

Oberry Fields, Bishops Hill, Lighthorne, Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1594

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation comprising seven trial trenches was undertaken on behalf of Housestyle Countrywide Ltd in advance of a new housing development. Iron Age and Roman features were recorded on the western side of the area whilst trenches on the eastern side were sterile, possibly through later truncation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Outline planning permission has been granted by Stratford-upon-Avon District Council for the demolition of existing outbuildings and the erection of nine dwellings with associated landscaping and parking at Oberry Fields, Bishops Hill, Lighthorne, Warwickshire.

1.2 A condition of planning permission requires the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Planning Authority in November 2015. The fieldwork was completed in December 2015 and this report presents the results of that work. The site archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under the site code LO15.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The development site is located at the southern limit of the village of Lighthorne and lies on the northern side of Bishops Hill. It is centred around National Grid Reference SP 3376 5555, within the parish of Lighthorne.

2.2 A set of outbuildings remain extant on the south-east part of the development plot are to be demolished as part of the development (Fig 1).

2.3 The underlying geology of the area is largely Lower Lias whilst around the site White Lias over Rhaetic beds is recorded (British Geological Survey 1974).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric

3.1 The site of a Neolithic long barrow has been suggested, but there is no corroborative evidence (MWA 4460).

Roman

3.2 The Fosse Way Roman road forms the western boundary of the parish of Lighthorne which suggests that the parish post-dates the road. A possible villa site has been recorded to the north of the village but several findspots have been recorded within 800m of the site including copper alloy brooches and pins (Historic Environment Record MWA 682).

Medieval

3.3 Lighthorne is recorded in Domesday although the first record for the parish church of St Laurence (MWA 674) is from 1291. The present structure largely dates from the 18th and 19th centuries and little remains of the fabric of the medieval church. The likely extent of the medieval settlement of Lighthorne (MWA 9012) can be surmised from 19th century mapping and the field boundaries implied by mapping the extent of the ridge and furrow ploughing.

Warwickshire Historic Environment Record data: Medieval

| <i>Record No</i> | <i>Description</i> | |
|------------------|--------------------|---|
| 19567 | Ridge and furrow | Eleven fields of ridge and furrow earthworks |
| 19566 | Ridge and furrow | Nineteen fields of ridge and furrow earthworks, part of medieval agricultural cultivation identified from aerial photos |
| 9012 | Settlement | The possible extent of medieval settlement of Lighthorne |
| 19565 | Ridge and furrow | Four fields of ridge and furrow earthworks, part of medieval agricultural cultivation |
| 19569 | Ridge and furrow | Three fields of ridge and furrow earthworks identified from aerial photos |
| 673 | Cross | Remains of a medieval cross, only socket stone survives |
| 674 | Church | Parish church of St Laurence first recorded in the 13th century and modified in the 18th and 19th century |
| 680 | Cemetery site | The possible site of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery was recorded to the north of the church, including two burials |

Post-medieval

3.4 The village contains a variety of Grade II Listed Buildings which include 17th and 18th century cottages and farmhouses. These continued to be developed and altered during the 19th century. The Ordnance Survey First Edition map of 1885 shows the site as part of fields at the southern edge of the village. Quarrying during the 19th century is recorded to the west of the site (MWA 9262) and small scale quarrying may have taken place on or near the site.

Warwickshire Historic Environment Record data: Post-Medieval

| <i>Record No</i> | <i>Description</i> | |
|------------------|--------------------|---|
| 4460 | Gardens | 17th century house with gardens and grounds |
| 9263 | Forge | Site of 19th century forge |
| 9262 | Quarry | 19th century quarrying |

3.5 The site lies within and adjacent to a field named “Owberry” and was previously known as Old Borough field. The field name may mean ‘burial place’ and might be the reason for the suggested location the long barrow (ie old barrow). Nine burials were recorded here in the 19th century (MWA 676) during quarrying work (MWA 9262).

