

**Coton House (Area C1)  
Rugby  
Warwickshire**

Site code: CTH 14

Archaeological Evaluation



*for*  
**Coton House Rugby Ltd**

CA Project: 660390  
CA Report: 15026

January 2015

Coton House (Area C1)  
Rugby  
Warwickshire

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: 660390  
CA Report: 15026

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date	8 January 2015
checked by	Nicola Powell, Post-Excavation Manager
date	21 January 2015
approved by	Simon Carlyle, Project Manager
Signed	
date	22 January 2015
issue	01

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## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	Coton House (Area C1)
<b>Location:</b>	Rugby, Warwickshire
<b>NGR:</b>	SP 5180 7946
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date:</b>	8-11 December 2014
<b>Planning ref:</b>	Rugby Borough Council R12/1353
<b>Site Code:</b>	CTH 14

In December 2014, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at Coton House, near Rugby Warwickshire. The work, which was commissioned by Coton House Rugby Ltd, was carried out prior to the residential development of Area C1, one of a number of development plots that form the Coton House development.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and investigation of six trial trenches to the west of the Coton House stable buildings, in a former car park and adjacent areas. The remains of modern brick walls, a foundation trench and a brick-built conduit were revealed in the southern part of the site. These features are the remains of 19th-century glasshouses and ancillary buildings, which are shown in this location on the 1887 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of the area. There were no features or finds from periods predating the construction of Coton House in the late 18th century.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In December 2014, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Coton House, near Rugby Warwickshire (site centred at NGR: SP 7633 644 Fig. 1). The work, which was commissioned by Coton House Rugby Ltd, was carried out prior to the residential development of Area C1, one of a number of development plots that form the Coton House Estate development (Areas C1-C9 and BHH1-BHH3; Fig. 1a). The development was granted planning permission by Rugby Borough Council (planning ref. R12/1353) and the evaluation was carried out in order to fulfil a condition that had been attached to consent (Condition 33).
- 1.2 The current evaluation forms the second phase of a programme of archaeological evaluation of the site, the earlier phase having been undertaken by MOLA in January 2014 (MOLA 2014). The evaluation was carried out in two phases as the car parks and pasture fields were not accessible at the time of the initial evaluation. The scope of the current evaluation was agreed with Anna Stocks, Warwickshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist (WCCPA), at a site meeting on 14 November 2014.
- 1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by CA (2014) and abided by the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2008) and the English Heritage procedural documents *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (EH 2006). The fieldwork was monitored by a representative of WCCPA, with a site visit being made on 9 December 2014.

### ***The site***

- 1.4 The site (Area C1), which covers an area of c. 2.4ha, is located within the grounds of Coton House, off the A426 Rugby to Lutterworth road, approximately 4.5km to the north-north-east of Rugby town centre. It comprises two adjacent car parks, the corners of two pasture fields and an area of grass landscaping. The access road and the eastern end of the car parks are lined with mature trees. The former stable block, which is to be the subject of a forthcoming building recording survey, is situated in the north-east corner of the site (awaiting confirmation of scope by

WCCPA). The ground is generally flat and lies at c. 129m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

- 1.5 The solid geology of the site comprises Jurassic mudstone of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS 2014). The bedrock is overlain by extensive superficial deposits of the Oadby Member, comprising unstratified and poorly-sorted deposits of glacial till (diamicton).

### **Archaeological background**

- 1.6 The following is a summary of available information from the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER), supplemented with information from the desk-based assessments prepared by WSP Environmental (WSP 2009) and PJO Archaeology (PJO 2009).

### **Prehistoric**

- 1.7 Possibly the earliest known site in the vicinity is a possible Bronze Age barrow, located c. 300m to the south-west of the site (MWA2780). It is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map as a *tumulus*, although the HER suggests that alternatively it may be the remains of a medieval windmill mound (WSP 2009). A Middle Bronze Age cremation cemetery and pits have been investigated nearby, approximately 400m to the south-east of the supposed barrow, prior to the construction of industrial units on the south side of the M6 Motorway (MWA7953 and MWA 10312; NA 2001). The remains of a Late Iron Age settlement were investigated at the same site (MWA 10314).

### **Roman**

- 1.8 There are no known Roman settlement sites in the vicinity, although finds dating to the Roman period have been found in the general area, suggesting that there is some potential for Roman remains to be present. The route of Watling Street, the Roman road from London to Wroxeter (*Viriconium*), passes within 700m of the eastern site boundary.

### **Medieval**

- 1.9 The origins of the medieval hamlet of Coton or Cotes, the site of which lies immediately to the south of the M6 Motorway, dates back to the late Saxon period (mid-10th century). At this time it comprised a complex of rectangular and square enclosures, possibly focussing on a sub-circular mound located in the south-eastern

part of the site. The date of the mound is uncertain, but it was used in the post-medieval period as a windmill tump.

