Batholomew and joining with Mill Lane adjacent to the site of the mill. A range of buildings are shown along this lane.

This development site is located within the curve of Brinklow Road to the north and west and Brandon Road to the south. It is located at the centre of the settlement opposite the parish church of St Bartholomew (Fig 2).

By 1778 the buildings had disappeared as evidenced by the Craven Estate Map of that time (not illustrated). The topography of the site remains unchanged in 1887 when it was surveyed for the 1st edition 25"Ordnance Survey map (Fig 3).

Sites and Monuments Records data

A search of Coventry's Sites and Monuments Records database was made within a 500m radius of the site producing fifteen records detailed in Table 1 (Fig 4). None are located within the application site.

Table 1: Historic environment data

SMR No	Description
MCT60	Find spot. Coin of Elizabeth I.
MCT147	Ex situ field boundary stone inscribed with date 1663.
MCT160	Site of Binley Mill (medieval/post-medieval).
MCT189	Site of Binley Grange windmill (medieval).
MCT287	'Rosedale' listed post-medieval building.
MCT539	Site of former post-medieval pound.
MCT586	Ridge and furrow.
MCT672	Church of St Bartholomew. 18th century.
MCT673	Vicarage. 16th century.
MCT683	Grade II listed building. 17th century.
MCT694	Grade II listed building. 16th century.
MCT705	Grade II listed building. 16th century.
MCT716	Grade II listed building. 16th century.
MCT733	The Old Grammar School. 1879.
MCT740	Ridge and furrow.

Documentary research

Prior to boundary changes in 1931, Binley was assessed at 1688 acres, fairly consistent with the recorded 900 acres of arable, meadow and woodland recorded in the Domesday Survey and taking into account common, scrub and waste not recorded at that time.

Binley had originally been a five hide vill, Coventry Church holding three hides and Eadwulf who had held two hides before the Conquest and who held them from Thorkill of Warwick at the time of the Domesday Survey.

The holdings of the Church of Coventry were acquired from Osbern, son of Richard de Mortimer who held extensive lands in Wales and the Welsh Marches. Originally it had belonged to Gruffydd of North Wales, and then by his widow, Ealdgyth. This land remained connected with the honour of Richard's Castle on the Welsh border. It was held by a succession of tenants during the 12th and 13th centuries by payment of part of a knight's fee to the honour of the castle. Part of this land was granted to the Abbot of the newly established Combe Abbey in the 12th century and this was increased by Joceline and Robert, sons of Ralph de Bilney who gave a hide of land rated at onr sixth of a knight's fee. Their son Geoffrey granted additional land and by 1287 it was recorded that the Abbot of Combe Abbey held half of the manor of Binley.

The two hides held from Thorkill by Eadwulf passed to Thurbert, son of Eadwulf, who then passed land in the vicinity of the stream and the now lost hamlet of Smite adjoining the site of the new abbey to the Abbot of Combe Abbey. The gift was confirmed in 1149 and again in 1153 by Robert Basset and Henry de Arderne who held the mense lordship there. Thurbert's son Henry later gifted part of his woodland and the mill to the Abbey.

By 1291, the abbey grange at Binley contained two caracutes of land in demesne, rents from other lands in Binley, stock and a windmill. The adjoining grange at Ernsford was also held by the abbey and contained another caracute of land with waste attached and valuable stock. In 1410, the Abbey was said to have the manor at Binley and another at Ernsford although this was never manorial

After the Dissolution in 1539, the Manor of Binley was granted to Mary, Duchess of Richmond, and has since descended with the estates of Combe Abbey. In 1544, Ernsford was granted as a grange to Thomas Brooke and John Wyllyams who conveyed it later that year to Christopher Warren. It was he or a namesake who then acquired the remainder of the Coventry Church land at Binley in 1603.

Other local religious houses had also held land at Binley before the Dissolution. In 1279 the Hospitallers of Grafton held a small estate from Combe Abbey, nothing else is known of it. In 1542 the Coventry Charterhouse granted $2^1/_2$ acres of meadow beside the River Sowe Bridge to Richard Andrewys and Leonard Chamberlayne who sold the freehold on to a Henry Waver (Over?). The lands formerly held by St John Baptist Hospital were granted to John Hales in 1545.

The church of St Bartholomew was a daughter chapel of the Priory at Coventry and confirmed to the monastery by the Earl of Chester in the reign of Henry 1 (1100-1135) and confirmed by Roger Meuland, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield in 1260 (VCH 1951, Dugdale 1656). The current church was built at the expense of Lord Craven and completed in 1773.

Previous archaeological intervention

Northamptonshire Archaeology prepared an historic environment assessment and undertook trial trench evaluation work on the site during 2nd–5th April 2007 (Mason 2007a). A single gully was exposed at the south west of the site in a location that corresponded with that of a small building depicted on an estate map of 1746 (Fig 2).

Elsewhere, there were several undated gullies and a single pit. Towards the north east of the site, a crude hearth containing a large quantity of charred cereal grains appeared to be the remains of a medieval malting oven (Fig 5).

Topography and geology

The site is situated on a ridge of high ground bounded to the west and north by a loop of the River Sowe, and to the south by the valley of the Warwickshire River Avon. The site covers an area of about 1100 sq m and is fairly flat open waste ground. It is located at *c* 81m AOD.

The surface geology consists of glacial sand and gravel mixed with reddish clay till. The bedrock is Permo-Triassic grey mudstone and reddish sandstones of the lower Jurassic period (www.bgs.ac.uk).

The exposed natural sub soil was yellow-orange/brown sand containing ribbons and patches of red or yellow silt clays and bands of orange/red coarse sands and gravel.

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Objectives

The main objective of the archaeological excavation was to excavate and record the archaeological remains in order to understand the nature, function and character of the site in its cultural and environmental setting. The specific aims of the project were to:

- To prepare a detailed assessment of the development site's historical and archaeological potential
- To identify evidence for the survival of buried archaeological remains on the site that may be threatened by the development
- To determine the depth of burial, character, date, extent and state of preservation of any such remains
- To recover evidence of the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Binley.

The national framework for research is set out by English Heritage (1997); the Research Aims set out in this document are addressed by the project.

A report on the project will be published in the proceedings of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society (BWAS) and in West Midlands Archaeology, the annual report of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) West Midlands.

3.2 Method statement

Mitigation Strategy

It was proposed to mitigate against the impact of the development on the archaeological deposits through preservation by record.

A strip, map and recording action was undertaken during pre-construction clearance of the site.

Fieldwork and Recording

All works were conducted in accordance with the IFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations (1994, revised 1999) and the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1985, revised 2000).

Monitoring of the programme of fieldwork was carried out by Chris Patrick, Planning Archaeologist, Coventry City Council.

The topsoil and sub soil were removed by a 360° mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, to reveal significant archaeological remains or, where these were absent, the natural substrate. Spoil was transported by a dumper where appropriate. This work was carried out at all times under archaeological supervision.

A site plan was established and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid, and all levels are related to Ordnance Survey Datum. The archaeological surfaces were cleaned by hand and planned at a scale of 1:100. All discrete features were sectioned and drawn at 1:20. The character, composition and general depositional sequence of the site stratification were recorded on pro-forma sheets, with a unique context number being allocated to each distinct deposit and feature (to avoid confusion with contexts recorded during evaluation, the site sequence commenced at 601).

Samples were taken for flotation from contexts with a potential for the recovery of organic residues, charcoal and carbonised plant remains. The sampling strategy conformed to English Heritage Guidelines (2002).

A full photographic record comprising both 35mm monochrome negatives, with associated prints, colour transparencies and digital images was maintained.

All records completed during fieldwork have been compiled into a comprehensive and fully cross-referenced site archive.

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

4.1 Summary of chronology

Table 2: Site chronology and phasing

ACTIVITY	PERIOD	PHASE
Ditches, field boundary, ridge and furrow cultivation, pits and ponds	12th –16th century	Phase 1
Rubbish pits	19th-20th century	Phase 2
Modern service trenches	20th century	Phase 3

Details of the excavated features are described at Appendix A.

4.2 Ditches, field boundary, ridge and furrow cultivation, pits, hearth and ponds, 12th-16th century (Phase 1)

Ditches

Aligned roughly north south along the western side of the site was a shallow ditch [642], [667], [695] up to 1.2m wide and 0.45m deep (Figs 5 and 6, Section 613, Plate 1). It had steeply sloping sides to a broad dished base. It was filled with orange/brown sandy silt (643) washed in from the newly excavated sides. This was sealed beneath grey/brown silt sand (644) containing occasional flecks of charcoal, very occasional pieces of burnt or heat shattered pebbles and some rounded gravel.

Roughly parallel to this ditch and extending at an angle along the eastern side of the site was another ditch [601], [711], [720] up to 1.1m wide and 0.35m deep (Figs 5 and 6, Section 601). It had steeply sloping sides to a broad dished base. It was filled with dark grey-brown/black silt sand (602) containing some rounded gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal. This ditch produced pottery dating from the 13th century. There was evidence in the northern part of the site of a re-cut [724] which produced pottery dating to the 16th century.