4 AIMS AND METHODS

4.1 The main aim of the evaluation was to determine if there are any significant archaeological remains in the area to be developed; to form an understanding of their value and their potential to shed light on the subsequent development of the area.

4.2 Secondary aims include placing the results in their wider local and regional contexts as appropriate.

4.3 The objectives were to locate, record and analyse archaeological materials and deposits and to disseminate the results in an appropriate format.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Seven trenches were opened by a JCB type excavator with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Topsoil and other overburden were removed in shallow spits to the top of the geological natural. Site constraints proved a limiting factor on the exact location and extent of the trenches. The significant constraints included a live mains electricity cable, which was identified as crossing through trenches 1, 2 and 5; a stock proof fence which crossed the line of Trench 1; and a buried water pipe which crossed Trench 6. Other site factors and machine access affected the precise location of Trench 4, 6, and 7.

Trench summary

| Trench No | Dimensions | | Orientation | Contexts* | Topsoil | Natural geology (Lias limestone fragments) | Modern truncation/ Constraint |
|-----------|------------|-------|-------------|-----------|---------|---|----------------------------------|
| | Length | Width | | | | | |
| 1 | 30m | 1.6m | SW-NE | 100-111 | ✓ | ✓ | Cable trench |
| 2 | 15m | 1.7m | NW-SE | 200-201 | ✓ | ✓ | Cable trench |
| 3 | 15m | 1.7m | W-E | 300-305 | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 4 | 30m | 1.7m | SW-NE | 400-402 | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 5 | 15m | 1.7m | NW-SE | 500-504 | ✓ | ✓ | Cable trench |
| 6 | 15m | 1.7m | N-S | 600-601 | | ✓ | Pipe trench |
| 7 | 30m | 1.6m | N-S | 700-701 | | ✓ | Trackway/road |

5.2 Geological natural Lias limestone in a matrix of yellowish brown clay (101, 201, 301, 401, 501, 601, 701) was consistent across all seven trenches. The natural was cut by several features.

Iron Age

5.3 Iron Age features were recorded in Trench 1. Ditch 110 was 0.6m wide and 0.2m deep with steeply sloping sides and a rounded base and contained brown clay loam (111) which yielded a single small fragment of Iron Age pottery. This ditch may relate to a roundhouse or other structure.

5.4 Ditch 104, aligned approximately W-E with a curving butt end was a minimum of 0.9m wide and 0.18m deep and was filled by a brown clay loam (105). Two sherds of Iron Age pottery and a fragment of animal bone were recorded.

Roman

5.5 Roman features were recorded in Trenches 1, 3 and 4. Ditch 106 aligned approximately N-S was 0.9m wide and up to 0.23m deep with moderately steep sides leading to a deeper rounded basal slot. It was filled by a very dark greyish brown clay loam (107) from which several fragments of animal bone and a single sherd of Roman pottery were recovered.

5.6 Ditch 302 was aligned N/S and was 1m wide and 0.25m deep with steep sides and a flat base. It was filled with very dark greyish brown clay loam (303) from which a single sherd of Roman pottery and several fragments of animal bone were recovered. It aligned with ditch 402 in Trench 4.

Undated

5.7 Ditch 102 was 1.6m wide and contained very dark greyish brown clay loam (103). In Trench 3 this feature (304) was 2m wide, although part of this was extremely shallow. It was filled with very dark greyish brown clay loam (305) from which several fragments of animal bone, including cow bone, were recovered.

