

'The Motte', Ell Lane, Brinklow, Warwickshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



understanding heritage matters

Report No 1352
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*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: 'The Motte', Eil Lane, Brinklow

Commissioned by: Dr Gunstone

Project Report No. 1352

Site Code: BE13

NGR: SP 439 797

Planning Reference: R12/1255

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new garage at 'The Motte', Ell Lane, Brinklow, revealed a small part of a medieval layer containing pottery probably dating to the 14th century along with a layer containing 19th-century domestic waste. No other archaeological features or layers were observed. Observation of groundworks for the construction of the new house revealed only natural clay and topsoil. The site is likely to have lain within the rear part of a medieval property and the medieval finds probably derive from rubbish disposal in this area. Terracing activity from the 1970s had truncated around a third of the area of the new house.

1 Introduction

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council for the erection of a new detached house and a new double garage for the existing house at 'The Motte', Ell Lane, Brinklow CV23 OLP (planning ref. R12/1255). The site lies within an area of archaeological potential, within the possible limits of the small medieval town of Brinklow and close to the line of the Roman Fosse Way. It was therefore a condition of planning permission that the development be accompanied by a programme of archaeological investigation.

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of the archaeological observation of soil stripping and foundation trenches, in accordance with a Brief prepared by the County Planning Archaeologist on behalf of the Planning Authority (January 2013) was commissioned from Archaeology (Projects) Warwickshire and carried out between March and July 2013. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum.

2 Location

2.1 The development site is located to the north of the Motte and Bailey Castle in Brinklow in the village and parish of Brinklow, at map reference SP 439 797. The underlying geology of the area is Wolston Clay (British Geological Survey Viewer <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/mapViewers/> accessed September 2013).

2.2 The site had previously been occupied by a garden, shed and garage. The site sloped downwards to the north.

3 Methodology

3.1 The watching brief was designed to observe any groundworks associated with the development and record as far as possible, the nature of the archaeological resource on the site.

3.2 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area, local historical journals and other publications. Fieldwork involved an archaeologist being present during groundworks.

4 Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area is possibly a Neolithic or Bronze Age round barrow (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No MWA 6009). It has been suggested that the 'low' element to the place-name Brinklow derives from the ancient term for tumulus or barrow (Dugdale 1730, 218; Lilley 1994, 54). This barrow, it has been suggested, would have been sited on the hillock on which the later castle was built, to the east of the church. A Neolithic or Bronze Age flint has also been found to the south of the castle (MWA 4419).

4.2 A major Roman road, the Fosse Way, probably runs across the site though its precise alignment is uncertain (MWA 4759). In 1932 a number of Romano-British coins, including one of Valens dated to AD 364-78, were found in the garden of the school house, which impinges on the outer ditch of the medieval castle (MWA 6010). Roman period pottery was found during an observation in the churchyard in 2004 (MWA 9863). Lilley speculates that the rectilinear form of the field boundaries around the castle is suggestive of a Roman settlement site or station (Lilley 1994, 52). Suggestions that the inner bailey of the medieval castle incorporated the western half of a posting station are thought tenuous.

4.3 Brinklow (MWA 9496) is not mentioned by name in Domesday, at which time it is likely to have formed part of the larger parish of Smite (VCH 1951, 42; Lilley 1994, 54, 58). The most prominent topographical feature of Brinklow is a fine motte and bailey castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, crowning the hill just to the east of the village to the south of the current development (SAM 21547; MWA 3656). It is 'a well-preserved example of an early Norman type of stronghold, presumably built of timber, as there is no trace of masonry, but no documentary history seems to have survived' (VCH 1951, 42).

4.4 The properties either side of the Crescent to the north-west of the castle bailey appear likely to have formed the earliest part of the medieval settlement (Lilley 1994). This area includes the medieval church, and the motte and bailey castle. Medieval pottery was found in the garden of the school house, which impinges on the outer ditch of the medieval castle, in 1932 (MWA 5480). Work at the rear of Grove Hall revealed residual medieval pottery (EWA 956), while recording at 47 and 49 The Crescent (EWA 6814) revealed a backfilled pond which may have been open in the medieval period (MWA 8796).