Cutting both ditches and extending east west across the centre of the mitigation area was another ditch [633], [693] with steeply sloping sides and a dished base. It was up to 1m in width and 0.5m deep. It was filled with dark grey/brown silt sand (634) containing rounded gravel, occasional flecks of charcoal and very occasional fragments of burnt or heat shattered pebbles. At the west of the site, the ditch showed evidence for at least one re-cut [635] with sides sloping at 60º to a bowl shaped base up to 1.1m wide and 0.7m deep (Figs 5 and 6, Section 611, Plate 2). The lower part of the re-cut was filled with soft grey/brown silt sand (636) containing occasional rounded gravel. This was sealed below a 0.1m thick layer of dark grey/brown-black silt sand loam (637), quite organic with only occasional gravel.

The upper fill of the ditch was dark grey/brown silt sand (638) containing rounded gravel, occasional flecks of charcoal and very occasional fragments of burnt or heat shattered pebbles identical to (634). Pottery from the ditch fills dated to the 12th and 13th centuries.

At the south of the site and aligned east west across the site was another ditch [612] 1.15m wide, 0.25m deep with shallow sloping sides and a broad, slightly dished base (Fig 5 and 6, Section 606). It was filled with grey-yellow/brown sand (613), slightly organic, containing coarse gravel. It was cut along its south side by re-cut ditch [614] 0.45m wide and 0.25m deep with steeply sloping sides and a bowl shaped base. It was filled with grey/brown silt sand (615) containing gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal. The ditch terminated to the east at the junction with ditch [601] in the south east corner of the site. To the west the line of this ditch was lost through the cutting of modern service trenches and the disturbance of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation (Fig 5).

Field boundary

At the centre west of the site, a line of postholes extended west from ditch [642] and curved south forming a wide arc (Fig 5).

The postholes [671], [673], [677], [679], [681], [683] and [686] varied between 0.3-0.5m in diameter and between 0.2 and 0.3m deep.

All of the postholes were filled with grey/brown sand with little organic fill. Posthole [683] showed evidence of a post pipe (684) 0.3m wide and with large pebbles up to 50mm that may be post packing (Figs 5 and 6, Section 638). Although there were large pebbles up to 40-50mm in some of the postholes, there was no other firm evidence for post pads, pipes or packing. It is likely the original posts were removed before the holes were allowed to silt naturally.

Ridge and furrow cultivation

In the south west corner of the stripped area, there was remnant earthwork evidence of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. At least three furrow scars [629] and [631] about 6m apart were observed on this part of the site. They were filled with dark grey/brown silt sand (630) and (632), slightly organic with occasional gravel and flecks of charcoal. There was no dating evidence from the features but the furrows respected both the north south ditch [642] and the east west ditch [613] and appear to be contemporary with them (Fig 5).

Pits

At the north west of the site, located between pond [702] and ditch [642] were three oval pits (Fig 5). The northern pit [699] was about 1m in diameter and 0.3m deep with 60º sides sloping to a rounded base. It was filled with a 0.2m deep layer of soft orange/brown silt sand (700) lying deepest to the north of the pit. It was covered with a layer of dark grey/brown silt sand (701) up to 0.2m deep and containing occasional gravel and flecks of charcoal. Both layers were mottled with dark brown/black organic root disturbance. Pottery from this pit was dated to the 13th century.

To the south west lay pit [706] oval in shape, 1.5m long and 1.3m wide and 0.3m deep. It was filled with a 0.1m deep layer of orange/brown sand, very clean with only occasional small gravel. The upper fill was grey-orange/brown sand 0.2m deep with little gravel and some organic root disturbance. There were no finds from this pit.

Immediately to the north pit [709] was 1.05m in length, 0.9m wide and 0.2m deep. It was oval in shape with shallow sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a single homogenous fill of clean grey/brown sand (710) with no obvious inclusions. There were no finds from this pit.

To the east of ditch [642] and to the north of east west ditch [633] there were two further pits (Fig 5). Pit [660] was 1.5m long, 1.3m wide and 0.5m deep with steeply sloping sides and a rounded base. It was filled with a 0.25 layer of orange-grey/brown silty-sand (661) containing clods of red clay and coarse sand and gravel. It was sealed below a layer of clean, soft, water deposited yellow/orange sand (662) 0.05m deep with no obvious inclusions. This was covered with a layer of dark grey/brown silt-sand (663) mottled by dark brown/black organic root disturbance and containing gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal. Pottery from this pit is dated to the 12th century.

Slightly to the north and east was pit [669] roughly 1m in diameter with steep sloping sides and a rounded base 0.3m deep (Fig 5). It was filled with grey-orange/brown sand (700) with occasional charcoal flecks, some gravel and was mottled brown and black by root disturbance. There were no finds from this pit.

Located at the north east of the site was an oval pit [716] 1.6m long, 1.1m wide and 0.2m deep (Fig 5). It had shallow sides sloping to a broad dished base. It was filled with a 0.1m deep layer grey/brown-orange silt sand (717) containing occasional gravel badly disturbed by root action.

It was overlain by a layer of grey/brown sand (718) containing occasional flecks of charcoal and some coarse gravel. Pottery and a fragment of roof tile from this pit date to the 17th century.

About 12m to the south and just to the west of ditch [601] lay a circular pit [714] 1.1m in diameter with shallow sloping sides and a dished base 0.35m deep (Fig 5, Plate 3). It was filled with dark grey/brown silt sand (715) and gravel, banded with dark red/purple iron pan. Pottery from this pit dated to the 12th century.

About 15m to the west and slightly north lay another irregular oval pit [697] 1.95m long, 1.8m wide and 0.25m deep. It had shallow sloping sides and an irregular base. It was filled with orange/brown sand and occasional gravel (698). Given the irregular shape and profile of this feature it is likely to have been a tree bole. Pottery from this feature was dated to the 15th century.

At the south of the site and below the east west ditch [633] there were three clusters of pits. In the corner created by the junction of ditch [633] and ditch [642] was pit [688] (Fig 5). This was roughly oval 1.35m long, 0.75m wide and 0.4m deep with steeply sloping sides and a flat base. It was filled with a 0.1m deep layer of clean orange sand (689) containing small gravel. This was covered with a layer of grey/brown silt sand (690) containing coarse gravel, occasional flecks of charcoal and some brown/black organic mottling caused by root disturbance. Pottery from this pit was dated to the 13th century.

Immediately to the east lay another oval pit [691] 1.6m long, 1m in width with steep near vertical sides and a slightly dished base 0.45m deep. It was filled with grey/orange-brown sand containing gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal. Pottery from this pit was dated to the 13th century.

Further to the east there was a cluster of four oval pits (Fig 5). The northern pit [654] was 1.5m long, 1m wide and 0.1m deep. It had near vertical sides and a flat base. It was filled by grey/brown sand (655) containing occasional gravel and flecks of charcoal. Pottery from this pit was dated to the 13th century. To the east it was cut by either a re-cut or smaller pit [656] 0.4m in diameter and 0.2m deep. It had steep sides and a rounded base. It was filled with grey/brown sand (657) mottled by root disturbance containing gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal. There were no finds from this feature.

About 1m south lay oval pit [649] measuring 1.7m long and 1.2m wide with 45º sides sloping to a rounded base 0.4m deep. It was filled with a 0.25m deep layer of clean orange-grey/brown sand (650) mottled by extensive root disturbance. There were no obvious inclusions. It was sealed below dark grey/brown sand (651) 0.15m deep containing occasional gravel and flecks of charcoal. Pottery from this layer was dated to the 12th century.

Pit [645] lay about 1m further south. It was 1.6m long, 0.9m wide and 0.45m deep. It had steeply sloping sides except to the south where there was a shallower angle before a break in slope to match the rest of the pit cut (Fig 5, Plate 4).

The base was rounded and filled with a primary silting up to 0.15m deep of clean orange-grey/brown sand (646) with some small gravel, there were no other inclusions. Covering this was a 0.2m deep layer of grey/brown sand (647) slightly more organic with some root disturbance, containing rounded gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal. It was sealed below a layer of dark grey/brown sand (648) 0.25m deep, very disturbed by root action. It contained occasional gravel and charcoal flecks. Pottery from this pit was dated to the 12th century.

About 1m to the south was pit [652] roughly oval in shape with steeply sloping sides (60º) and a rounded base. It was 2.0m long, 1.4m wide and 0.45m deep, it was filled with dark grey/brown sand (653) mottled dark brown or black by organic root disturbance. It contained a little rounded gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal. Pottery from this pit was dated to the 12th century (Fig 5, Plate 4).

Some 3-4m to the south lay pit [616] roughly rectangular in shape with straight sides and rounded corners. It was 2.0m long, 1.7m wide and 0.95m deep with steep near vertical sides to the north and east but with a distinct break in slope and a shallow shoulder to the pit along the west side (Figs 5 and 6, Section 608).