- 1.10 The hamlet, which derived its name from the Middle English word for ‘cottages’ (low-status dwellings), was part of the parish of Churchover and is first mentioned in a charter of 1206 (NA 2000). Following an initial gift of parish land to Combe Abbey in the late 12th century by Robert de Wavre, the abbey gained further land within the parish and by the end of the 13th century Coton was the largest of the abbey’s granges outside the three home farms. It is likely that the grange buildings were located on the site of Coton House. Excavation at the site indicates that the hamlet was abandoned at the end of the 13th century (NA 2001) and the land was eventually turned over to park land.

### ***Post-medieval and modern***

- 1.11 In 1551, following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the estate was purchased by William Dixwell, who built a moated manor house at Coton, either on the site of or incorporating elements of the former grange buildings. In 1757, on the death of Sir William Dixwell, the estate passed to his nephew William Dixwell Grimes, whose son Abraham Grimes demolished the early manor house and built the current Coton House. This was built in 1787 to designs by the architect Samuel Wyatt and it remained in private hands until 1948, when it became an apprentice hostel and then a management training centre for the Post Office. The house, a Grade II\* Listed building, was extensively altered in the 1970s and severely damaged in a fire in 2010; it is currently being renovated.
- 1.12 The stable block, a Grade II Listed building, is broadly contemporary with the main house; with the exception of the house it is the only building within the site to date from the late 18th century. It comprises three two-storey ranges arranged around a courtyard, with the principal range facing to the north-west. Access to the courtyard is through an archway below a clock and bell tower in the centre of the north-west range.

### ***Archaeological objectives***

- 1.13 The objectives of the evaluation, as outlined in the WSI (CA 2014), were to:
- Establish the location, extent, nature and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present;

- Determine the palaeoenvironmental potential of the site through the assessment of bulk soil samples taken from any suitable archaeological deposits;
  - Establish the integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present.
  - Identify features that may be associated with the medieval grange and the grounds of the manor estate.
- 1.14 The results of the evaluation will assist WCCPA, archaeological advisor to Rugby Borough Council, in making an informed judgement on the significance of the archaeological resource and the likely impact upon it of the proposed development. This will determine if any further archaeological work is required to meet Condition 33 of planning consent (Rugby Borough Council planning ref. R12/1353) and what the nature and scope of that further work might be.

### ***Methodology***

- 1.15 The evaluation comprised the excavation and investigation of two 30m and four 15m trial trenches (120 linear metres) in the locations shown in Figure 2. The trenches were all 1.6m wide and positioned to investigate areas that were not accessible when the evaluation by MOLA was undertaken earlier in the year. Trench 3 was not excavated to its full length due to the discovery of asbestos at its western end and a modern service trench in its centre.
- 1.16 Trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using a Leica 1200 series SmartRover GPS and scanned for live services by trained CA staff using CAT and Genny equipment. All trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the geological substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where potential archaeological deposits were encountered, they were excavated by hand in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual* (CA 2013). There were no finds in the excavated deposits.



- 1.17 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003). No deposits worthy of environmental sampling were encountered.
- 1.18 Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner, the archive will be deposited with the Rugby Museum & Art Gallery. Until such time, it will be stored in CA's archive room at Milton Keynes. A summary of information from this project, as set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 2. RESULTS

### **Summary**

- 2.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation and investigation of two 30m and four 15m trial trenches (120 linear metres; Fig. 2). The remains of modern brick walls, a foundation trench and a brick-built conduit were encountered in Trenches 4–6. These features are the remains of 19th-century buildings shown in this location on the 1887 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of the area. No archaeological features were encountered in Trenches 1–3. Details of the features and deposits recorded by the evaluation are presented in Appendix A and are summarised below.

### **Trenches 1 and 2**

- 2.2 The geological substrate was typically mid greyish or yellowish-orange sandy clay with occasional to moderate pebbles. In Trench 1 (Fig. 3), which was located in the pasture field to the north of the access road to the site, this was overlain by subsoil, 0.17m thick, comprising mid orangey-brown sandy clay with occasional pebbles (101). The topsoil was 0.22m thick and consisted of mid greyish-brown sandy clay with moderate small sub-rounded pebbles (100). A similar sequence was recorded in Trench 2 (Fig. 4), in the pasture field to the south of the access road, although subsoil was absent.

### **Trench 3**

- 2.3 In Trench 3, located in the northern car park, the geological substrate (303) was overlain by a deep layer of subsoil, 0.65m thick (Fig. 5). This was sealed by two

layers of hardcore (302 and 301), with a combined thickness of 0.20m, which formed the sub-base for the car park's tarmac surface (300).