4.5 Archaeological work at No 29 The Crescent (EWA 6738) found pottery dating from the 12th-14th centuries, but no features (MWA 8743, Warwickshire Museum 1999), while observation at 44 and 46 The Crescent recorded only post-medieval features, a fragment of 14th/15th century floor tile and pottery dating from the late 15th/16th century up to the 20th century (EWA 7650; Warwickshire Museum 2005, 6-8).

4.6 Archaeological recording between 28 and 30 Broad Street (EWA 6807) revealed a likely toft boundary ditch, but no evidence of medieval structures (MWA 8792). An

archaeological watching brief carried out at The Church Hall, Broad Street in 2009 recorded no significant archaeological features, finds or deposits (EWA 9453).

4.7 To the south, south-east and east of the castle are the remains of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation (MWA 7172). The ridge and furrow immediately east and south-east of the motte defines a triangular enclosure attached to the castle, which may have been used by its inhabitants.

4.8 By 1169 Brinklow was the seat of the court of the Brinklow Hundred and by 1218 it had been granted a market charter. By 1307 Brinklow had gained the status of a borough, suggesting that it flourished as a small market town (Lilley 1994, 54-5). The church of St John the Baptist dates back to the 13th century but was rebuilt in the 15th century, and the only part of the 13th-century church that remains is the chancel (MWA 3655; VCH 1951, 219). The church was much restored in the 19th century. A 15th-century floor tile is recorded as a casual find from the church (MWA 3665).

4.9 The village expanded to the south-west in the post-medieval period. Archaeological recording at The Dun Cow in 2003, recorded post-medieval material, but no medieval features or finds (EWA 7347). Archaeological work (EWA 7034) in the southern part of the village has recorded an 18th-century boundary wall (MWA 8966). The Rectory (MWA 3659) was built in the early 19th century.

4.10 The earliest map of the area dates to 1793 (WRO CR 2026/24) and shows the church and motte and bailey with properties on the street frontage to the north of the church but none in the area of the current development. The map also shows the original course of the Oxford canal looping behind the properties on the western side of the main road (now The Crescent/Lutterworth Road). The parish map of Brinklow of 1838 is more detailed and shows properties lining the main street but the area of the current development is, again, empty, though with a field boundary marked (WRO Z 262 (L)). This remains the case with the Ordnance Survey map of 1887 (Ordnance Survey 1887; Figure 2) when the development site lay in an enclosure fronting onto Ell Lane, one of whose boundaries is that marked on the 1838 map. By the early 20th century (Ordnance Survey 1905; Figure 3) this, and two adjacent enclosures, are marked as allotment gardens. Two detached houses had been built to the north, within the enclosures, by 1925 (Ordnance Survey 1925) with the current development area lying within the garden of the southern one.

4.11 An archaeological watching brief undertaken during redevelopment of The Brae (EWA 9859) failed to identify any medieval or otherwise significant deposits. A layer of greyish brown clay loam that contained a variety of medieval and later pottery sherds probably developed during the cultivation of allotments in the early 1900s (Jones and Gethin 2010).

Further HER records for Brinklow:

MWA 3658	Early 18th Century House	1299534 (National Heritage List for England (NHLE))
MWA 3664	Site of a Toll House	
MWA 3669	Site of a Brewery or Malthouse	
MWA 3670	Brewery or Malthouse	
MWA 3668	Smithy	

MWA 6861 Smithy
MWA 3661 Disused Canal
MWA 3666 Dovecote
MWA 3667 Smithy
MWA 3662 Congregational Chapel
MWA 4788 Toll Road
MWA 13432 Bulls Head Inn
MWA 13433 White Lion Inn

EWA 7430 Further Observation at St John's Church
EWA 9986 Strip, map and sample excavation, 5 Coventry Road

5 Watching Brief

5.1 The geological natural of reddish-brown clay (103) was revealed across the area of ground reduction for the new house and in the foundation trenches for the garage. This was reached at a depth of 1m below the current ground level in the foundation trenches and at 0.3m across the footprint of the new house.

5.2 A brownish-grey clay loam layer (102) was observed in the base of the new garage foundation trench at a depth of *c*1m. It was observed in the western corner (Figure 5) and three sherds of medieval pottery and a piece of tile were recovered from it. A 0.65m deep layer of dark reddish-brown clay loam (101), containing fragments of brick and tile overlay the natural and layer 102 within the foundation trenches.