It was filled with a 0.15m deep layer of dark grey sand (617) containing rounded gravel and fragments of larger heat shattered and burnt pebbles up to 85mm. It was covered in a 0.35m deep layer of grey/brown sand (618) containing rounded gravel, occasional larger pebbles up to 50mm including burnt and heat fractured stones and occasional flecks of charcoal. A single piece of red sandstone, possibly burnt and a piece of limestone were recovered from this fill. This was sealed below a 0.25m deep layer of grey/brown sand (619) mottled brown and black by root disturbance. It contained rounded gravel, occasional larger pebbles including burnt or heat shattered stones up to 60mm. There were occasional flecks of charcoal and some decayed organic material. The upper fill of the pit was dark grey/brown sand (620) 0.25m deep and contained some gravel. There were occasional larger pebbles including five fragments of burnt/heat shattered stone up to 55mm. This layer was quite organic and badly disturbed by root action. Pottery from this pit is dated to the 13th century.

About 8m to the east pit [610] was oval, 1m long, 0.9m wide and 0.15m deep with near vertical sides and a flat base. It was filled with dark grey/brown sand containing gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal. Pottery from this pit is dated to the 12th century.

Hearth

Located in the north west part of the site was a hearth or oven [404] uncovered in the trial trench evaluation (Figs 5 and 6, Section 639, Plate 5). The initial phase of activity was the cutting of a circular pit [731] 1.2m in diameter and at least 0.8m deep. This was lined with stiff red clay (732) up to 0.15m deep along the base and sides. This contained two sherds of Coventry A ware pottery dating from the 11th-12th century.

Set into this were rounded pebbles (733) up to 120mm long forming a surface on which fuel was burnt. The stones and clay all exhibited discolouration and cracking from the heat. At a later stage, the side walls were partially removed and the stone surface became covered in a layer of grey/orange sand and ash (734), no doubt the residue from the partial demolition of the hearth. A second construction cut [404] extended the original pit to the west creating a tapering wedge shaped feature 0.4m deep next to the original hearth and tapering out 1.3m to the west. The entire structure, including the original hearth was then packed with a layer of stiff red clay (405) sealing the original hearth and creating a base for a layer of sandstone (407) forming a new firing floor for oven [404]. This floor was covered in a rich deposit of burnt cereal grains (408) and charcoal.

Some of the sandstone (407) had been removed when the hearth was abandoned but a raised edge of burnt and heat cracked sandstone formed a partial surround to the main part of the oven/hearth.

Immediately to the west of this stone surround lay another roughly circular construction cut [729] 1.1m in diameter and about 0.4m deep. It had steep near vertical sides and a flat, slightly dished base. It was packed with a layer of stiff red clay (730) up to 0.15m deep and baked solid by heating or burning on its surface. It was covered with a layer of grey/brown sandy loam (409) containing flecks of charcoal. This covered all parts of the oven/hearth and clearly post-dates its abandonment. Pottery from the fill (408) of the hearth was dated to the period 1250-1350 (Mason 2007a).

Ponds

There was evidence for at least two ponds on the site. In the north west of the site, a large pond [702], 8m long and 5.5m wide and up to 1.2m deep was partially hand sectioned and then machine excavated to establish its full depth and profile (Figs 5 and 6, Section 637).

The primary fill was a 0.55m deep layer of black silt sand (705) containing an abundance of root and decayed vegetative matter. This was sealed below an 0.3m deep layer of much lighter brown, orange/yellow layer of water deposited soft silts and sands (704). It was unclear whether this represented a cleaning or re-cutting of the pond or whether it was the results of a different arable regime in the surrounding field. This was covered in a layer of dark grey/brown-black silt sand (703) up to 0.4m deep, very organic and full of roots and decayed organic material. Pottery from this pond dates from the 13th to the early 14th century.

At the south of the site and only partially exposed along the limit of excavation was another pond [605] exposed only 2.9m long and 3m wide (Fig 5). It was 0.9m deep in the exposed section. It had a primary fill of soft yellow/brown sand (606) 0.1m deep, very clean but disturbed and mottled dark brown by later root activity. This was covered by a layer of dark grey/brown silt clay 0.2m deep mottled brown and black by later root disturbance. It contained occasional flecks of charcoal or decayed vegetative matter and gravel. It was sealed below a 0.3m deep layer of sandy loam much more compact and mottled by root disturbance. The upper fill of the pond was dark grey/black silt sand (609) up to 0.3m deep. It was slightly organic with decayed organic material and occasional flecks of charcoal and ash. Pottery and glass from this layer dated to the 19th century.

4.3 Rubbish pits, 19th-20th century (Phase 2)

Pit [621] was located to the south east of the site about 3m west of trench [601] (Fig 5 and 6). It was roughly rectangular with straight sides and rounded corners. It was 2.2m long, 1.5m wide with steeply sloping sides to a dished base 0.75m deep. It was filled with a 0.1m deep layer of clean orange/yellow sand (622) with some coarse sand and gravel. This was covered by a 0.2m deep layer of pale grey-orange/yellow sand (623), slightly organic and mottled by root disturbance. It contained rounded gravel, occasional larger pebbles including some burnt or heat shattered stones up to 50mm and occasional flecks of charcoal.

Sealing this was the lowest of a series fine deposition layers of alternating light sand and darker more organic material. Layer (624) was clean grey/yellow sand, 0.02m deep formed of alternating layers of fine sand and silt with occasional coarser sand and fine gravel; there were no other obvious inclusions. Above this was a 0.05m deep layer of dark brown/black silt sand (625) quite organic with occasional fine gravel.

This was covered by a 0.3m deep layer of grey–orange/yellow sand (626) containing occasional coarser sand and gravel.

Sealing these layers was 0.3m deep layer of soft grey/brown sand (627) mottled with brown or black organic staining where disturbed by roots. It contained some rounded gravel and occasional larger pebbles including two heat cracked stones up to 50mm. The upper fill of the pit was a layer of dark grey/brown sand (628) with slightly higher silt content making it stiffer and firmer. It contained rounded gravel with occasional pebbles up to 50mm and isolated flecks of charcoal. Pottery from the upper fill of this feature was dated to the 19th century.

About 14m north and adjacent to the footway beside Harry Weston Road was pit [727] (Fig 5, Plate 6). This was 3.5m long, 2.3m wide and 0.2m deep, with steep near vertical sides and a flat base. It was filled with dark brown/black sandy loam (728) quite disturbed by root action, containing rounded gravel and occasional flecks of charcoal and ash. Pottery from this pit was dated to the late-19th and early-20th century.

To the north east of the main excavation area, on the north side of the main site access road lies a detached piece of ground designated for use as a visitors car park. Removal of the top soil exposed two large machine cut pits [745] and [747]. Both trenches were backfilled with the re-deposited upcast from their excavation mixed with modern builders rubbish, concrete road kerbs, broken brick and concrete, plastic and wood (Fig 5). Material from these pits clearly relates to the construction of the nearby buildings in the late 1990s and early 21st century.

4.4 Modern service trenches, 20th century (Phase 3)

The modern period was marked by the transfer of the site from agriculture to use as a school playing field in the 1960s. Soil from elsewhere on the school site was used to build up and level the surrounding area for sports pitches. This resulted in a build up of topsoil on the site up to 1.2m deep in places. In the late 1980s and into the 1990s the school was demolished and the site was redeveloped as a business park. Harry Weston Road formed the spine road for the new development with modern office buildings being built either side of it with associated access roads and car parking. This is the final plot to be built on this development. As part of this development, service trenches for electricity, telecommunications, foul and storm sewers were constructed.

Cutting across the development site from the south of Harry Weston Road and extending along the east boundary of the site was a machine cut service trench backfilled with the re-deposited upcast from its excavation and containing three 11 kilovolt electric cables (Fig 5).

In the north east of the site, adjacent to Harry Weston Road there was a service trench extending west from the main axis of Harry Weston Road to a pre-cast concrete section manhole, the trench then continued south parallel to the footway along the roadway (Fig 5). The trench contained a plastic storm drain and was filled with the re-deposited upcast from its excavation.

Extending north from the southern limit of the stripped area was an 8m wide trench containing a 1m diameter concrete section storm drain and a 0.8m diameter foul sewer (Fig 5). Both sewers were cut 4m deep and the trench filled with the re-deposited upcast from their excavation. The storm drain extended north towards the junction of Brinklow Road with Clifford Bridge Road. The foul sewer was diverted sharply to the west to connect with pre-existing sewers in the road.

5 THE FINDS

5.1 The Pottery by Iain Soden

The excavations produced a small assemblage of 97 sherds of medieval and later pottery, weighing 2.362kg in fourteen basic fabrics or types, none of which are new to Coventry or Warwickshire. The pottery was weighed and identified by type and assigned to its place in the Warwickshire Medieval and Post-Medieval Pottery Type Series (Ratkai and Soden 1997).