#### **Trench 4**

- 2.4 Trench 4 was located in the western half of the southern car park (Fig. 6). Here, the geological substrate (404) was exposed c. 0.4m below current ground level (bcgl). Cut into the geological substrate near the centre of the trench was the base of a foundation trench (403), aligned north-east to south-west and measuring 0.76m wide by 0.20m deep (Fig. 7). It was packed with crushed brick rubble in a mid orangey-red sand matrix (404). This was overlain by geotextile and a layer of Type 1 stone (401) that formed the sub-base for the tarmac surface of the car park (400).

#### **Trench 5**

- 2.5 In Trench 5, which was located at the eastern end of the southern car park, excavation revealed a modern brick-built conduit (505), covered with rectangular limestone slabs (503), which appeared to extend down the length of the trench on an east to west alignment (Fig. 8). The slabs were only exposed at the eastern end of the trench, where a masking layer of gravel and rubble (504) was removed to expose them. In the eastern part of the trench, the foundation for a brick wall (506) had been constructed over the conduit. These remains were sealed by two layers of hardcore (502 and 501), with a combined thickness of 0.35m, that formed the sub-base for the tarmac surface of the car park (500).

#### **Trench 6**

- 2.6 Trench 6 was situated in a landscaped area to the south of the car parks. Removal of the topsoil (600), which varied in thickness between 0.23m and 0.52m, exposed modern brickwork, consisting of five parallel wall foundations, spaced between 0.9m and 2.2m apart (603, 605, 607, 609 and 615). The walls, which were 0.23m wide, were on a north-east to south-west alignment and were constructed from unfrogged bricks weakly bonded with lime mortar (Fig. 9). The soil between the walls was generally dark greyish-brown charcoal-flecked clayey silt containing small fragments of brick and roofing slate.



### 3. EVALUATION DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The evaluation broadly confirmed the results of the geophysical survey (NA 2013) and the findings of the evaluation in the adjacent part of the site (MOLA 2014), which had identified the remains of features predominately associated with 19th-century landscaping and activity in the grounds of Coton House.
- 3.2 In three of the trenches (Trenches 4–6), a modern brick-built conduit and the foundations of a number of modern brick walls were identified. The wall foundations were relatively insubstantial, suggesting that they were the remains of partition walls, although one wall was wider and may have been an external load-bearing wall. The conduit was sizeable, measuring over a metre wide, and it was covered with heavy, rectangular limestone slabs that could only be moved with the excavator. Reference to the 1887 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of the area (Fig. 10) shows three glasshouses and ancillary buildings in the location of these trenches, so it is likely that these features are the remains of buildings in this complex.
- 3.3 There were no archaeological features in the trenches in the pasture fields either side of the access road (Trenches 1 and 2), but they demonstrated that the ground in this part of the site had not been disturbed by landscaping and other activities. Within the area of the car parks and the landscaped area to the south (Trenches 3–6), modern activity associated with the construction and subsequent demolition of the glasshouses and the construction of the car parks had impacted on the levels where archaeological remains could be anticipated. However, this impact was generally localised and the original subsoil survived *in situ* in places, suggesting that archaeological features, if present, may be preserved within the general area.

### 4. CA PROJECT TEAM

The fieldwork was undertaken by James Coyne, assisted by Stuart Joyce, Jonathan Whitmore and Edwin Pearson. The report was written by James Coyne, with illustrations prepared by Rosanna Price. The archive has been compiled by James Coyne and prepared for deposition by Emily Evans. The project was managed for CA by Simon Carlyle.

## 5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2014 *Geology of Britain Viewer* [http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology\\_viewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geology_viewer_google/googleviewer.html) Accessed 7 August 2014

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MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) 2014 *Archaeological trial trench evaluation of land at Coton House, Rugby, Warwickshire*, report **14/54**

NA (Northamptonshire Archaeology) 2000 *Excavation of the Deserted Medieval Village of Coton at Coton Park, Rugby, Warwickshire, 1998: Assessment Report and Updated Project Design*

