

# Quinavon, Upper Quinton, Warwickshire

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS



*understanding heritage matters*

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1527

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*Working for  
Warwickshire*

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## SUMMARY

*An archaeological evaluation consisting of three trial trenches was undertaken in advance of the construction of two new dwellings. A small pit in Trench 2 contained the substantial part of the fragmented remains of an Iron Age pottery vessel. A ditch exposed in Trench 3 was aligned broadly parallel with Hill Lane. It contained three sherds of medieval pottery.*

*Subsequent to the evaluation a WSI was produced for the excavation of the footprint and driveway of the proposed dwellings. In the event this was not carried out until after the new foundation trenches had been concreted and the internal floor areas mechanically reduced. Restitutional mitigation comprising the machine and hand cleaning of the exposed surfaces within part of the reduced footprint established that the archaeological horizon had been removed. In the driveway it was established that the majority of the frontage included the backfill of a substantial medieval ditch dug along the edge of the road. This ditch may well have been a watercourse designed to carry spring water to the heart of the medieval village. A sherd of medieval pottery and animal bone were recovered from a slot cut through this feature.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-upon-Avon District Council for the erection of two new dwellings at Orchard Land adjacent to Quinavon, Upper Quinton, Warwickshire. The site lies in an area of archaeological potential and there is a possibility that archaeological deposits could be disturbed or exposed by the development.

1.2 It is a condition of planning permission that, before the development commences, the applicant secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

1.3 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Planning Authority. The results of the work were incorporated into a Written Scheme of Investigation for Strip Map and Sampling which was to be carried out before the development commenced.

1.4 This report presents the results of that work. The archaeological archive will be deposited at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code QA15.

## 2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 The development site occupies a plot on the eastern side of Hill Lane adjacent to Quinavon. The site is also within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Fig 1).

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Blue Lias and Charmouth mudstone formation (BGS 2014).

## 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 A 500m search of the Historic Environment Record centred on the site was carried out (15/008). The site lies within the extent of Upper Quinton medieval settlement, which has been plotted with reference to the First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping (MWA 8972). Earthworks to the south and west suggest that the medieval settlement was originally larger than can be seen on historic mapping (MWA 6452). The village is surrounded by extensive medieval ridge and furrow (MWA 6451).

3.2 A watching brief was carried out in 1998 at the Cottage on the Green and finds of 18th/19th-century pottery were recovered from the topsoil, but no archaeological features observed (MWA 8331). A watching brief was also carried out at Marcott in 2000 during groundworks for an extension (EWA 6947). A possible stone wall foundation was recorded and a number of 18th-19th century finds were recovered. Further work was carried out at Marcott in 2003 when the foundation trenches for a music room were being excavated; a few fragments of 19th-century pottery were recovered, but no archaeological finds or features relating to the medieval settlement.

3.3 No estate or tithe maps survive for the area. On the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1:2500, Fig 2) the area of the development was part of an orchard on the southern edge of the village.

3.4 There are a number of Listed Buildings in the village. The Manor House is 16th century with 17th-century additions. The Chestnuts dates to the 17th century, as does Tudor Walls, while The Farmhouse on The Green dates to the 18th century.

## 4 AIMS AND METHODS

### **Evaluation**

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 included 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.

### **Strip, Map and Sample**

4.4 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains that would be disturbed by the development, to collate the records in an archaeological archive and present the significant aspects of the archive in a report for dissemination.

4.5 The secondary aims were to form an understanding of the remains recorded in terms of their character and date, and to place the evidence in its local and regional context.

## 5 RESULTS

### **Trenches**

5.1 Three evaluation trenches were excavated, two within the footprint of each of the proposed properties and one across the proposed drive area. Trenches were machine excavated 8m long and 1.8m wide by a 360° excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide ditching bucket. Archaeological features were recorded in two of the trenches (T2 and T3) and a modern service trench in the other (T1).

5.2 Trench 1 was located in the footprint of the northern house plot. Geological natural clay (103) was reached at a depth of 0.38m. This was cut by a modern service trench (104). The natural clay was overlain by 0.18m of yellow brown clay loam (102), itself overlain by 0.12m of brownish grey clay loam (101). This was covered by 0.08m of topsoil (100). No finds were recovered from Trench 1 and no significant features recorded.