The pottery types recovered are listed in Table 3 below. A table of the pottery recorded by context, weight and suggested *terminus post-quem* is shown at Table 4 overleaf.

Table 3: Pottery types and production period

Common name	Type-series designation	Approximate production range
Stamford ware (Mahany fabric B)	WW20	1000-1150
Coventry A ware	Sq20/201/2/3, 211	1100-1400
Coventry D ware	Sq 21	1150-1240
Nuneaton/Chilvers Coton A ware	WW01	1250-1300
Nuneaton /Chilvers Coton B ware	Str20	1250-1300
Nuneaton/Chilvers Coton C ware	Sq30	1300-1500
Nuneaton/Chilvers Coton D ware	?Sq51	1400-1600
Potterspury-type ware	WW10	1250-1500
Deritend ware	Sg12	1250-1300
Glazed red earthenware	SLM	1400-1600
Martincamp flask	IMP10	1475-1600
Midland Yellow ware	MY	1500-1700
English stone ware	STE	1800-1900
Under-glaze transfer-printed earthenware	MGW	1800-1950

This comprises a relatively small assemblage which, unusually for Coventry, is weighted slightly towards the earlier medieval period, most noticeable in the presence of the Stamford Ware, not produced in the fineware form (cream fabric, apple green glaze) much after *c*1150.

Overall, the assemblage lacks the overwhelming superiority of Nuneaton products which characterise sites in the city itself from the later 13th century. As such it might be seen as indicating a peak of activity at a slightly earlier date, perhaps the first half of that century. Some material is redolent of that at Ernesford Grange but in much smaller quantities. However, there is a relative dearth of types which are considered type fossils for the late 12th-early 13th centuries, for instance the Coventry D wares, known in quantity at Coventry's Broadgate East and latterly from rural Warwickshire (such as Coton, near Rugby).

Table 4: Pottery by context, weight (g) and type with suggested ceramic dating (terminus-post-quem) for each context

Context/type	103	105	408	409	508	609	611	617	618	619	620	634	648	651	653	655	663	690	692	696	698	701	703	713	715	723	726	728	732	Total
Stamford	1/40																							1/1						**2/41**
Coventry A		1/20	1/7	1/3			?3/67	4/67	3/42	4/30	4/23	1/57	3/35	2/24	2/51		1/25					6/212	7/123	1/15	1/20				2/28	**47/849**
Coventry D				1/46																										**1/46**
Chilvers Coton A								2/16	2/39		3/46		1/4					3/89	1/40	1/9			2/53	1/13						**16/309**
Chilvers Coton B																						1/52		1/5						**2/57**
Chilvers Coton C																							2/25							**2/25**
Chilvers Coton D					1/16																									**1/16**
Potterspury										1/12																				**1/12**
Deritend											4/12					1/5							2/7			1/7				**8/31**
Glazed red earthenware																											1/6			**1/6**
Martincamp stoneware																											2/21			**2/21**
Midland Yellow																					1/91									**1/91**
English Stoneware						2/139																								**2/139**
Transfer-printed						6/329																						5/390		**11/719**
Total	**1/40**	**1/20**	**1/7**	**2/49**	**1/16**	**8/468**	**3/67**	**6/83**	**5/81**	**5/42**	**11/81**	**1/57**	**4/39**	**2/24**	**2/51**	**1/5**	**1/25**	**3/89**	**1/40**	**1/9**	**1/91**	**7/264**	**13/208**	**4/34**	**1/20**	**1/7**	**3/27**	**5/390**	**2/28**	**97/2362**
Context TPQ	**1000**	**1100**	**1100**	**1150**	**1400**	**C19**	**1100**	**1250**	**1250**	**1250**	**1250**	**1100**	**1100**	**1100**	**1100**	**1250**	**1100**	**1250**	**1250**	**1250**	**1500**	**1250**	**1300**	**1250**	**1100**	**1250**	**1600**	**C19**	**1100**	

Some incidence of (for example) Deritend and Nuneaton products indicates some continuing occupation through the 13th century and into the later medieval period but at such a low level of occurrence that one of two conclusions seems inescapable: that a) occupation was very sparse indeed, or that b) pottery in this formerly rural location, was middened before being spread on the fields as part of manure scatters.

Disposal of rubbish in pits is a relatively urban phenomenon, middening being much more common in rural areas where space is not an issue. On the basis of the ceramics alone the most extended period of medieval occupation on this site seems to be *c*1100-1300.

The post-medieval material recalls the spread of modern Binley back over formerly occupied areas and small amounts of post-medieval material might be expected anywhere. The fragments of a Martincamp flask probably represent a casual loss sometime before the Civil War.

5.2 The bottles and glass by Tora Hylton

Three complete drinks bottles and three stem fragments from wine glasses were recovered during the excavations. The drinks bottles are represented by two manufactured from glass and one from stoneware, they would all have been sealed with corks.

The two glass bottles are 'egg-ended' and would have been used for carbonated drinks like lemonade. Their shape meant that they were unable to stand up, thereby ensuring that the cork did not dry out and the gas escape, resulting in a 'flat' liquid. This bottle, often referred to as the 'bowler' or 'torpedo' was patented in 1809 by William Hamilton. The bottles are marked with the name and trade mark of the company who manufactured the carbonated drink, both are companies that were based in Coventry, 'The Licence Trade Supply Society Ltd, Coventry' and 'W. Lant & Co, Coventry'.

A two-tone stoneware ginger beer bottle with an under-glaze transfer, also originated from W. Lant and Co.

The wine glasses, although incomplete, include two with plain stems and annular knops at the junction of the base and the cup and one with a faceted octagonal stem. Both forms date to the 19th and 20th centuries.

5.3 The environmental samples by Karen Deighton

Method

18 samples were hand collected from the site from a range of medieval pits and ditches which formed part of a medieval field system. This material was analysed to establish the presence, nature and level of preservation of ecofacts along with their contribution to the understanding of the nature and function of the site. The samples were processed using a siraf tank fitted with a 500 micron mesh and flot sieve. The resulting flots were dried and examined using a microscope at 10x magnification.

Identifications were made, where possible with the aid of the author's reference collection, a seed atlas (Schoch et al 1988) and the seed identification workshop at www.oardc.Ohio-state.edu/seedid.

Results

Preservation

Cereal grains recovered from the ditches and pits were generally very abraded which affected identification.

In the malting oven, preservation was exclusively by charring and the condition was excellent. The large quantities of charred cereal grain (290g; 5% sub sample contained approximately 900-1,000 grains) appeared to be predominantly hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) with occasional naked barley (*Hordeum vulgare nar nudum*).

Charred material from the possible malting oven appears to have been dispersed into surrounding features where low levels of charred grain were also recovered.

Charcoal fragments where recovered were small with no evidence for heartwood. Samples were comminuted which militated against positive identification.

Taxonomic distribution (See Table 5 overleaf)

Bread wheat was the only variety of wheat which could be identified with any certainty. Both naked and hulled barley were also present across the site but mainly as charred grain, probably dispersed from the 'malting oven'. The dominant cereal type could not be ascertained due to problems with identification and the scarcity of material present. The oat grains present in sample 12 are of the domesticated variety and therefore suggestive of a crop.

Pulses where identifiable are weeds rather than cultivated crops. The weeds present are common crop or ruderal weeds, for example fat hen and sheep sorrel. These become incorporated into the archaeological record through site clearance or destruction through refuse disposal or burning as kindling or fuel.

Discussion

The spread of material and the range of both cultivated grain and weeds is consistent with arable farmland.

The majority of recovered grain was from the probable 'malting oven', indeed it is probable this feature was the origin of much of the recovered charred grain with the remaining charred material representing crop-straw used as fuel.

The nature of the deposit suggests the hearth could have been used for crop drying or parching. The fact the sample appears to be largely barley grains could suggest an activity associated with malting. It is unclear if the sample is the result of a single burning episode or cumulative firing.

The presence of the nearby public house may be an indication of a long standing link with brewing and consumption of beer at this location.

The charcoal samples recovered were all small comminuted fragments with no evidence of heartwood which would indicate it was small brushwood or brash, probably used as kindling rather than traditional charcoal for use as a main fuel.

Inter-site comparisons were not undertaken due to the low levels of material available and the problems with poor preservation and identification.