5.7 Ditch 108 was 2.35m wide and 0.34m deep with steep sides and a flattish base. It was filled by a very dark greyish brown clay loam (109).

| Trench | Levels (aOD) | | | |
|--------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Ground surface | | Natural | |
| | max | min | max | min |
| 1 | 109.76m | 87.27m | 109.4m | 109.34m |
| 3 | 109.59m | 109.49m | 109.33m | 109.15m |
| 4 | 109.31m | 109m | 108.84m | 108.37m |

| Trench | Levels (aOD) | | | |
|--------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|
| | Ground surface | | Natural | |
| | max | min | max | min |
| 2 | 109.76m | 87.27m | 109.4m | 109.34m |
| 5 | 109.47m | 109.34m | 109.22m | 109.06m |
| 6 | 109.25m | 108.90m | 108.96m | 108.67m |
| 7 | 108.98m | 108.4m | 108.62m | 108.05m |

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The evaluation has demonstrated that significant archaeological deposits could be disturbed by the proposed development. The work has established a contrast between the

western and eastern parts of the site. All of the western trenches contained archaeological remains or features. The most significant features were Iron Age and Roman ditches or gullies (203, 304 and 402).

6.2 The archaeological evidence seems most likely to be associated with previously unknown Iron Age /Roman settlement activity on or close to the site.

6.3 The eastern side of the development area revealed no archaeological features. This could reflect the extent of the settlement related activity but could be a result of truncation associated with modern farm activity.

6.4 Two undated parallel ditches in Trenches 1 and 3 are similarly aligned with Roman features and may be taken to imply that they are of a similar date and function.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1. Trench 1, ditch 104



2. Trench 1, ditch 106



3. Trench 1, ditch 108



4. Trench 1, ditch 110



5. Trench 2



6. Trench 3, ditch 302



7. Trench 3, ditch 304



8. Trench 4, with ditch 402 running at an angle along the trench



9. Trench 5



10. Trench 6



11. Trench 7

APPENDICES

A List of Contexts

| <i>Context</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Comments</i> |
|----------------|--------------------|---|
| 100 | Topsoil | Dark greyish brown clay loam |
| 101 | Geological natural | Broken lias limestone in yellowish brown clay soil matrix |
| 102 | Ditch | |
| 103 | Ditch fill | |
| 104 | Ditch | |
| 105 | Ditch fill | |
| 106 | Ditch | |
| 107 | Ditch fill | |
| 108 | Ditch | |
| 109 | Ditch fill | |
| 110 | Ditch | |
| 111 | Ditch fill | |
| 200 | Topsoil | Dark greyish brown clay loam |
| 201 | Geological natural | Broken lias limestone in yellowish brown clay soil matrix |
| 300 | Topsoil | Dark greyish brown clay loam |
| 301 | Geological natural | Broken lias limestone in yellowish brown clay soil matrix |
| 302 | Ditch | |
| 303 | Ditch fill | |
| 304 | Ditch | |
| 305 | Ditch fill | |
| 400 | Topsoil | Dark greyish brown clay loam |
| 401 | Geological natural | Broken lias limestone in yellowish brown clay soil matrix |

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|--|
| 402 | Ditch | |
| 403 | Ditch fill | |
| 500 | Layer | Dark greyish brown clay loam |
| 501 | Geological natural | Broken lias limestone in yellowish brown clay soil matrix |
| 502 | Layer | A tip of re-deposited geological natural from previous building work on site |
| 600 | Trackway | Modern hardcore surface |
| 601 | Geological natural | Broken lias limestone in yellowish brown clay soil matrix |
| 700 | Trackway | Modern hardcore surface |
| 701 | Geological natural | Broken lias limestone in yellowish brown clay soil matrix |

B List of Finds

| <i>Context</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>No.</i> | <i>Description</i> |
|----------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|
| 105 | Pottery | 2 | Iron Age |
| 107 | Pottery | 1 | Roman |
| 111 | Pottery | 1 | Iron Age |
| 303 | Pottery | 1 | Roman |
| 303 | Animal Bone | | |
| 305 | Animal Bone | 3 | |