5.2 Trench 2 was located in the footprint of the southern house plot. Geological natural clay (205) was reached at a depth of c.0.50m. The clay was cut by a small, steep-sided pit 203, only partially within the limits of the trench. The fill of the pit was a grey clay loam with brown mottling (204) which contained 95 sherds of pottery, probably deriving from a single pot. The pit fill and natural clay were overlain by a layer of yellowish brown clay loam (202), 0.15m deep in the southern part of the trench and 0.25m deep in the northern part. Layer 202 was overlain by 0.15-0.20m of brownish grey clay loam (201) which was sealed by brown clay loam topsoil (200). No finds were recovered from the layers above the natural clay.

5.3 Trench 3 was located near the street frontage, in the area of the proposed drive. Geological natural clay (305) was reached at a depth of c.0.40m. It was cut by a 0.80m wide ditch with moderately steep sides and a flattish base 0.34m deep (303). The ditch was filled with a brownish grey clay loam (304), from which three small sherds of pottery were recovered. Overlying the ditch fill and the geological natural was 0.35m of yellowish brown clay loam (302). This was covered by between 0.15 and 0.2m of brownish grey clay loam (301) from which three sherds of pottery were recovered. It was sealed by 0.08m of turf (300).

#### **Iron Age Pottery by Dr Phil Mills MCI(A)**

5.4 There were 95 sherds, weighing 583g from a single deposit (204). They are probably from the same vessel, in a handmade poorly levigated fabric with yellowish red (5YR 5/6) surfaces on the body and base and black neck and rim. The fabric is soft with a hackly break and a soapy feel. It has inclusions of abundant fossil shell and other calcareous inclusions, common coarse organic voids and some sub rounded quartz and fine silver mica. The vessel is a large (with mouth of 300mm diameter and a base of 110 mm diameter) bowl or jar with an everted rim squared at the tip, with a simple flat base. There is slight finger-tip decoration around the rim and the suggestion of a further band at the shoulder of the vessel. There is no evidence of internal wear or sooting.

5.5 The dating of this vessel is problematical as the diagnostic criteria are common to both Iron Age and Saxon pottery. However finger tipping decoration is more commonly noted on Iron Age pottery than Saxon pottery, Saxon pottery tends to be of smaller jars, Saxon pottery tends to have more rounded bases than the one noted here. Furthermore, whilst calcareous inclusions are possible in Saxon pottery, nearby Saxon assemblage have tended to have quartz or granadiorite inclusions (e.g. Evans 2009; Evans and Mills 2008), whilst the

site is located in a zone of Iron Age calcareous tempered pottery supply (Evans and Mills 2013). The vessel is probably therefore of early to mid-Iron Age date. The size and large quantity from a single vessel suggests that this may have been a structured deposition.

### **Stripped Areas**

5.6 Around 0.05m of soil was removed in order to clean the exposed clay between the foundations in the southern house plot. No archaeological features were evident and no finds were recovered on the site, although several natural tree root holes were examined.. The level of the exposed clay was a minimum of 0.15m below the level of the top of the natural observed in the trial trenches. The reduced level ground reductions in the northern house plot were deeper than the southern plot so it was concluded that further cleaning in this area would have no archaeological value.

5.7 An area at the front of the site was stripped to the geological natural of yellowish brown clay (405). A continuation of ditch 303 was noted (403). In addition, a large possibly linear feature was recorded towards the street frontage (401). A full profile of the feature was not possible due to its depth of around 1.5m. A sherd of medieval pottery and an animal bone fragment was recovered from the dark yellowish brown clay fill (402).

### **Medieval Pottery by Stephanie Ratkai BA**

5.8 A total of seven medieval pottery sherds were recovered from two contexts. The assemblage is too small for meaningful analysis. Three sherds from layer 301 derived from Chilvers Coton, Nuneaton and Malvern Chase. A jug sherd in Chilvers Coton (A) fabric dates between mid-13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Ditch fill 304 yielded two Malvern Chase ware sherds dated mid/late 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century and late medieval oxidised ware sherd possibly from Wednesbury of 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century date. A Malvern sherd handle from ditch fill 402 is also mid-14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 A single Iron Age pit was recorded in the evaluation. It is not possible to determine any other shallow features existed on the site but it can be reasonably inferred that there were no features greater than 0.30m in depth or 0.75m in width within the footprint as they would have been visible between the foundation trenches. Discrete Iron Age pits are not commonly found in Warwickshire, but there have been too few interventions at the foot of Iron Age hillforts to be sure that they are not commonly occurring in such locations. The fact that the single vessel recovered may have been a structured deposit supports this possibility.