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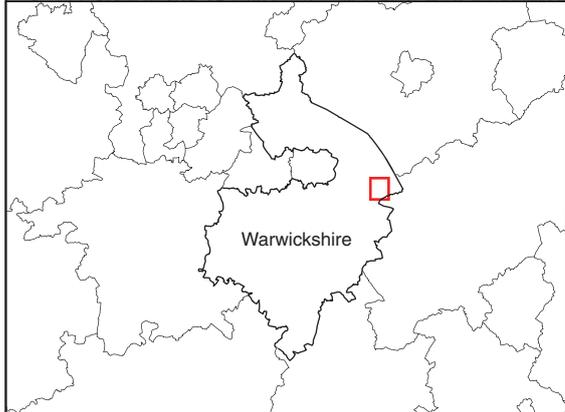
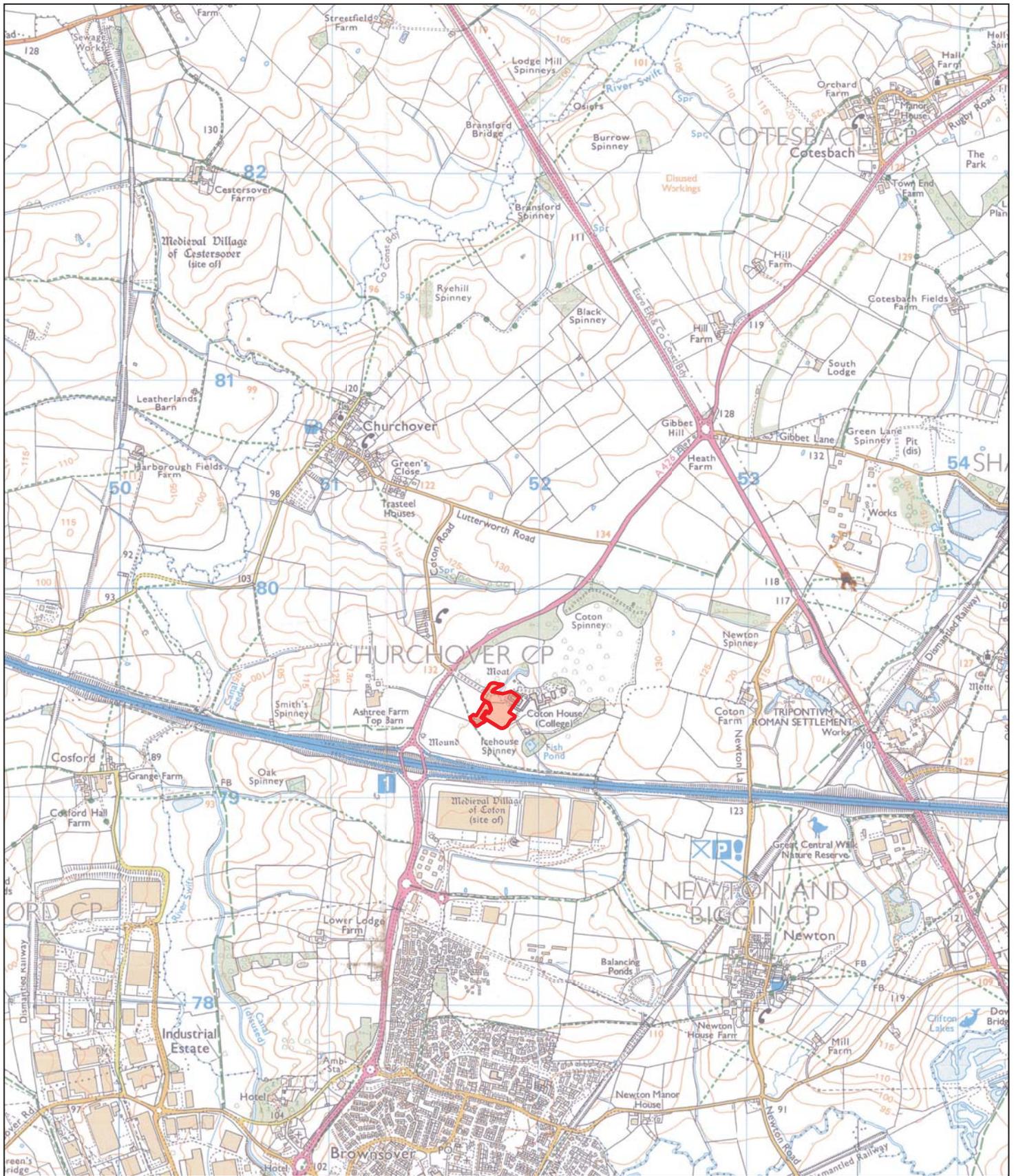
## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Type	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D/ T (m)	Spot date
<b>Trench 1</b>						
100	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy clay with moderate small sub-rounded stones, pebbles and charcoal flecks.	-	-	0.22	
101	Subsoil	Mid orangey brown friable sandy clay with occasional sub-rounded stones, pebbles and moderate charcoal flecks.	-	-	0.17	
102	Geology	Mid greyish orange firm sandy clay with occasional gravel stones.	-	-	-	
<b>Trench 2</b>						
200	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy clay with moderate small sub-rounded stones, pebbles and charcoal.	-	-	0.18	
201	Geology	Mid greyish orange firm sandy clay with occasional rounded pebbles.	-	-	-	
<b>Trench 3</b>						
300	Tarmac	Tarmac	-	-	0.10	Modern
301	Hardcore	Mid pinkish grey loose silty sand with frequent rubble material.	-	-	0.05	Modern
302	Demolition layer	Dark greyish brown friable sandy silt with frequent rubble material.	-	-	0.15	Modern
303	Subsoil	Mid greyish brown firm silty clay with occasional rounded pebbles.	-	-	0.65	
304	Geology	Mid yellowish brown friable clayey sand with frequent gravels.	-	-	-	
<b>Trench 4</b>						
400	Tarmac	Tarmac	-	-	0.26	Modern
401	Layer	Type I stone	-	-	0.11	Modern
402	Foundation trench	Linear cut, aligned N-S, edges parallel and well-defined, vertical sides and flat base	>1.8	0.76	0.20	Modern
403	Fill of 402	Crushed brick rubble in a mid orangey-red sand matrix	-	-	0.20	
404	Geology	Light orangey-yellow clay	-	-	-	
<b>Trench 5</b>						
500	Tarmac	Tarmac	-	-	0.20	Modern
501	Layer	Type I stone (light brown)	-	-	0.15	Modern
502	Layer	Brick, mortar and limestone rubble, only occurs below 507 at the E end of trench	-	-	0.35	Modern
503	Conduit/drain	Brick-built linear structure, comprises parallel brick walls capped with limestone slabs, extends length of trench, aligned E-W, N side lies beyond limits of trench. Appears to form a junction at E end with a similar feature aligned N-S.	>16.0	c. 1.0	>0.23	Modern
504	Layer	Coarse gravel in a dark brown silty sandy matrix	-	-	0.15	Modern
505	Trench	Trench for 503	>16.0	c. 1.0	>0.23	Modern
506	Brick wall	2-3 courses of unfrosted bricks weakly bonded with lime mortar, aligned NE-SW	>1.6	0.23	0.33	Modern
507	Layer	Type I stone (grey)	-	-	0.20	Modern
<b>Trench 6</b>						
600	Topsoil	Mid greyish brown friable sandy clay with moderate small sub-rounded stones, pebbles and charcoal flecks.	-	-	0.13-0.52	
601	Geology	Firm, mid yellowish-brown silty clay with frequent pebbles	-	-	-	
602	Foundation trench	Linear cut, aligned NE-SW	>1.8	0.23	>0.11	Modern
603	Wall	At least 2 courses of unfrosted brick, weakly bonded with lime mortar	>1.8	0.23	>0.11	Modern