Table 5: Taxa by sample and context

Sample		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Cut/fill		621/627	617/618	649/650	645/647	652/653	654/655	660/661	669/670	679/680
Feature		pit	pit	pit	pit	pit	pit	pit	Pit	pit
Volume		20	20	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Charcoal		10				100+			20-30	
Emmer/einkorn	*T.monococum/dicocum*									
Bread wheat	*T.aestivuum*								3	
Hulled barley	*H.vulgare*					2				
Naked barley	*H.vulgare* var nudum		2	1						
Indet barley	Hordeum sp				2					1
Wheat/barley	Triticum/Hordeum		19		4	15	6		11	
Cereal	Cerealia			11	4		5	1		34
Pulse	Leguminosae								2	
Fat hen	*Chenopodium album*	1								
Indet weed		1								1
Total		2	21	12	10	17	11	1	16	36
Items/litre		0.1	2.1	1.2	1	1.7	1.1	0.1	1.6	3.6

Sample		10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Cut/fill		689/690	699/701	702/703	697/698	711/713	714/715	716/718	727/728	705
Feature		pit	Pit	Pit/pond	pit	ditch	pit	ditch	pit	Pit/pond
Volume		10	10	10	10	10	20	10	10	20
Charcoal				50						100+
Emmer/einkorn	*T.monococum/diococum*				1					
Spelt/bread wheat	*T. spelta/aestivuum*			1						
Wheat	Triticum sp				20					
Hulled barley	*H .vulgare*			2			1			
Naked barley	*H .vulgare* var nudum			2		1			2	
Indet barley	Horduem sp									
Wheat/barley	Triticum/Hordeum			52			100		2	10
oat	Avena sp			2						
Cereal	Cerealia	3	15			4		6	4	
Pulse	Leguminosae		1				1			
Fat hen	*Chenopodium album*						1	3		20
Stinking mayweed	*Anthemis cotula*			1						2
Sheep sorrel	Rumex acetosella			2	1		4			
Cabbage family	Brassica sp			1						1
Indet weed				2			1			
Nutshell							1			
Total		3	16	36	22	5	109	9	8	33
Items/Litre		0.3	1.6	3.6	2.2	0.5	5.45	0.9	0.8	1.65

Conclusion

The low concentrations of ecofacts seen in the majority of samples suggest "background" which could be considered consistent with the non-occupational nature of the site.

It appears most likely that the charred grain derives from the use of the 'malting oven' on site. The crop-straw and any loose chaff being used as fuel. Any chaff incorporated in this material being destroyed by the intense heat.

The general absence of chaff within the samples suggests little crop processing on site. The normal early stages of crop processing, threshing, winnowing for example, must have been taking place elsewhere.

6 CONCLUSION

Binley was an established settlement from at least the late Saxon period with substantial arable, meadow, woodland and a mill on the nearby River Sowe. The site is on high ground with free draining sandy soil and easy access to water with the Rivers Sowe and Avon surrounding it on three sides. The area supported extensive woodland that has continued to the present and is reflected in the local names Binley Woods and Brandon Woods.

In 1086 it was held partly by St Mary's Church in Coventry and partly by Thorkill of Warwick. In the event, the establishment of the Carmelite abbey at nearby Combe in 1150 led to much of the land passing into the ownership of the church. The Victoria County History also records land held at Binley by the Knights Hospitallers, the Coventry Charterhouse and lands held by the Hospital of St John Baptist in Coventry.

The parish church can be traced to the establishment granted by Ranulph, Earl of Chester between 1100-1135 and may have had an earlier church on the site.

The excavations at Harry Weston Road have revealed little evidence for activity on the site prior to the 12th century. Isolated fragments of 12th-century pottery indicate only limited activity on the site, possibly associated with manuring of farmland or careless disposal along the line of the early medieval road.

Binley does not appear to have developed a nucleated centre and until the 20th century remained a rather dispersed collection of properties located around the junctions of Brandon Road, Brinklow Road and Clifford Bridge Road (Fig 2).

The development site seems to have remained as open agricultural land for much of its history. Combe Abbey derived much of its wealth from selling wool from sheep grazed on its extensive lands including the Binley area. It is highly likely that much of the land around the early village was not ploughed and cropped during the Abbey years but was used to pasture far more valuable sheep supplying wool to the cloth trade in Coventry.

The only recorded structures recorded prior to the modern development of the site were two small buildings shown on the Craven Estate Map of 1746 (Fig 2). Both were located at the south west of the current site. A single gully exposed in this area during evaluation may relate to one of these structures (Mason 2007a). No evidence for these buildings was exposed in the current soil stripping but the 10-12m landscape corridor left around the development may conceal any surviving evidence.

Although the present field boundaries and road alignment reflect the evidence of the 1746 Craven Estate Map (Fig 2), it is clear that the earlier field system exposed in excavation underlies the surviving landscape features.

The north south ditches form the sides of two rectangular fields divided by an east west ditch across the centre of the site (Fig 5). This ditch continued beyond the west ditch and may indicate two additional land divisions along the line of Brinklow Road.

The second east west ditch at the south of the exposed area may indicate another boundary or a sub-division of the south field, the ditch is narrower and shallower than the other three boundary ditches. The dating evidence from the ditches indicates they were open in the 12th and 13th centuries with at least one phase of re-cutting in the 16th century (The right-angled feature exposed during evaluation has been confirmed as the junction between this ditch and the eastern boundary ditch (Mason 2007a, Fig 5, Trench 5)).

The alignment of postholes at the west of the site form a curve or arc and may be the remnant of the curved boundary shown on the 1746 Craven Estate Map enclosing the two small buildings (Fig 2 and 5).

There was evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation in the south west corner of the development area and it is reasonable to assume that this would have been widespread across the surrounding area. This is confirmed by the 1746 Craven Estate Map (Fig 2) and the entries in the Coventry Historic Environment Record (MCT 586 *ibid*).

The ditches all showed evidence of re-cutting and the spread of pottery indicates that they were either open for a substantial period of time, or that they had been abandoned and allowed to silt naturally before being re-cut in the 16th century. This would be consistent with use as pasture between the 13th and 16th centuries when Combe Abbey maintained large flocks of sheep, followed by a reversion to arable farming when the abbey was closed and the land sold off following the Dissolution in 1542.

Pottery from the boundary ditches is dates mainly from the 12th-13th centuries with 16th century pottery from later re-cuts. It is mainly fragmentary body sherds, more indicative of manuring scatters than primary disposal in the vicinity of a dwelling. What is clear is that the last datable pottery from the ditches dates to the 16th century.

By the 18th century, the field boundaries had been re-aligned to the modern road and field layout. It cannot be coincidental that this follows on from the Dissolution of the church holdings and the reduction of the village lands into private ownership. It would not be unreasonable to expect some re-alignment of property holdings and boundaries to reflect new ownership and possible new use for the newly acquired lands.

The scatter of pits cross the site is not consistent with the cutting of rubbish pits adjacent to the centre of occupation of the village. Rubbish pits would be expected to contain much more organic material, possibly ash and charcoal and some metal or stone objects that might survive the acid soil. None of the pits excavated showed evidence for use as a cesspit, or of particularly high organic content, or the presence of concentrations of domestic rubbish. Only occasional fragments of pottery were recovered and the fills were remarkably homogenous. It is possible that many of these pits were dug for purely agricultural purposes, most likely as dew ponds for watering stock, the nearest open water being the river or stream to the north, west or south, all a substantial distance from the site. The ponds were then allowed to silt up naturally, the isolated fragments of pottery coming from subsequent ploughing or manuring spreads in the surrounding fields. This would be consistent with the wide spread of dating material within small features and repeated elsewhere across the site.

The pits may also represent extraction areas of sand and gravel for use either as road ballast or for building. While this remains a possibility, their size and distribution and distance from the road would seem inconsistent with such activity.

The hearth showed clear evidence for three phases of use. The large pebble-stone floored oven was sealed below a layer of red clay that formed the base of a later oven. The smaller circular oven to the east was the last phase, the structure being cut and constructed against the east wall of the second oven and respecting its location. The sandstone surround of the second phase oven was burnt front and back indicating it was used to form the back of the later circular oven.

The tile recovered from the stone surface of the first oven can be dated to the 13th century. Pottery from the burnt fill of the second oven and from the construction of the third phase oven all dates to the period 1100-1400 and 1250-1400 (Soden *ibid*). On this evidence it is probable that this sequence of ovens was in use in the early 13th century and went out of use by the mid to late 13th century. Again the abandonment of this oven would match a move to pasture rather than an arable farming regime.

From the amount of charred cereal grains recovered from the upper fill of the structure, it appears to have been used as a malting oven. The presence of the adjacent public house perhaps an indicator of the longevity of malting and brewing in the vicinity. The excavated evidence is consistent with agricultural use, the cutting of pits for agricultural purposes and the hearth used for the processing and parching of the crops.