6.2 Two ditches dating from the medieval period have been identified at the front of the site. They seem likely to continue across the entire frontage. The absence of any medieval deposits to the east of these ditches seems likely to indicate that this area was not developed in the medieval period. The relatively shallow topsoil combined with the absence of medieval finds suggests that it was not under plough and outside the village but neither was it used as domestic space. Garden, paddock or orchard seem more likely explanations.

6.3 Given that the site is on a rising slope the best explanation for the larger ditch on the street frontage is drainage or water supply. When excavated the rate of water ingress was considerable and it is clear that the base was below the water table. If merely to channel excess water from the slopes above it would probably been easier to construct drains around the village, but if fed by an uphill spring it would have channelled relatively clean water into the heart of the village.

## REFERENCES

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Photograph 1. Iron Age pit in Trench 2



Photograph 2. Area of pit examined (Iron Age pit would have been under foreground)





Photograph 3. Cleaning between foundations



Photograph 4. Slot through medieval ditch





Photograph 5. Ditch 303 in the evaluation Trench 3



Photograph 6. Ditch 403



Photograph 7. Iron Age pottery



## APPENDICES

### A List of contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comment</i>
100	Topsoil	
101	Layer	
102	Layer	
103	Natural clay	
104	Service trench	
105	Fill of service trench	
200	Topsoil	
201	Layer	Old topsoil
202	Layer	
203	Pit	
204	Fill of pit 203	
205	Natural clay	
300	Topsoil	
301	Layer	
302	Layer	
303	Ditch	
304	Fill of ditch 303	
305	Natural clay	
400	Layer	
401	Ditch	
402	Fill of Ditch	
403	Ditch	
404	Fill of ditch	
405	Natural clay	