5.3 Very dark greyish-brown clay loam topsoil (100) covered layer 101 and in the area of the new garage it directly overlay the natural. It ranged in depth from 0.2m in the area of the new garage to 0.5m across the footprint of the new house, where the depth of soil had been increased as a result of terracing deposits.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The construction of the new garage covered a relatively small area. However a small amount of surviving stratigraphy was exposed, suggesting that some medieval remains might exist in the vicinity. The medieval pottery sherds from layer 102 were relatively unabraded, suggesting that it was not a plough soil. There had been some doubt as to whether or not medieval Brinklow continued to the north-east of Ell Lane (hence the possible boundary of settlement shown on Figure 1) but this small area of medieval archaeology suggests that it did continue.

Acknowledgements

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Warwickshire Museum 2005 *Archaeological Observation at 44 and 46 The Crescent, Brinklow, Warwickshire*, Warwickshire Museum Report 0537.

Appendix A List of Contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>
100	Very dark greyish-brown clay loam	Topsoil
101	Reddish-brown clay loam	Layer
102	Brownish-grey clay loam	Layer (medieval)
103	Brownish yellow clay	Geological Natural

Appendix B List of Finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
101	Pottery	2	13th/14th century
102	Pottery	3	13th/14th century
102	Tile	1	Glazed floor

