

31 The Crescent Brinklow Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION



understanding heritage matters

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1686

SEPTEMBER 2016



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: 31 The Crescent, Brinklow
Commissioned by: David Gordon
Project Report No. 1686
Site Code: BK15
Planning Reference: R15/0001
National Grid Reference: SP 4368 7971
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Report checked by: Stuart Palmer MCIfA
Date: September 2016
Report reference: Charles, E 2016 *31 The Crescent, Brinklow, Warwickshire: Archaeological Investigation*, Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1686.

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SUMMARY

Archaeological investigations were carried out during the construction of a new dwelling adjacent to the medieval market place on behalf of David Gordon. An evaluation undertaken in December 2015 had demonstrated that significant archaeological deposits survived on the site so the programme of observation and recording was designed to record any such as the construction progressed. In the event, general ground reductions did not penetrate to archaeological levels and it was not possible to discern any significant deposits when the foundation or service trenches were excavated. However, 13 fragments of medieval pottery were recovered, ranging in date from the 13th to 14th/15th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council for the construction of a new dwelling to the rear of no 31, The Crescent, Brinklow, Rugby. A condition of planning permission requires the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological works.
- 1.2 An archaeological evaluation by Archaeology Warwickshire in December 2015 established that some significant archaeological deposits survive on the site (Gethin 2015). The archaeological advisor to the planning authority therefore requested that an archaeological controlled watching brief was undertaken in order that any archaeological deposits that did survive could be recorded in an appropriate manner.
- 1.3 Archaeology Warwickshire was commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the planning authority.

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is located on the western side of The Crescent to the rear of No 31 in what was a garden. It is centred around National Grid Reference SP 4369 7971 (Fig 1).
- 2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Mercia Mudstone Group (BGS 2015)

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area may be a Neolithic or Bronze Age round barrow (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No MWA 6009) which can

be inferred from 'low' element in the place-name Brinklow: Low derives from the ancient term for tumulus or barrow (Dugdale 1730, 218; Lilley 1994, 54). Such a barrow may have been sited on the ridge on which the later castle was built, to the east of the church. A Neolithic or Bronze Age flint has been found to the south of the castle (MWA 4419).

- 3.2 A major Roman road, the Fosse Way, runs to the east of the site, partially beneath the castle, although to the north of this its precise alignment is uncertain (MWA 4759). In 1932 a number of Roman 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) however suggestions that the inner bailey of the medieval castle incorporated the western half of a Roman earthwork are thought tenuous.
- 3.3 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 the fine motte and bailey castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, crowning the hill just to the east of the church (SAM 21547; MWA 3656, MWA 12301, 12302). The castle was originally timber and there is no evidence it was ever rebuilt in stone. The defences may well have gone out of use within 100 years of its construction but buildings within the baileys might have remained in use for somewhat longer.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 By 1169 Brinklow was the seat of the court of the Brinklow Hundred and by 1218 it had been granted a market charter. It has been considered likely that The Crescent itself represents the site of the medieval market place (Lilley 1994). By 1307 Brinklow had gained the status of a borough and was a small market town (Lilley 1994, 54-5). However, the last record of a burgage within the borough, a plot of land held under

- burgage tenure, is in a deed of 1473 (Mark Booth, pers. comm., SBT DR 10/106). This probably represents the last few years of the borough. The market is not mentioned by Dugdale in his 1656 history of Warwickshire and had probably died out.
- 3.6 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).
- 3.7 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).
- 3.8 An archaeological watching brief at No 29 The Crescent (EWA 6738) found a relatively large amount of pottery dating from the 12th-14th centuries, but no features (MWA 8743), while observation at 44 and 46 The Crescent recorded only post-medieval features it did also recover a fragment of 14th/15th century floor tile and pottery dating from the late 15th/16th century up to the 20th century (EWA 7650).
- 3.9 Archaeological recording between 28 and 30 Broad Street (EWA 6807) revealed a probable property boundary ditch, but no evidence of medieval structures (MWA 8792). An archaeological watching brief carried out at The Church Hall, Broad Street in 2009 did not record any significant archaeological features, finds or deposits (EWA 9453). Medieval pottery was found during excavations at 'The Motte' Eil Lane (MWA 19167, EWA 10206).
- 3.10 The village expanded to the south-west in the post-medieval period. Archaeological recording at The Dun Cow in 2003 found 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.