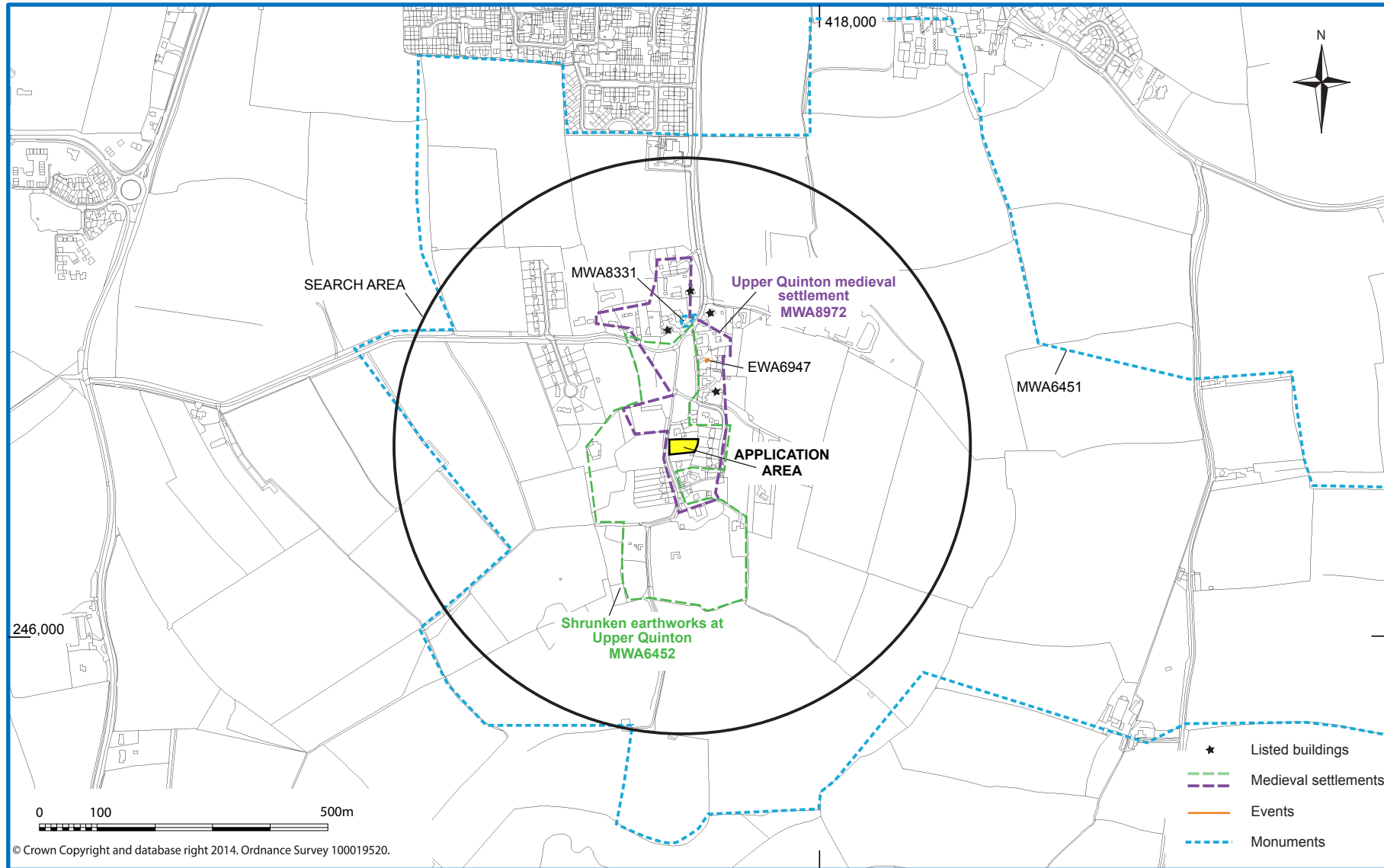


Fig 1: Location of site and Historic Environment Information

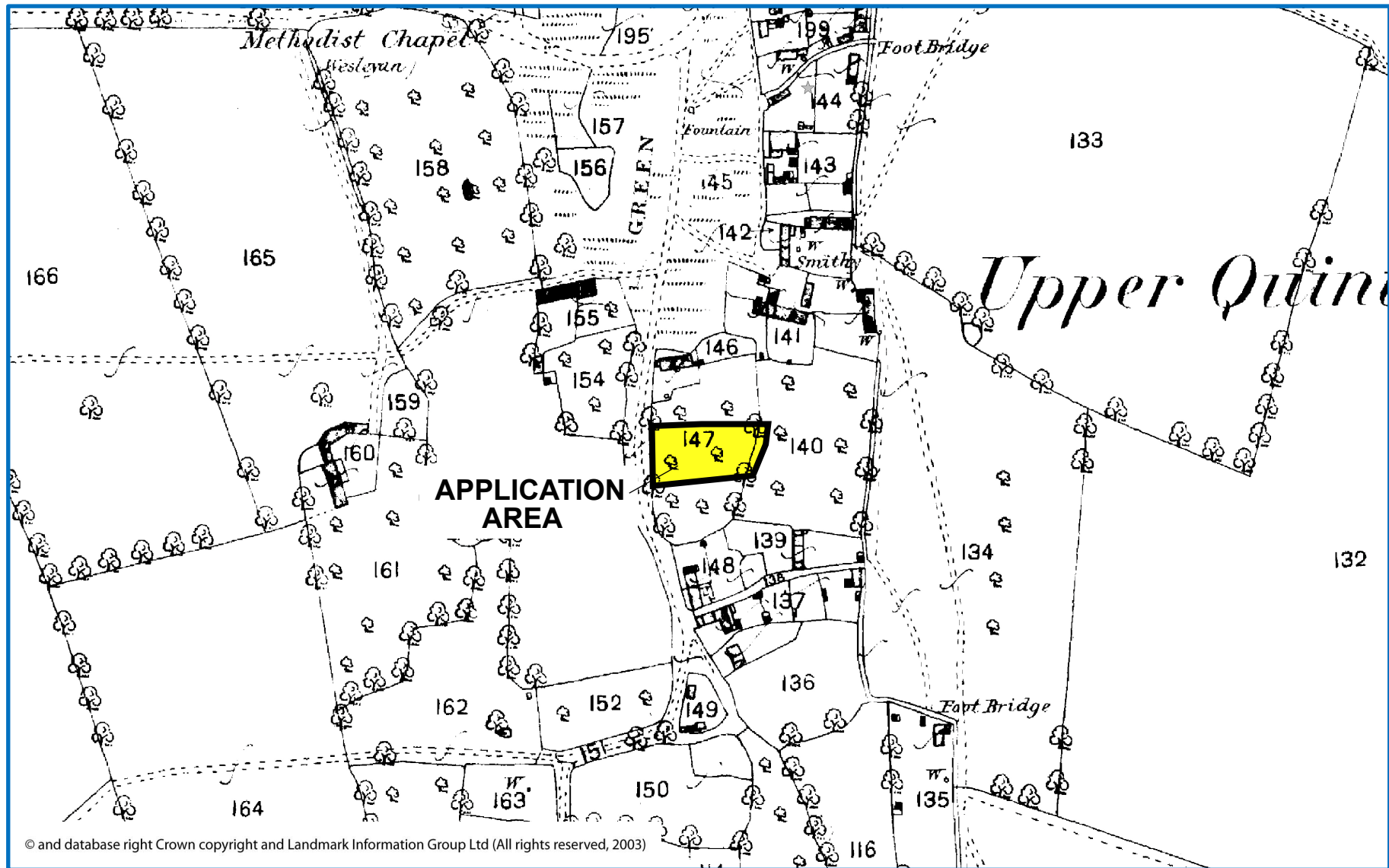