Context	Type	Description	L (m)	W (m)	D/ T (m)	Spot date
604	Foundation trench	Linear cut, aligned NE-SW	>1.8	0.23	>0.11	Modern
605	Wall	At least 2 courses of unfrosted brick, weakly bonded with lime mortar	>1.8	0.23	>0.11	Modern
606	Foundation trench	Linear cut, aligned NE-SW	>1.8	0.24	>0.11	Modern
607	Wall	At least 2 courses of unfrosted brick, weakly bonded with lime mortar	>1.8	0.24	>0.11	Modern
608	Foundation trench	Linear cut, aligned NE-SW	>1.8	0.23	>0.11	Modern
609	Wall	At least 2 courses of unfrosted brick, weakly bonded with lime mortar	>1.8	0.23	>0.11	Modern
610	Fill	Firm mid yellowish-brown silty clay with occ. charcoal flecks, abuts wall 615	>1.0	>1.6	n.e	Modern
611	Layer	Dark brown silty clay, abuts walls 603 and 605	-	-	>0.05	Modern
612	Layer	Dark brownish-black silty clay with mod. charcoal flecks, abuts walls 605 and 607	-	-	>0.07	Modern
613	Layer	Dark greyish-brown silty clay with occ. rounded pebbles, abuts walls 609 and 615	>1.0	>1.8	>0.03	Modern
614	Layer	Dark greyish-brown silty clay with mod. angular pebbles and occ. charcoal flecks	-	-	>0.05	Modern
615	Wall	At least 2 courses of unfrosted brick, weakly bonded with lime mortar, aligned NE-SW, appears to form a return to the SE	>1.8	0.35	n.e	Modern
616	Layer	Dark greyish-brown silty clay with occ. charcoal flecks and small frags. of brick rubble	-	-	>0.05	Modern
617	Layer	Dark greyish-brown silty clay	-	-	>0.07	Modern
618	Layer	Dark greyish-brown silty clay	-	-	>0.02	Modern

**APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Coton House (Area C1), Rugby, Warwickshire	
Short description	The evaluation comprised the excavation and investigation of six trial trenches to the west of the Coton House stable buildings, in a former car park and adjacent areas. The remains of modern brick walls, a foundation trench and a brick-built conduit were revealed in the southern part of the site. These features are the remains of 19th-century glasshouses and ancillary buildings, which are shown in this location on the 1887 First Edition Ordnance Survey map of the area. There were no features or finds from periods predating the construction of Coton House in the late 18th century.	
Project dates	8-11 December 2014	
Project type	Evaluation	
Previous work	Desk-based Assessment (PJO 2009); geophysical survey (NA 2013); evaluation (MOLA 2014)	
Future work	None	
Monument type	19th-century glasshouses	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Coton House (Area C1), Rugby, Warwickshire	
Study area	2.4ha	
Site co-ordinates	SP 5180 7946	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology (CA)	
Project Brief originator	-	
Project Design (WSI) originator	CA	
Project Manager	Simon Carlyle (CA)	
Project Supervisor	James Coyne (CA)	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVE</b>		
	Accession no: n/a	Content
Physical	Rugby Museum & Art	None
Paper	Gallery and	Site records
Digital	Warwickshire HER	Report, digital photos
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2014 <i>Coton House (Area C1), Rugby, Warwickshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA Report <b>15026</b>		



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PROJECT TITLE

Coton House, Rugby, Warwickshire

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

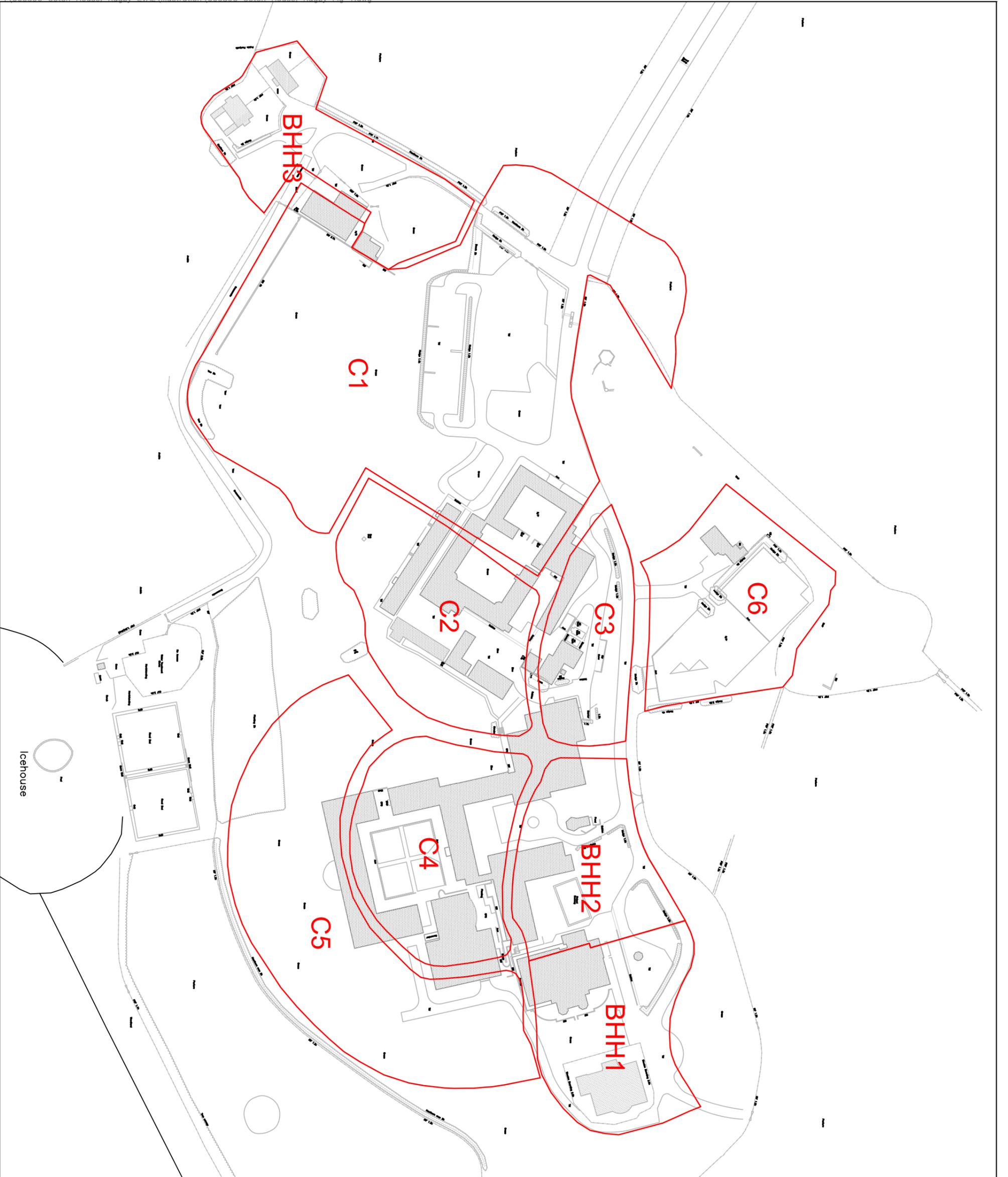
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FIGURE NO.