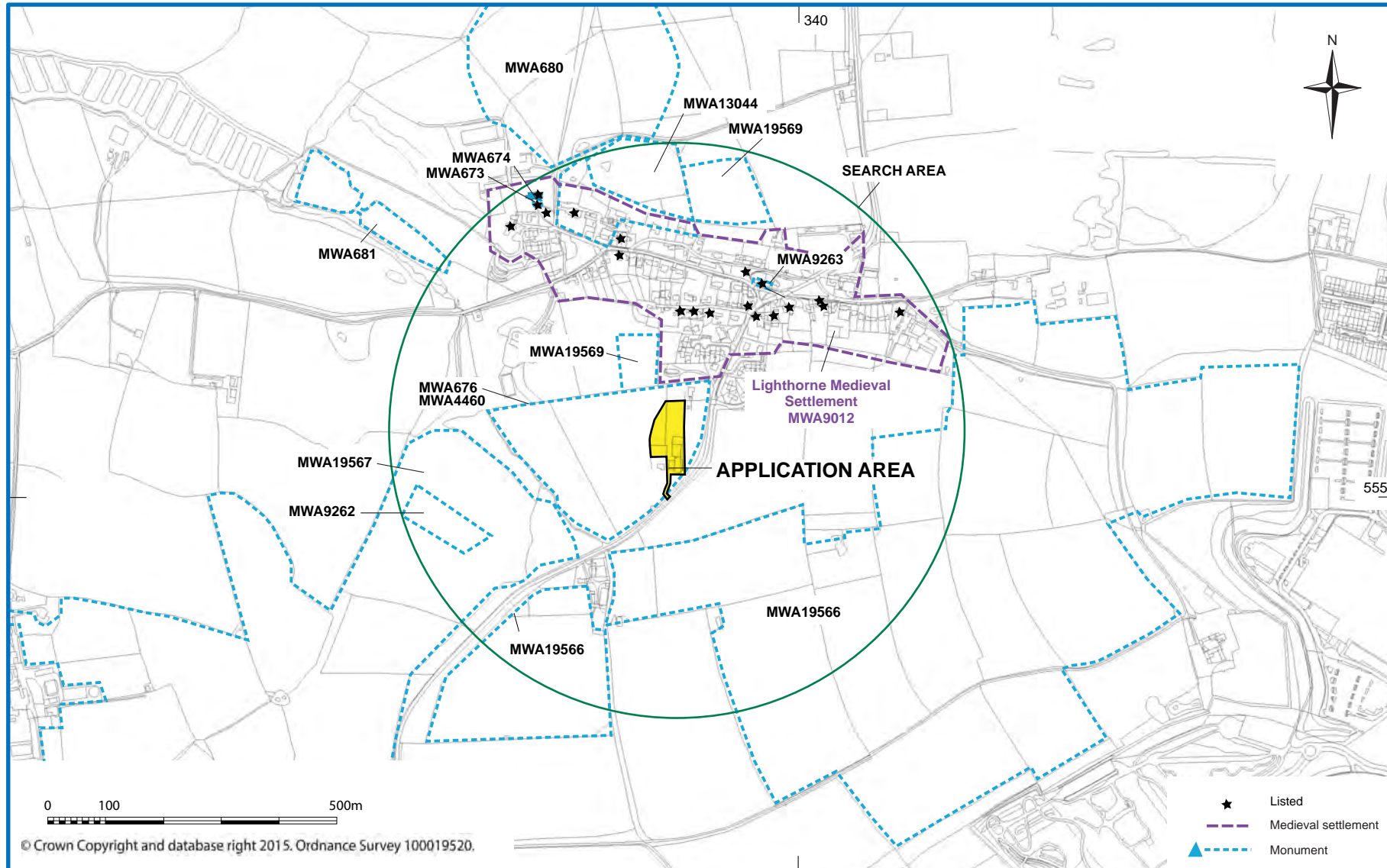


Fig 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment Information

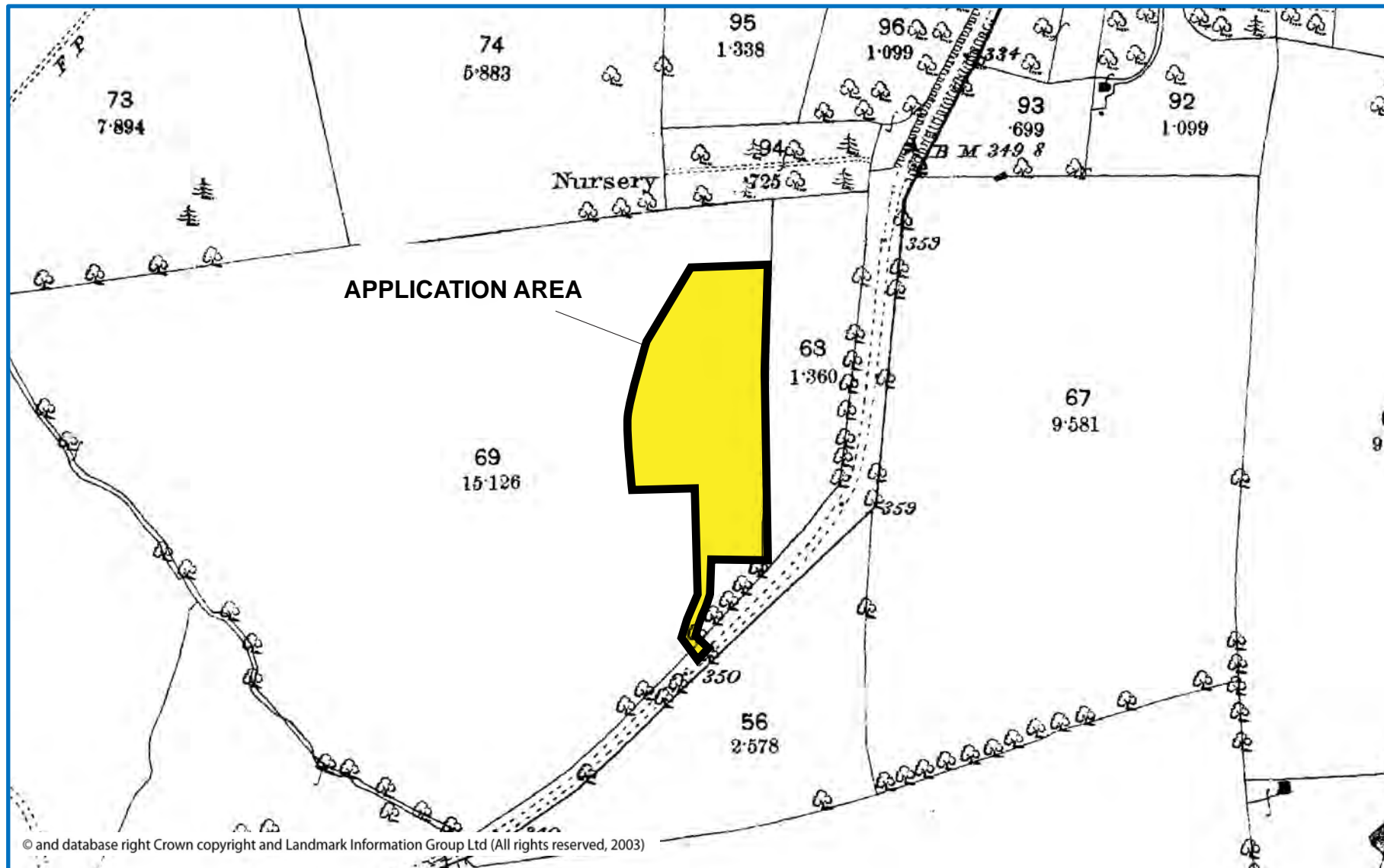


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