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885



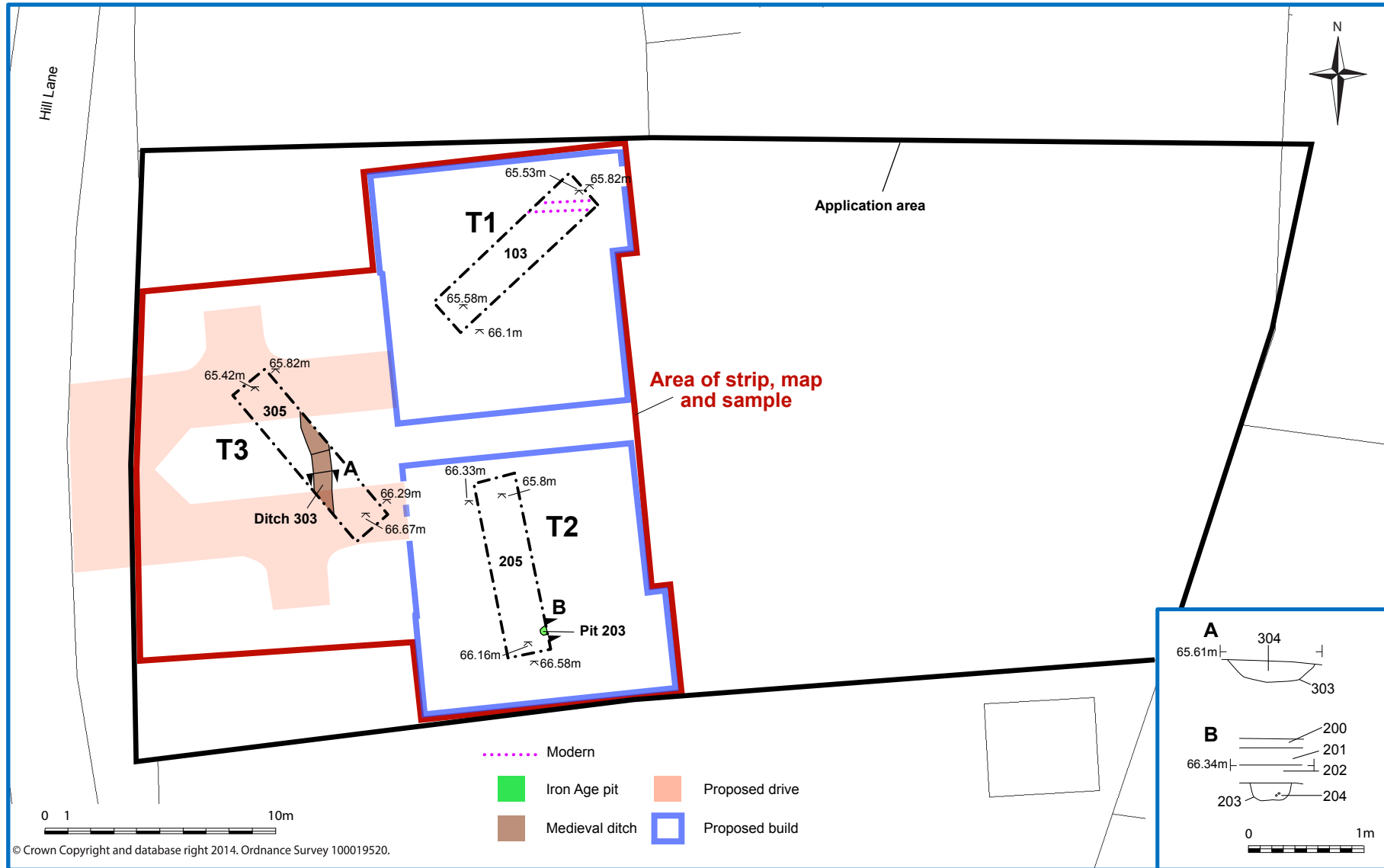