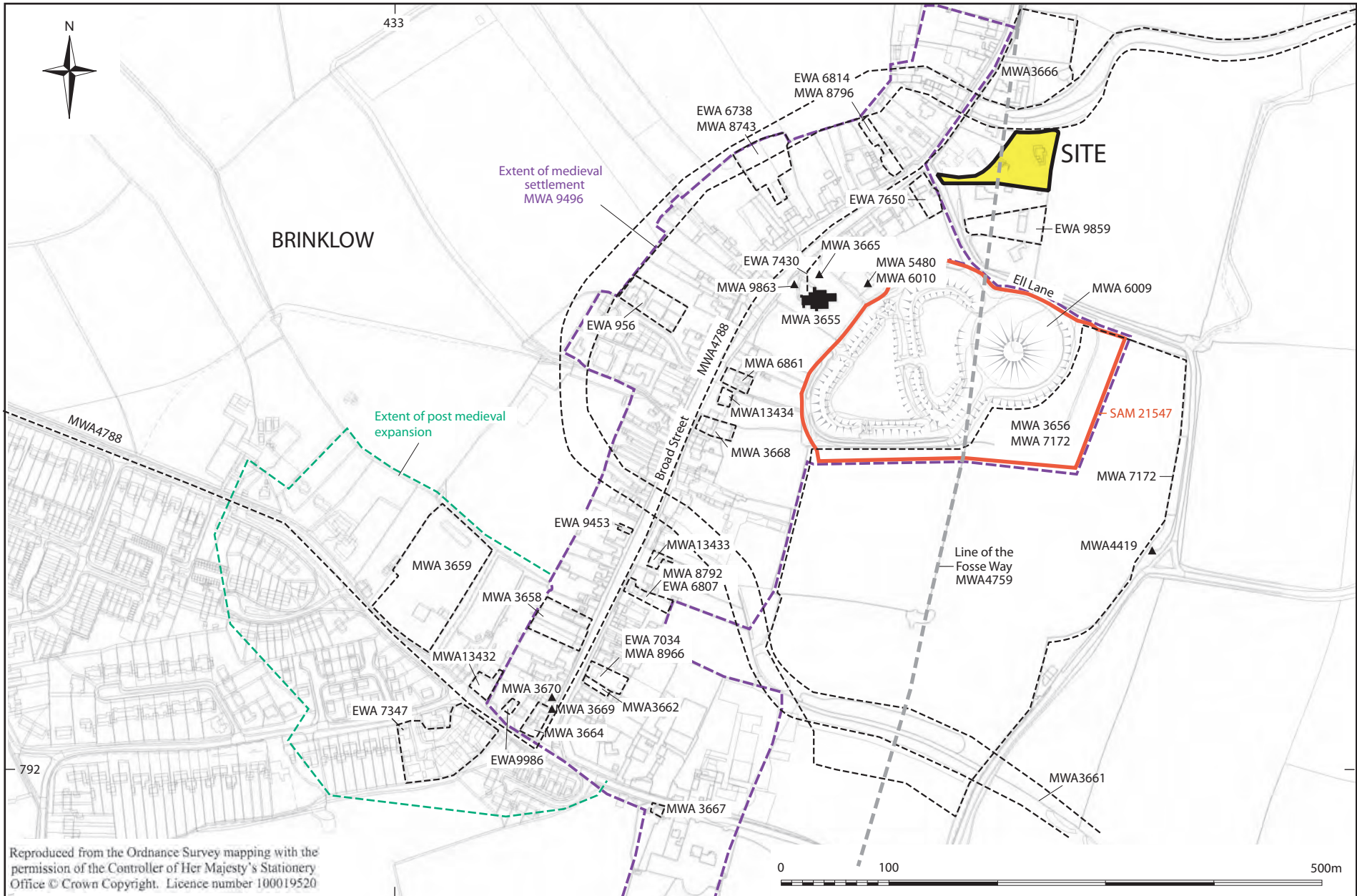


Fig 1: Site location

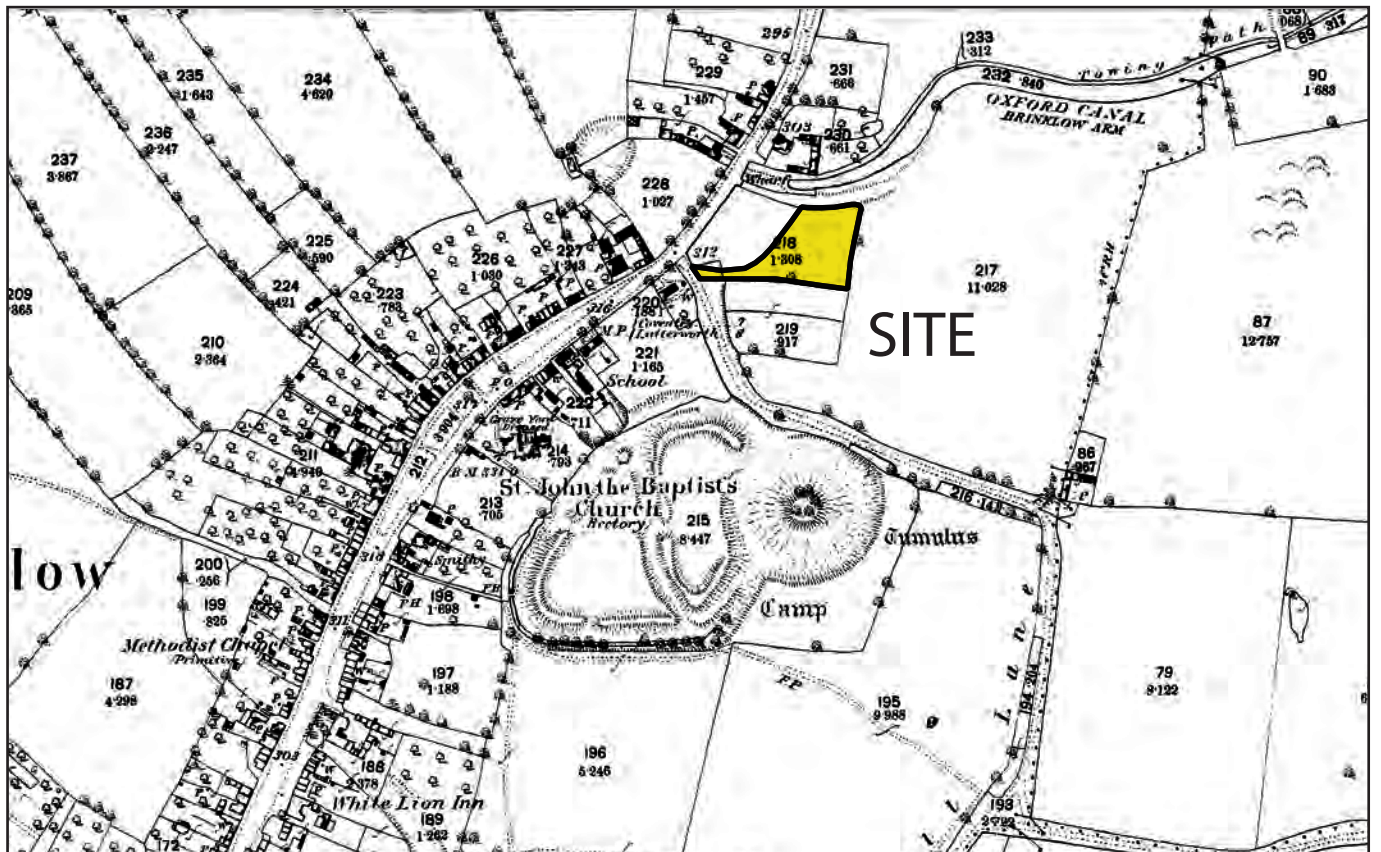


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1887