885-6

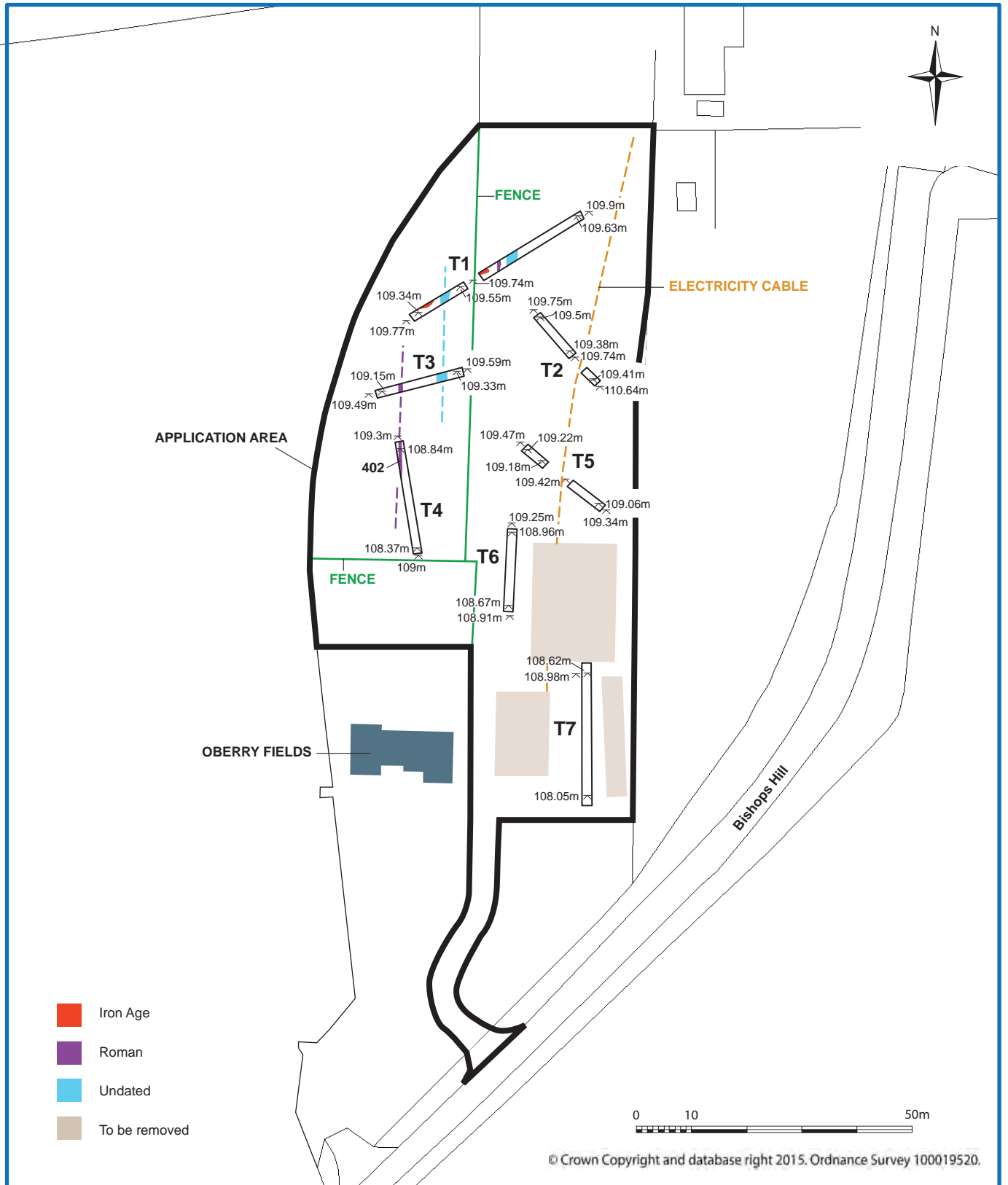


Fig 3: Excavated trenches