Fig 3: Location of excavated trenches and sections

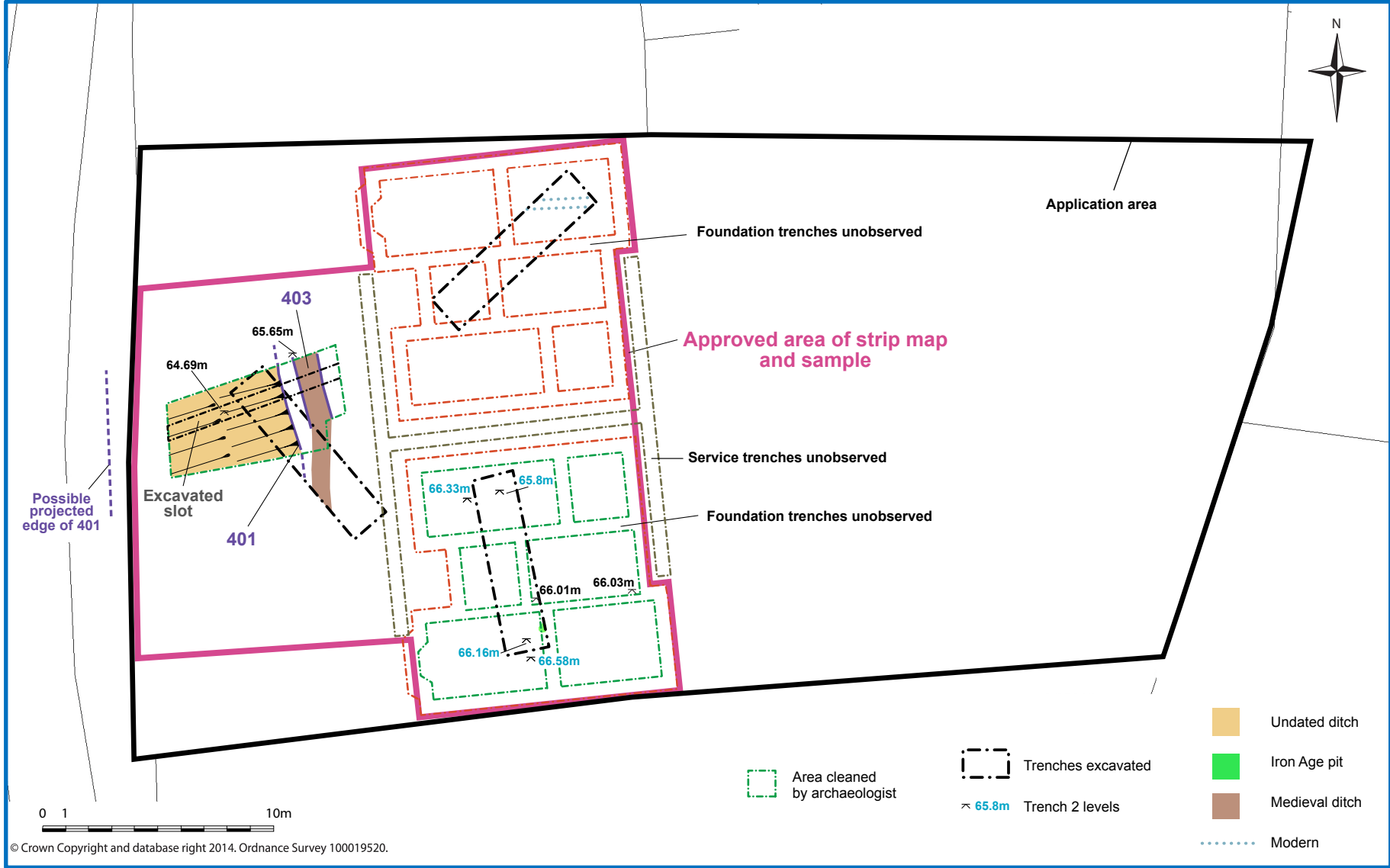


Fig 4: Location of unauthorised