- 3.11 The earliest map of the area dates to 1793 (WRO CR 2026/24) and shows the property along the street frontage and the former canal to the rear. There are no buildings within the area of the new development. There are none shown on the parish map of Brinklow of 1838 (WRO Z 262 (L)) or the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 (Landmark 2003, Fig 2) when the development site is depicted as an orchard.
- 3.12 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).
- 3.13 The site lies to the rear of Tudor House, a Grade II listed building (National Heritage List for England number 1233433) forming part of a large timber framed structure with jettied wings at either end, facing out on to The Crescent. The listing states that the building is of 16th-century date and it has now been split into three separate properties.
- 3.14 A single archaeological evaluation trench was excavated by Archaeology Warwickshire in December 2015 which exposed a number of medieval features including a ditch, a pit and a posthole and 12th- to 14th-century pottery (Gethin 2015). Two undated postholes may also have been medieval in origin. The features ranged from 0.05m – 0.18m deep, suggesting that there had been some horizontal truncation.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains 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.
- 4.2 A secondary aim was 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.
- 4.3 The objective of the work was a programme of controlled excavation to development formation levels, or the geological natural, whichever the higher.

- 4.4 An experienced archaeologist was made available for each day of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with Written Scheme of Investigation.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 All groundworks were observed; such works included the removal of trees, foundation and service trenches and stripping for a new driveway and garden. The removal of the topsoil was also observed across the site prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches. Following this, a period of inclement weather meant that the site was flooded for several weeks. Once trenching began it was clear that the soft ground caused construction vehicles to sink into the soil and that any shallow archaeological features were likely to have been disturbed by this (Photographs 1 and 2).

Geological Natural

- 5.2 The geological natural consisted of yellow brown clay mixed with reddish brown clay (102). This was only recorded in the foundation and service trenches (Photograph 3).
- 5.3 No medieval or earlier features were encountered. If present, the features may have been shallow like those found in the evaluation trenches and may therefore have been compromised by the soft ground.

Post-medieval/modern

- 5.4 A dark grey clay layer (105) was encountered in the service trenches that contained 19th-century pottery (not retained). Overlying this was a brick yard surface (104), likely to date to the 20th century, which was overlain by modern gravel (104).
- 5.5 A dark greyish brown silty clay layer of cultivation soil (101/201) overlay the natural clay and was in turn overlain by very dark greyish brown clay loam topsoil (100/200).
- 5.6 Layer 101 produced eleven sherds of medieval pottery dating from the 13th century to the 14th/15th century and two further medieval fragments were recovered from the spoilheap. The topsoil produced nine fragments of pottery of 18th- and 19th-century date.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 A total of thirteen sherds of medieval pottery were recovered during the watching brief. Although features of this date were not observed in the foundation or service trenches, if they were similar to those found during the evaluation phase, they were quite shallow and would have been removed by machinery traversing the soft ground after the period of flooding.
- 6.2 Substantial archaeological features, such as walls, or stone surfaces were not present on the site. This is probably consistent with the area being to the rear of the street frontage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr David Gordon for commissioning the work.

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1. General shot of the site



2. Foundation trench section



3. Service trench

APPENDICES

A Table of contexts

Context	Description	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
100	Black very dark grey loam		0.25- 0.30	Topsoil
101	Brownish grey silty clay			Layer, over all foundation trenches, sherds of medieval pottery recovered
102	Yellow brown clay mixed with reddish brown clay			Geological natural
103	Modern gravel mixed with Type 1 stone		0.12- 0.45	Modern gravel layer
104	Yard surface single course of "Stanley Brick Nuneaton" and "Rushcliffe Notts Baldwin brick" of various sizes			Very late 19th-century probably 20th-century brick yard surface
105	Very dark grey clay with brick fragments, roof tiles and 19th century pottery		0.10- 0.15	Layer, possibly 19th century.
200	Black loam with very occasional small pebbles		0.30- 0.38	Topsoil layer with 18th- and 19th-century pottery. Located in new driveway area
201	Yellowish brown clay loam with frequent flecks of charcoal and occasional small pebbles			Layer. Located in new driveway area.