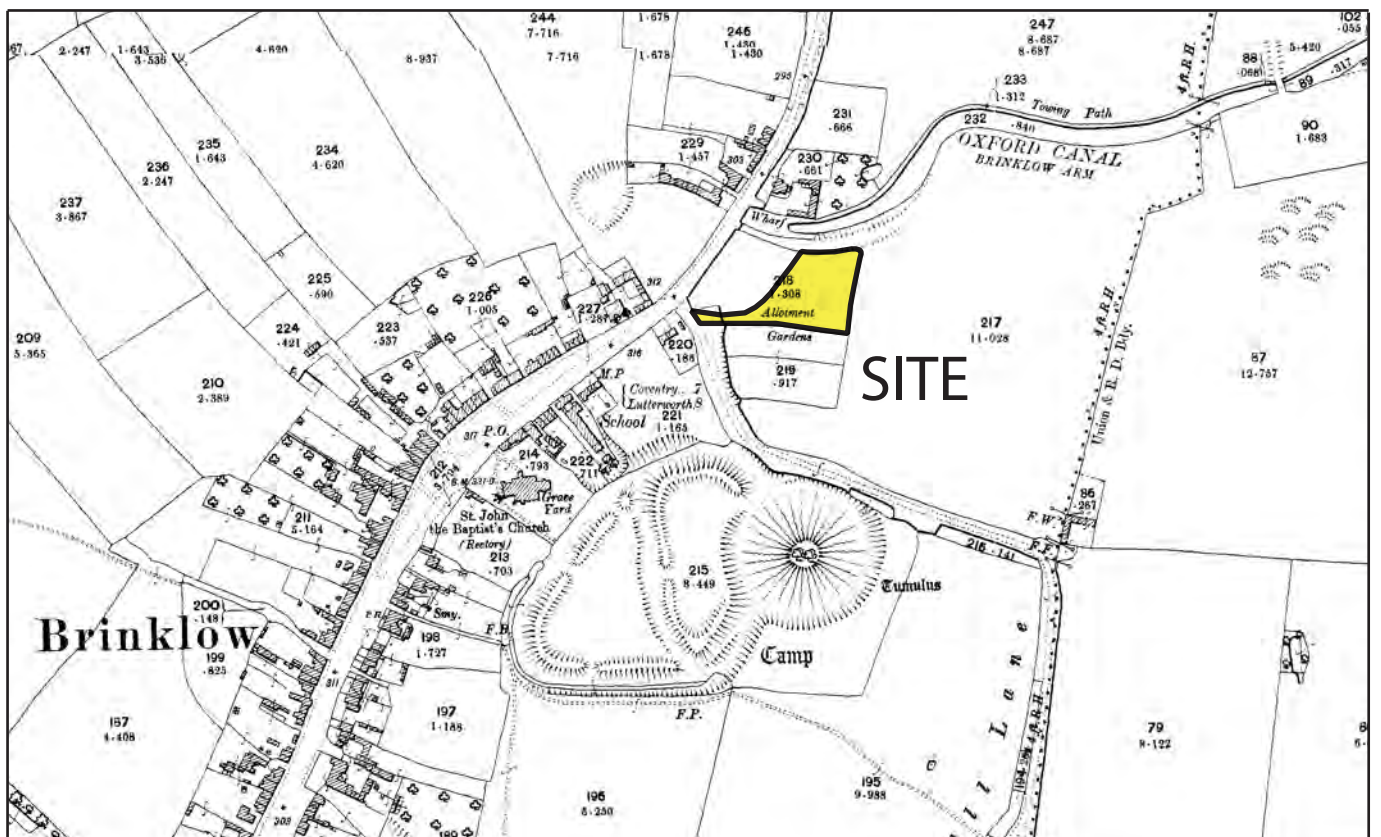


Fig 3: Detail from Second Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1905