1

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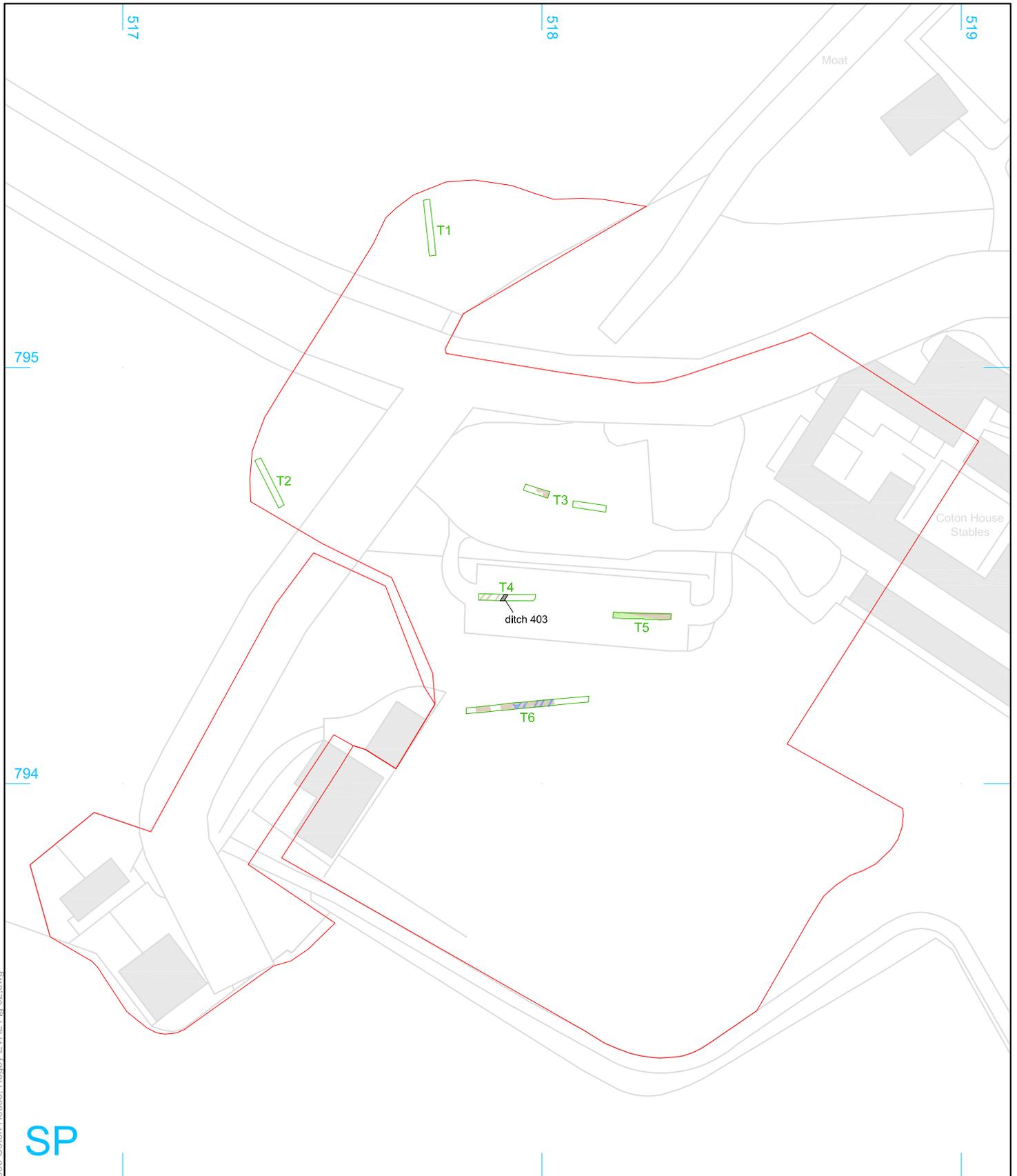
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PROJECT TITLE  
 Coton House, Rugby, Warwickshire

FIGURE TITLE  
 Development area

DRAWN BY: DJB PROJECT NO: 660390 FIGURE NO:  
 CHECKED BY: SCC DATE: 30.03.2015 1a  
 APPROVED BY: SCC SCALE@A3: 1:1500



SP

- site
- evaluation trench
- archaeological feature
- modern
- structure
- field drain



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PROJECT TITLE  
**Coton House, Rugby, Warwickshire**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench location plan, showing archaeological features**

PROJECT NO. 660390 DATE 05.01.15  
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FIGURE NO.