works and exploratory mitigation

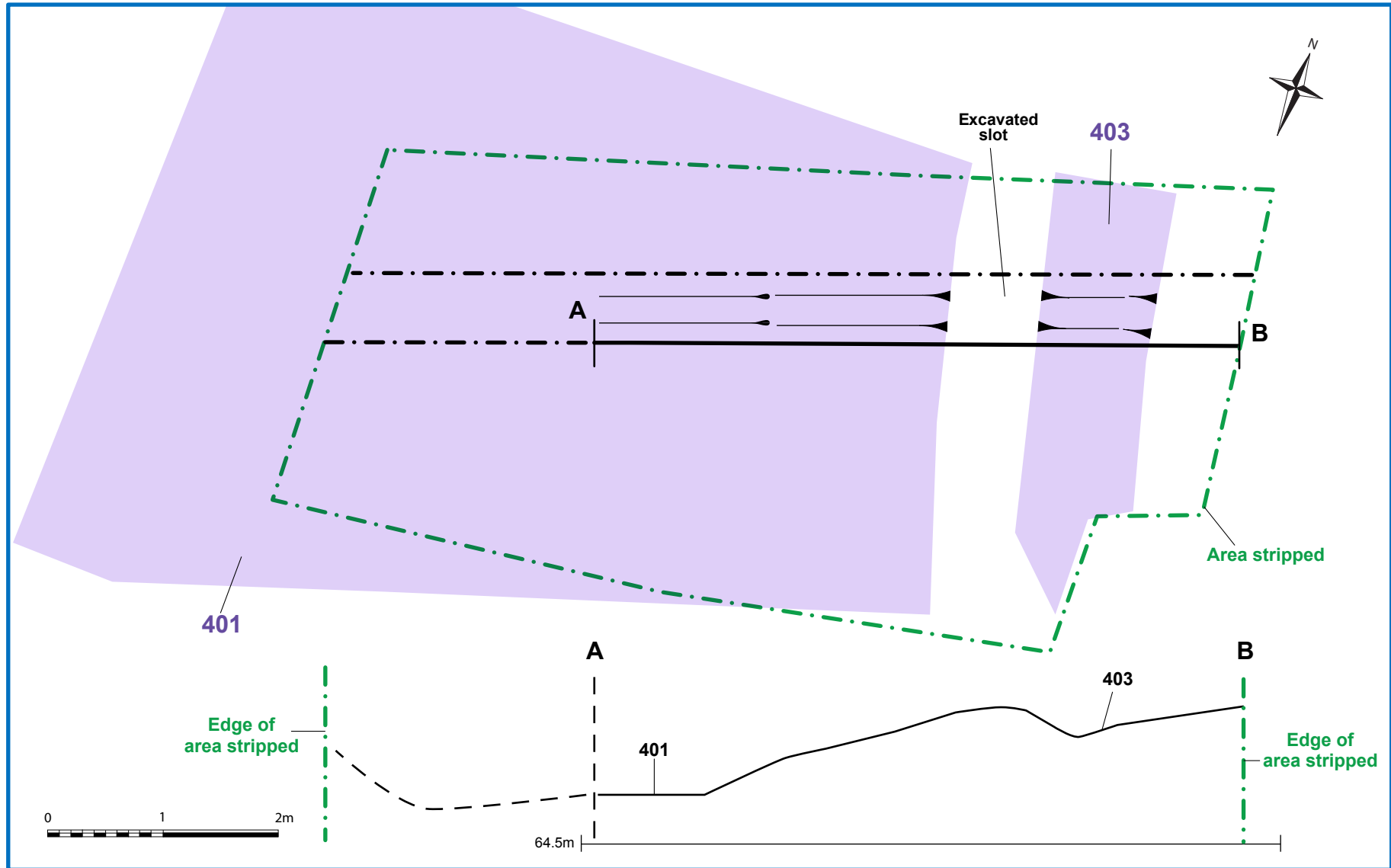


Fig 5: Location of features 401 and 403 profile