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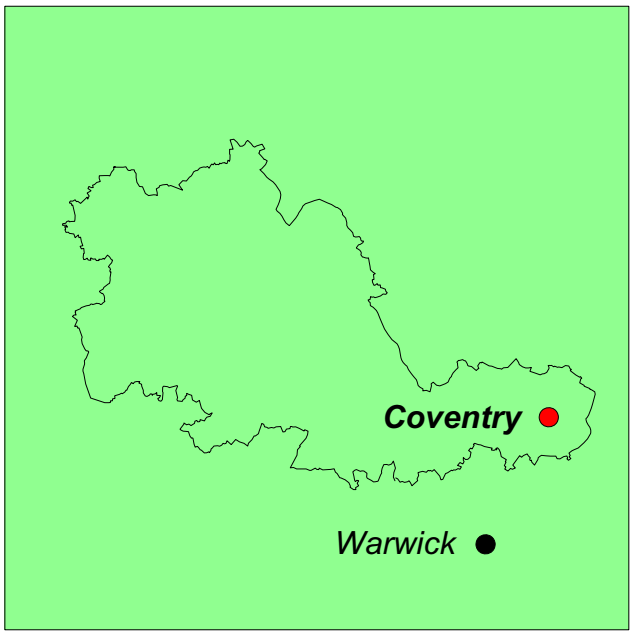