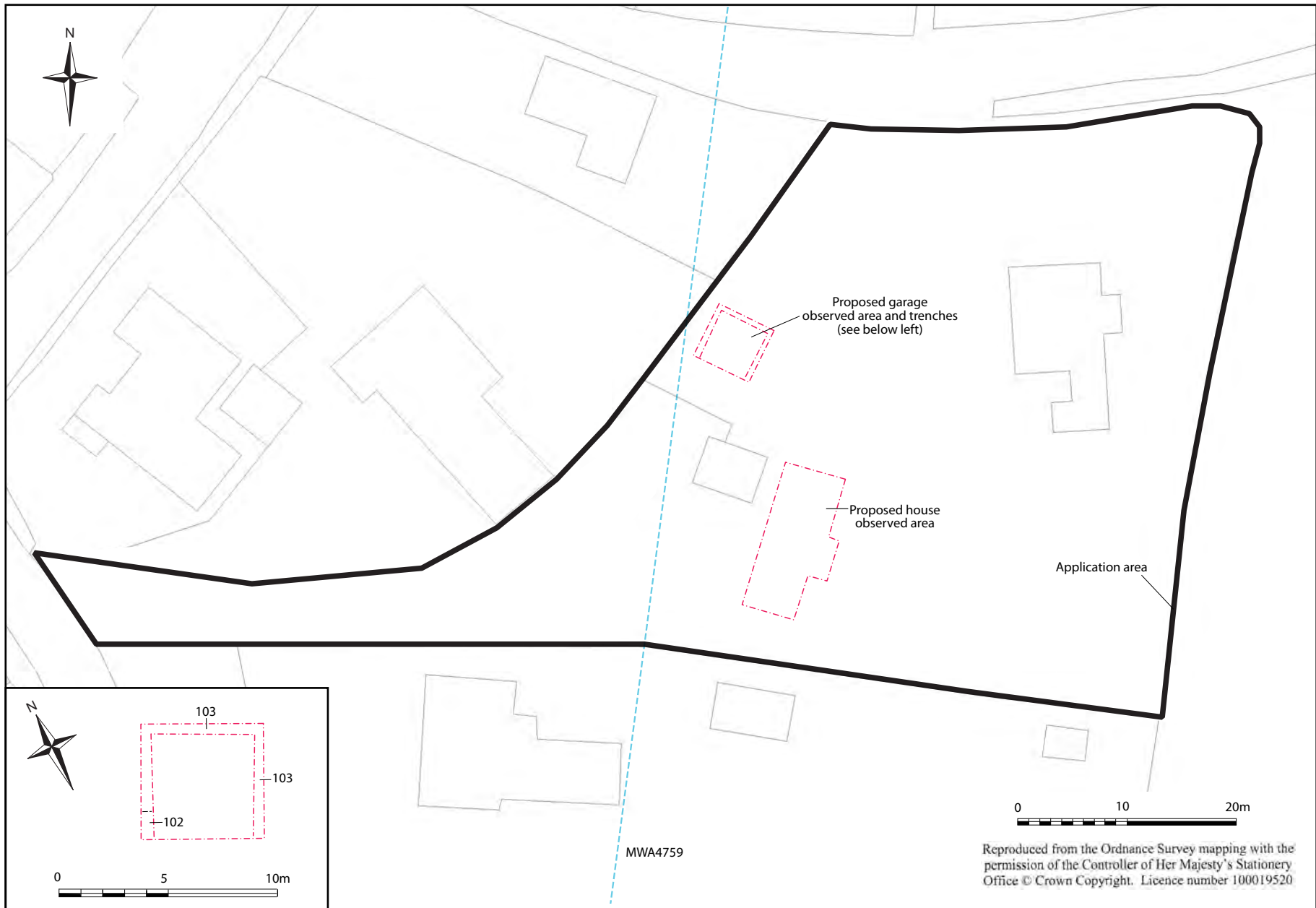


Fig 4: Areas observed



Figure 5: Excavation of garage trenches



Figure 6: Ground reduction for new house