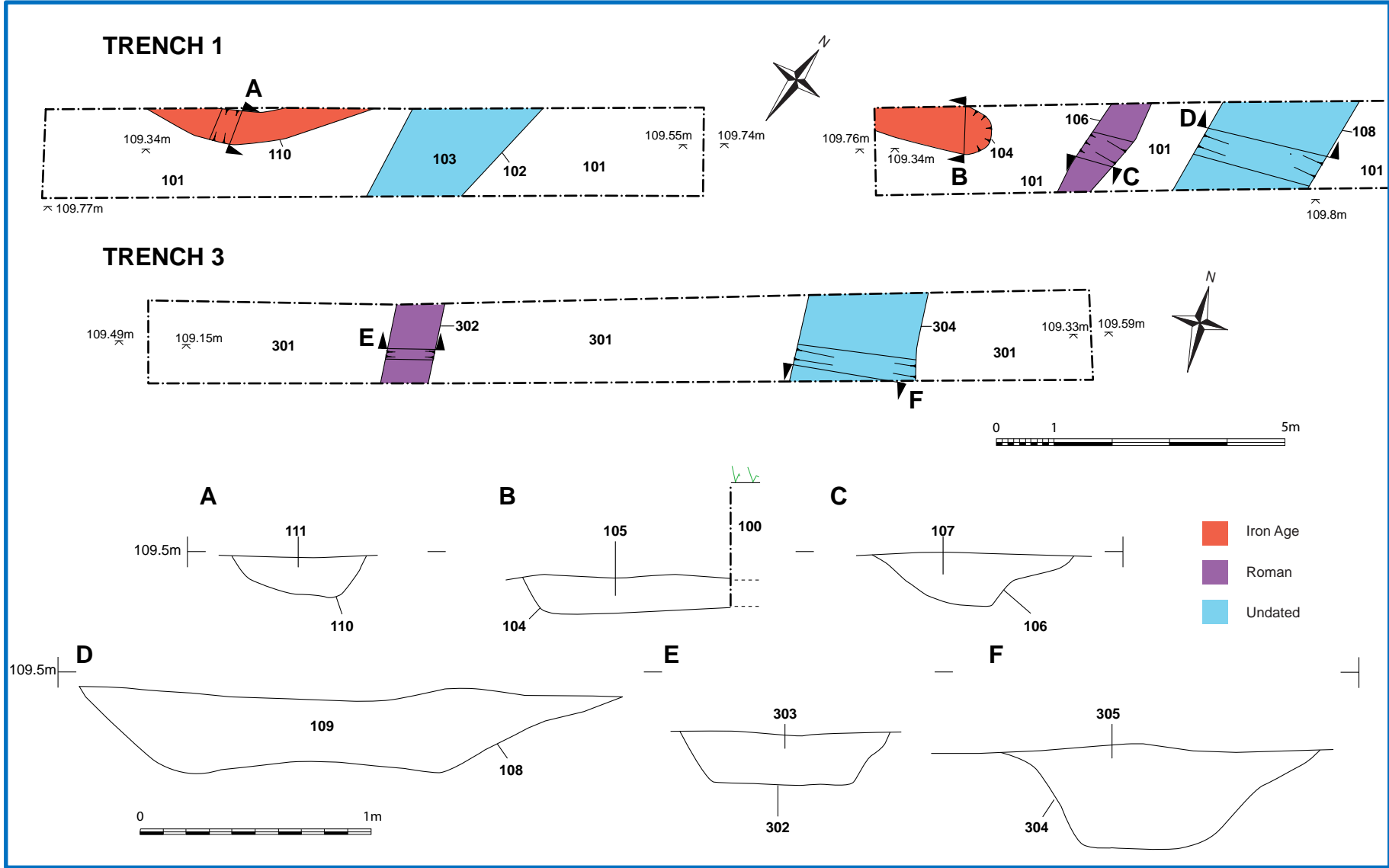


Fig 4: Detail of trenches 1 and 3 and sections A to F