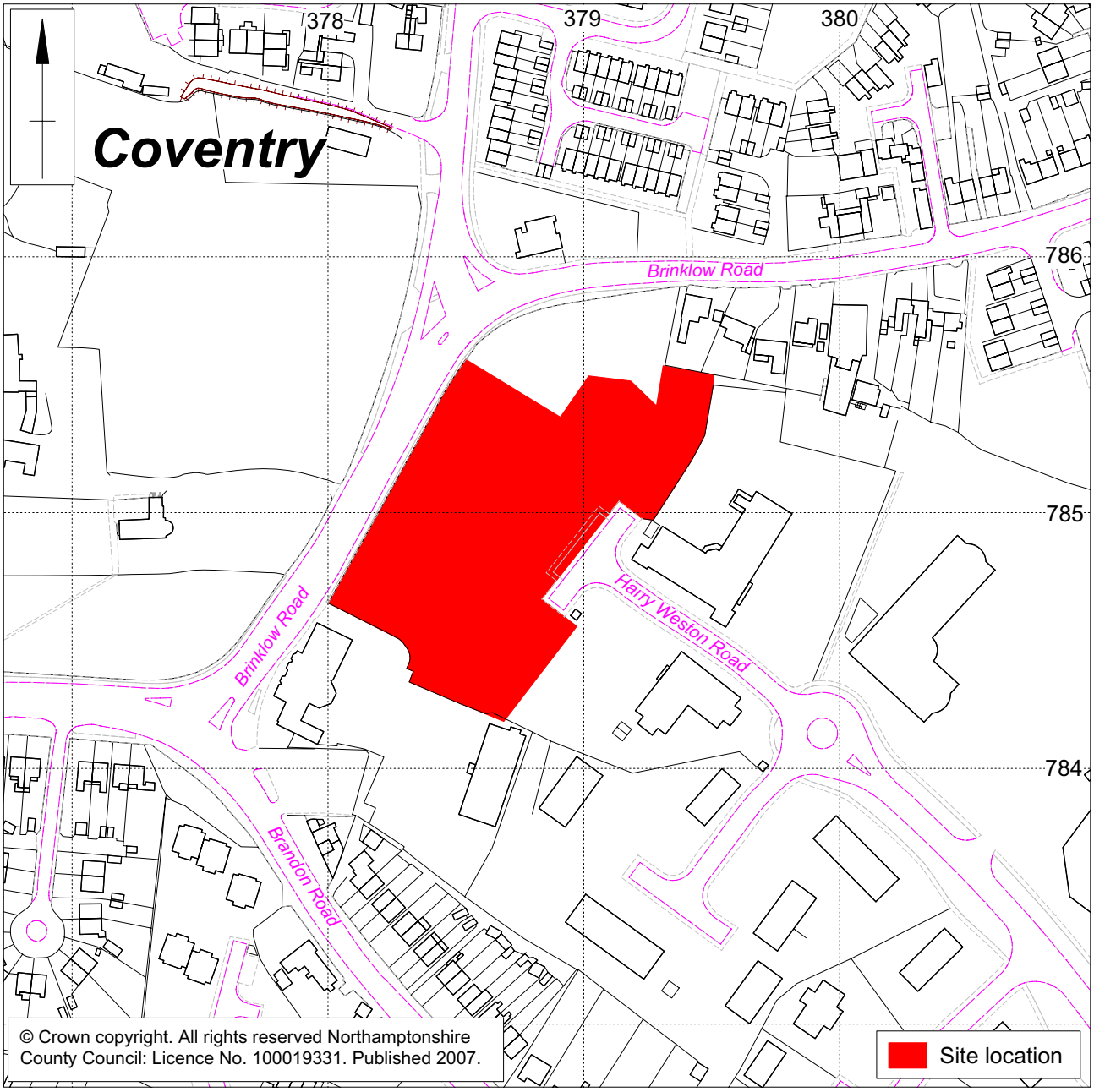

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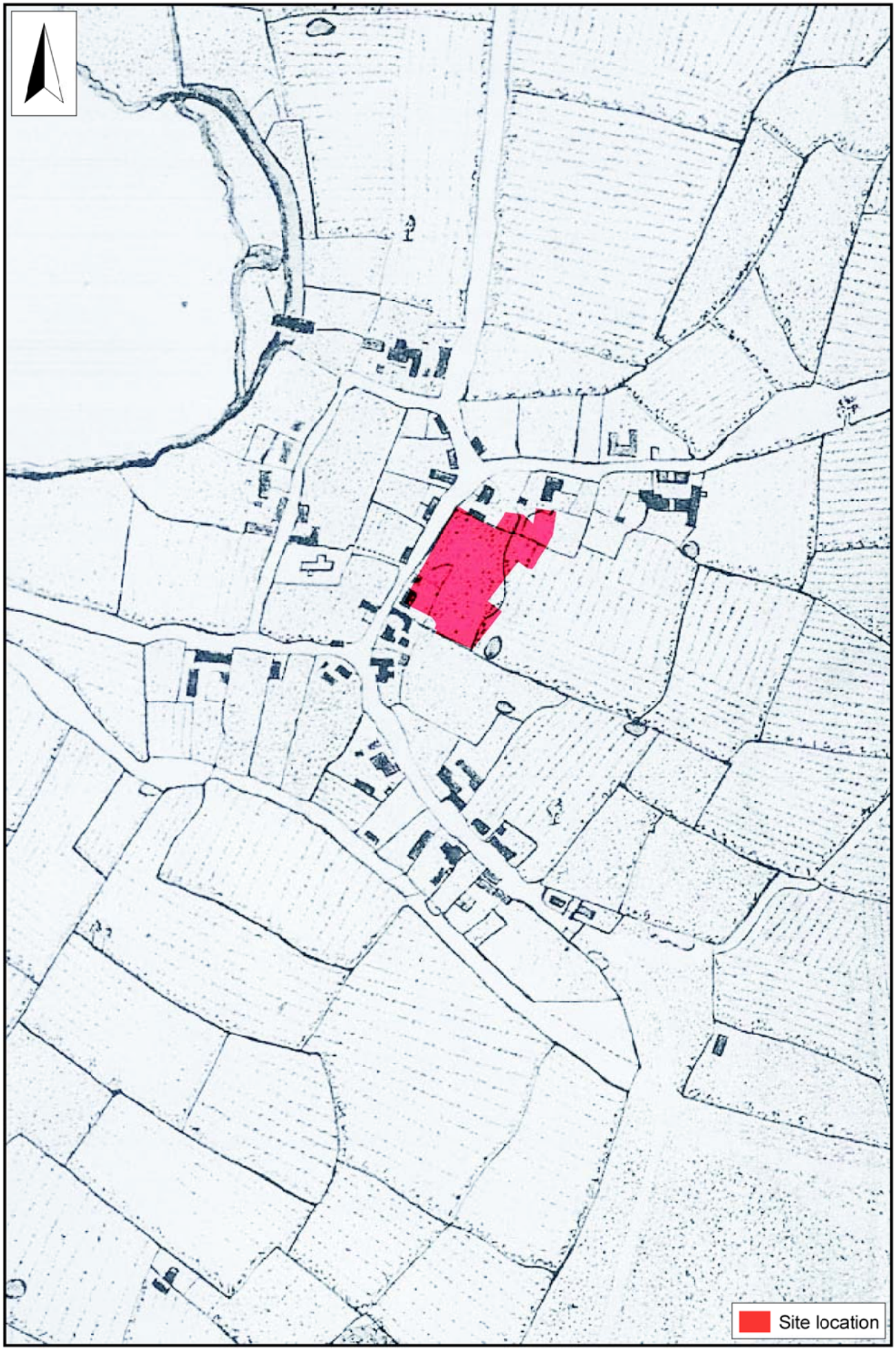
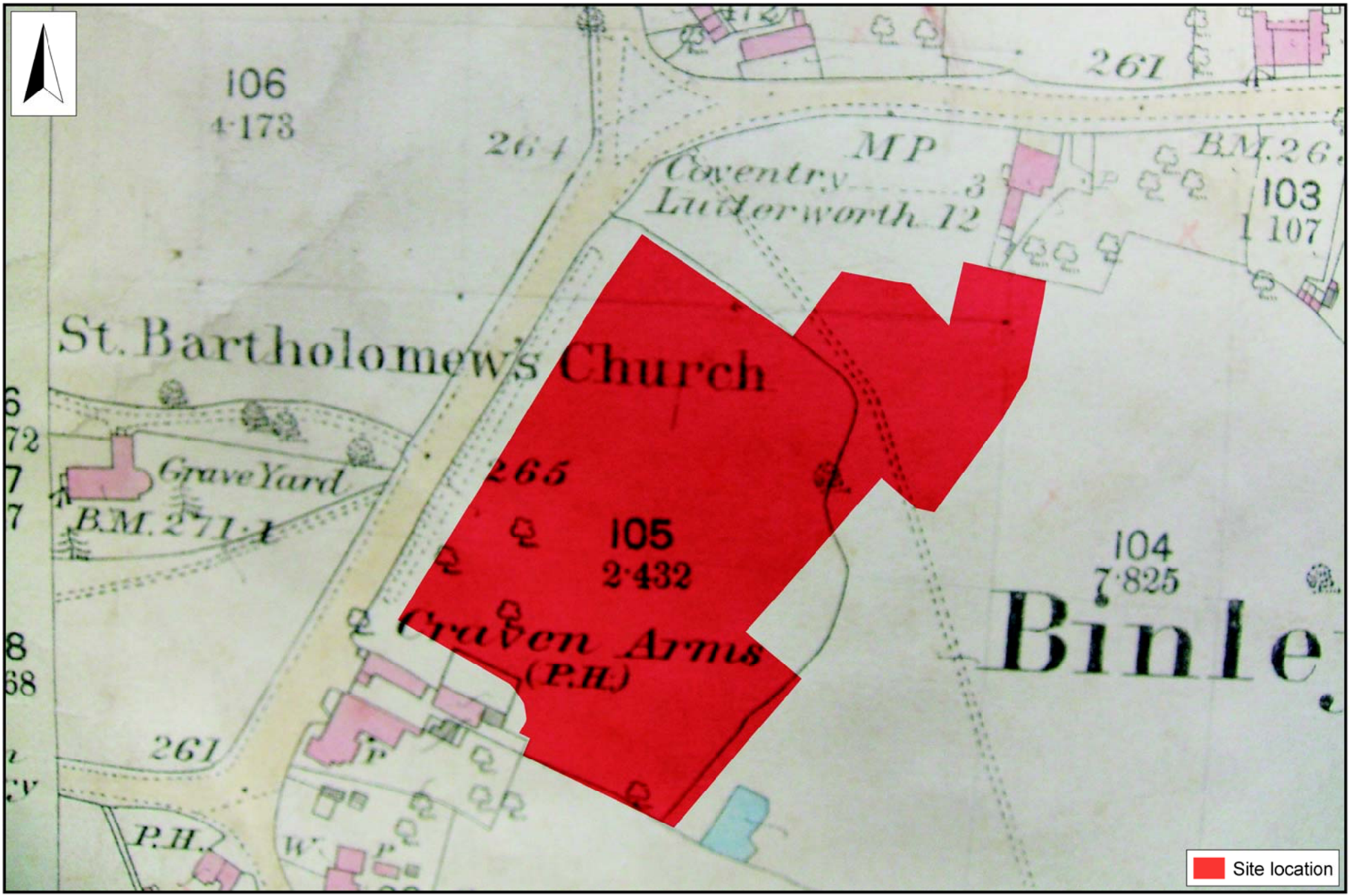
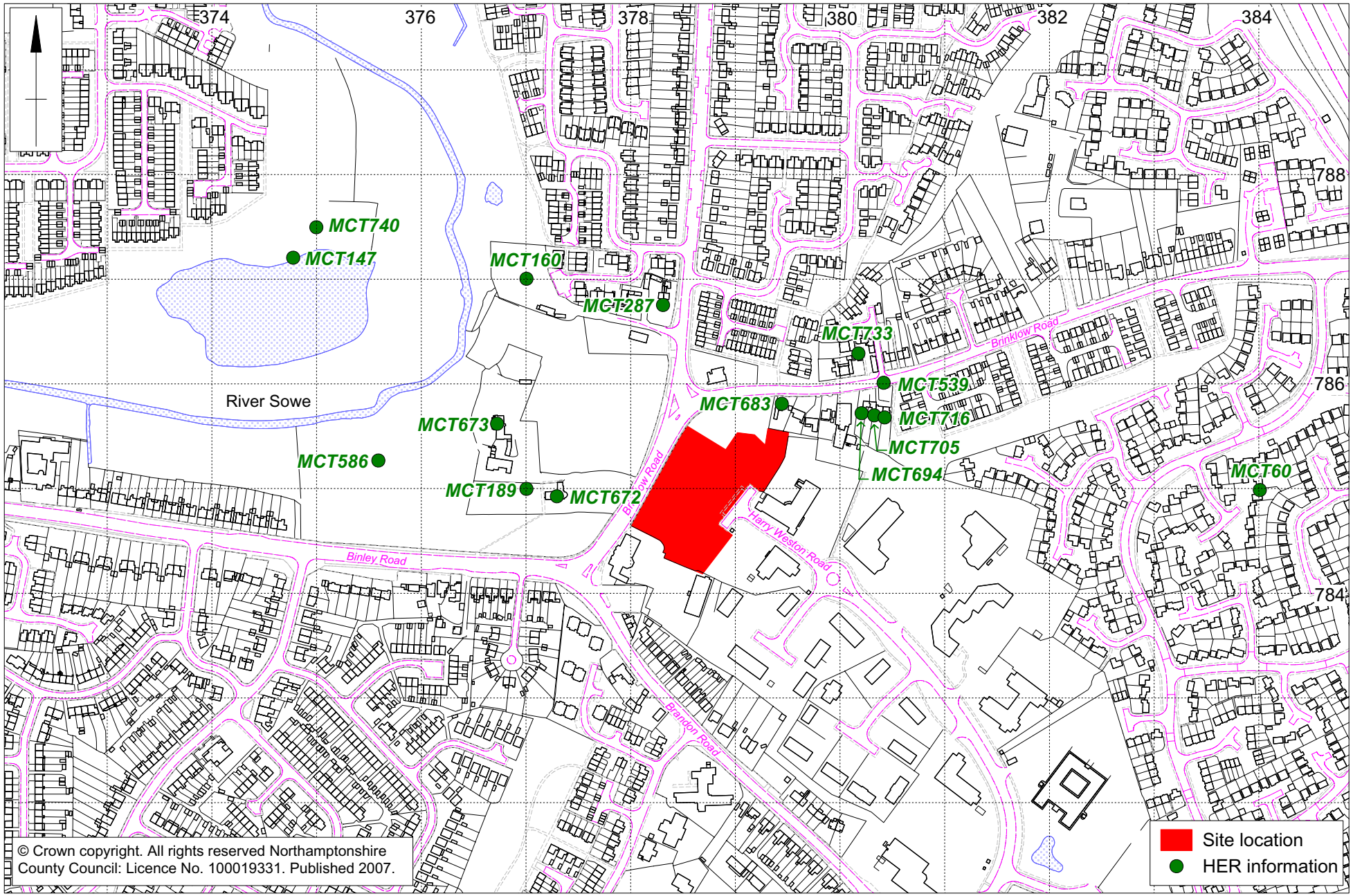
Site location Fig 1