**2**





3



4

3 Trench 1, general view, looking north (scales 1m)

4 Trench 2, looking south-east (scales 1m)



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Coton House, Rugby, Warwickshire

FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

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FIGURE NO.  
**3 & 4**



5



6

5 Trench 3, made-ground deposits, looking north (scale 1m)

6 Trench 4, general view, looking east (scales 1m)



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PROJECT TITLE

Coton House, Rugby, Warwickshire

FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

PROJECT NO. 660390 DATE 05.01.15  
 DRAWN BY RP REVISION 00  
 APPROVED BY JB SCALE@A4 NA

FIGURE NO.  
**5 & 6**



7



8

7 Trench 4, modern feature 403, looking south-west (scale 1m)

8 Trench 5, modern conduit, looking west (scales 1m)



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Photographs

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FIGURE NO.  
**7 & 8**



9

**9 Trench 6, modern brick foundations, looking east (scale 1m)**



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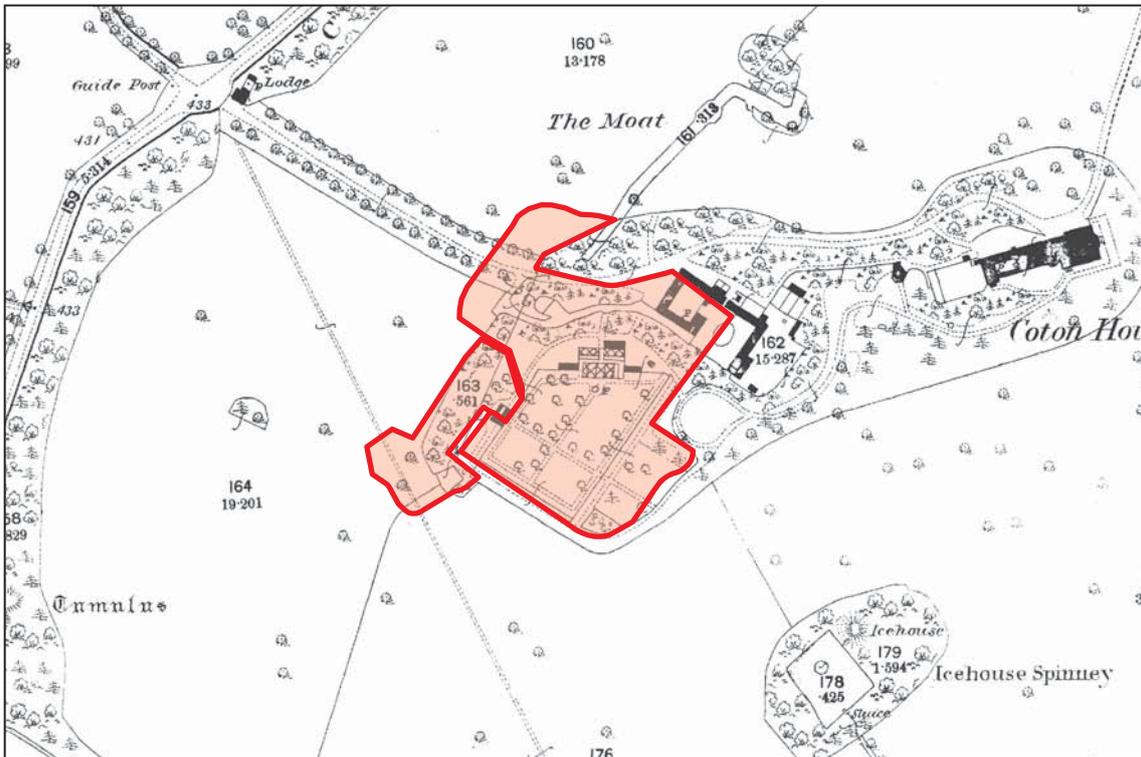
FIGURE TITLE

**Photograph**

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FIGURE NO.

**9**



10

10 Detail from the 1887 Ordnance Survey map of the area



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PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

Historic map

DRAWN BY RP PROJECT NO. 660390  
 CHECKED BY SCC DATE 22.01.15  
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FIGURE NO.

10