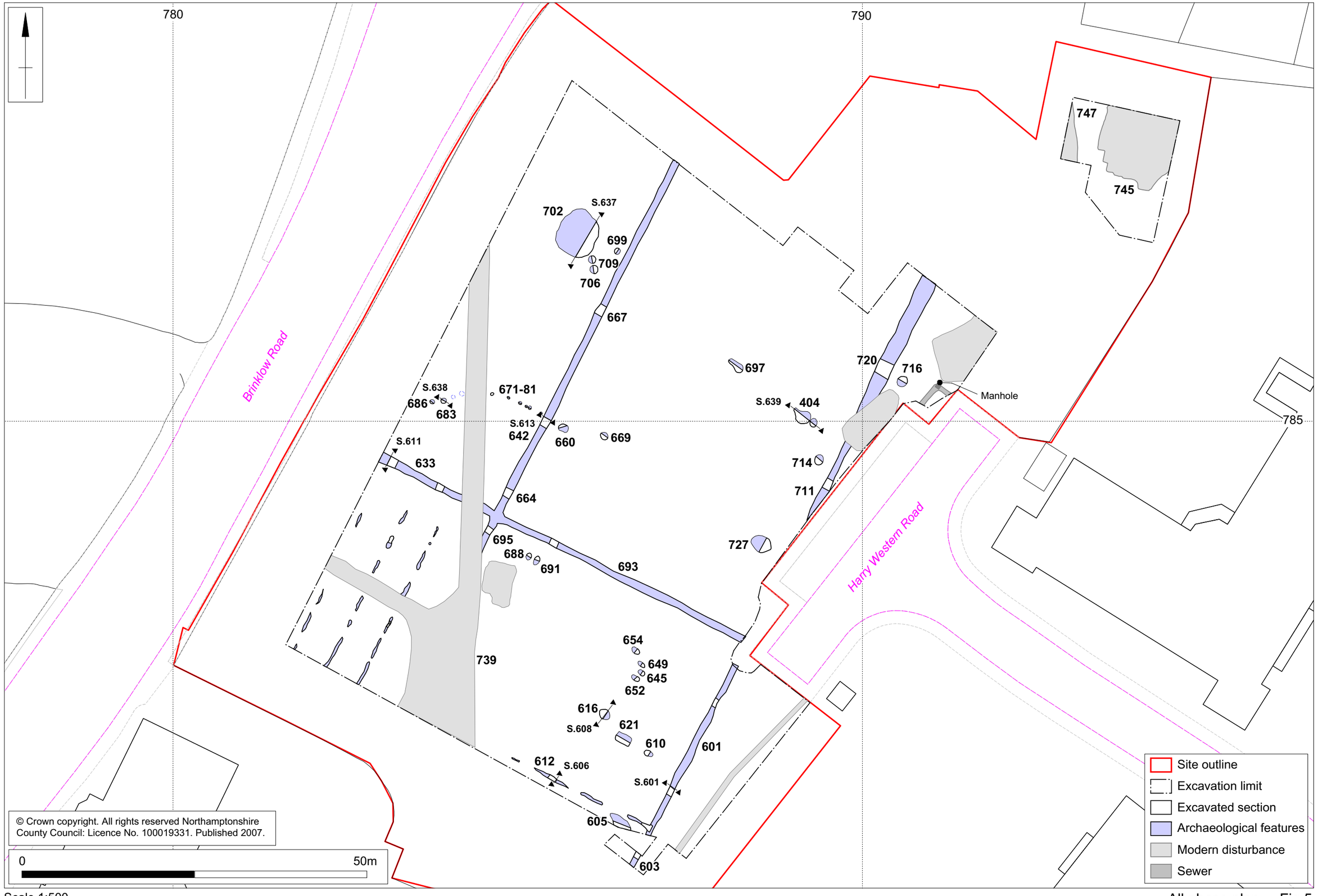
Binley Craven Estate Map 1746 Fig 2



1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1887 Fig 3



HER information Fig 4



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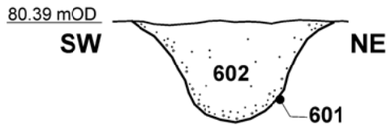
All phase plan Fig 5

Section 601



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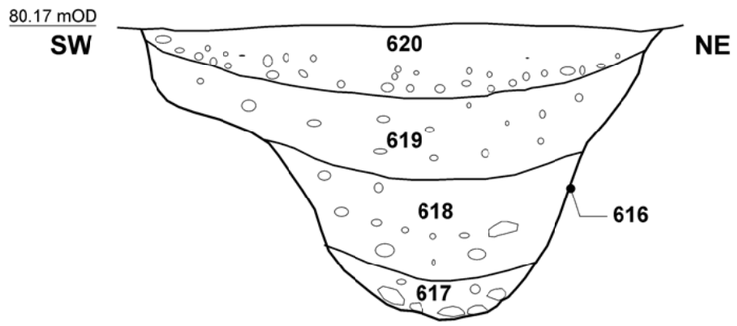

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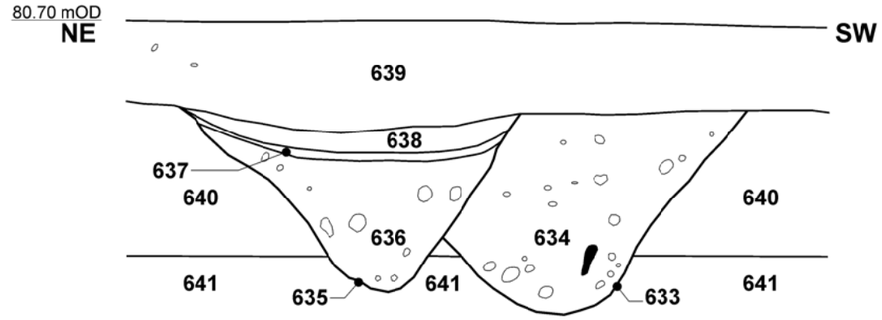

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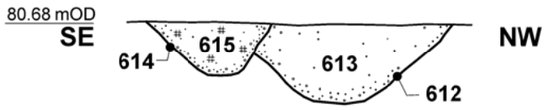

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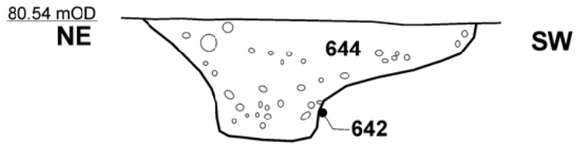

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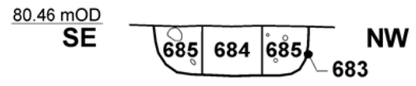

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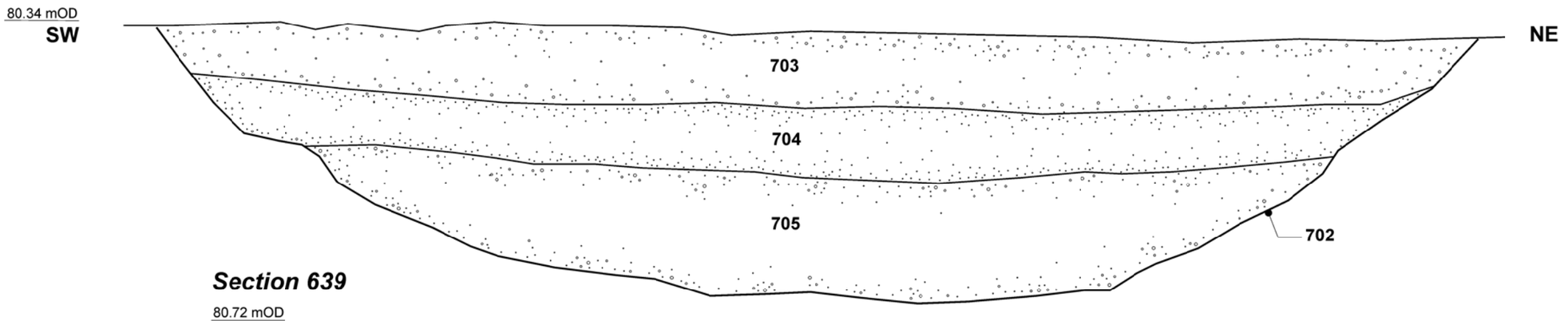

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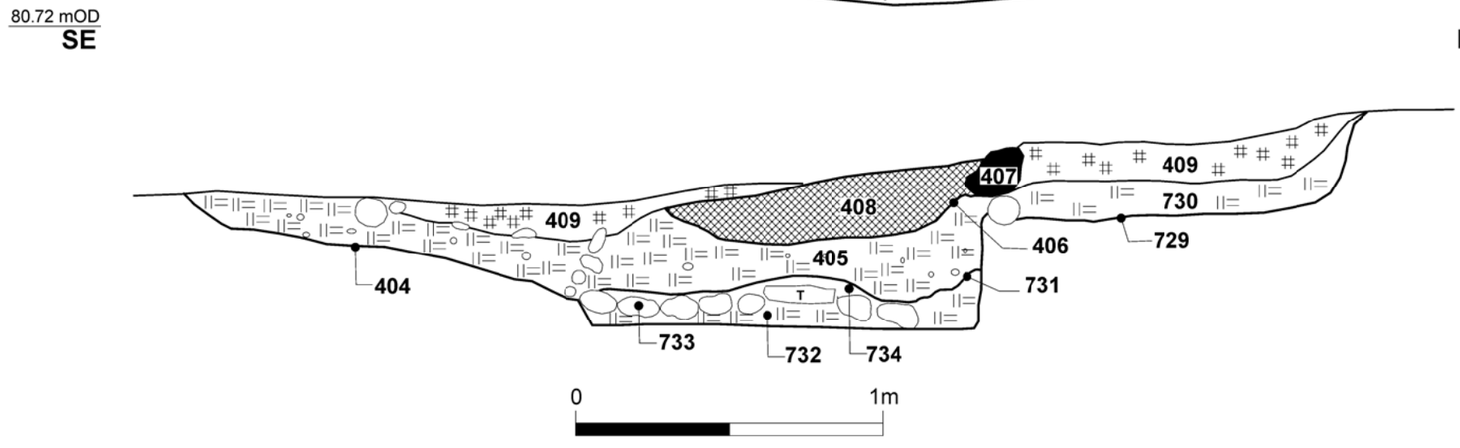

Tile
Burnt stone
Charcoal
Charcoal flecks
Clay

Sections 601, 608, 606, 611, 613, 637, 638 and 639 Fig 6

Plate 1: Field boundary ditch [642] looking south

Plate 2: Re-cut field ditch [633], [635] looking west

Plate 3: Pit [714] looking south

Plate 4: Pits [652] and [645] looking north

Plate 5: Section through hearth [404] looking north

Plate 6: Pit [727] looking west