B Table of Finds

Context	Type	Number	Comment
100	Pottery	9	18th and 19th century, 1 white salt-glazed fragment (STE03), 1720-1780, 1 hand painted Pearlware (PLW), late 18th/19thC, 2 black-glazed coarseware pancheon rims 18thC, 1 creamware (CRW), 1 Mocha (MO), 3 MGW including oval jug fragment with pattern registration of 1884 (Rd No 2959)
100	Clay pipe	1	Stem
101	Pottery	11	13th-14th/15th century, 2 Chilvers Coton A (WW01 and WW01.3) late 13thC, 2 reduced ware RS01 13th/14thC, 2 Canon Park Ware (SQ231) 13thC, 1 Potters Marston (STR20) 13thC, 2 Chilvers Coton C (SQ30) 14th/15thC, 2 small abraded oxidised sherds 13th/14thC
U/S	Pottery	2	13th/14th-century oxidised sherds

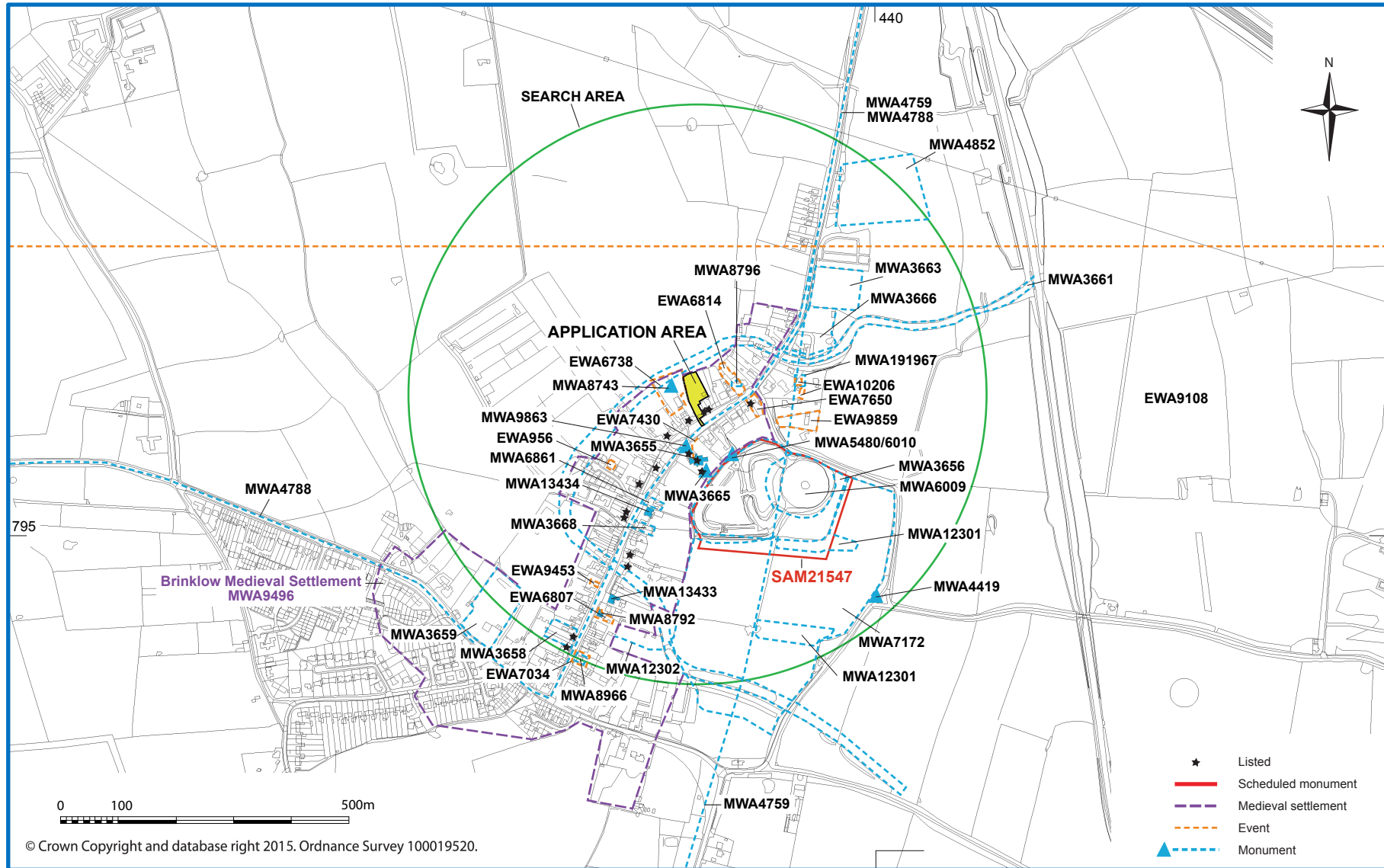


Fig1: Location of application area and Historic Environment information

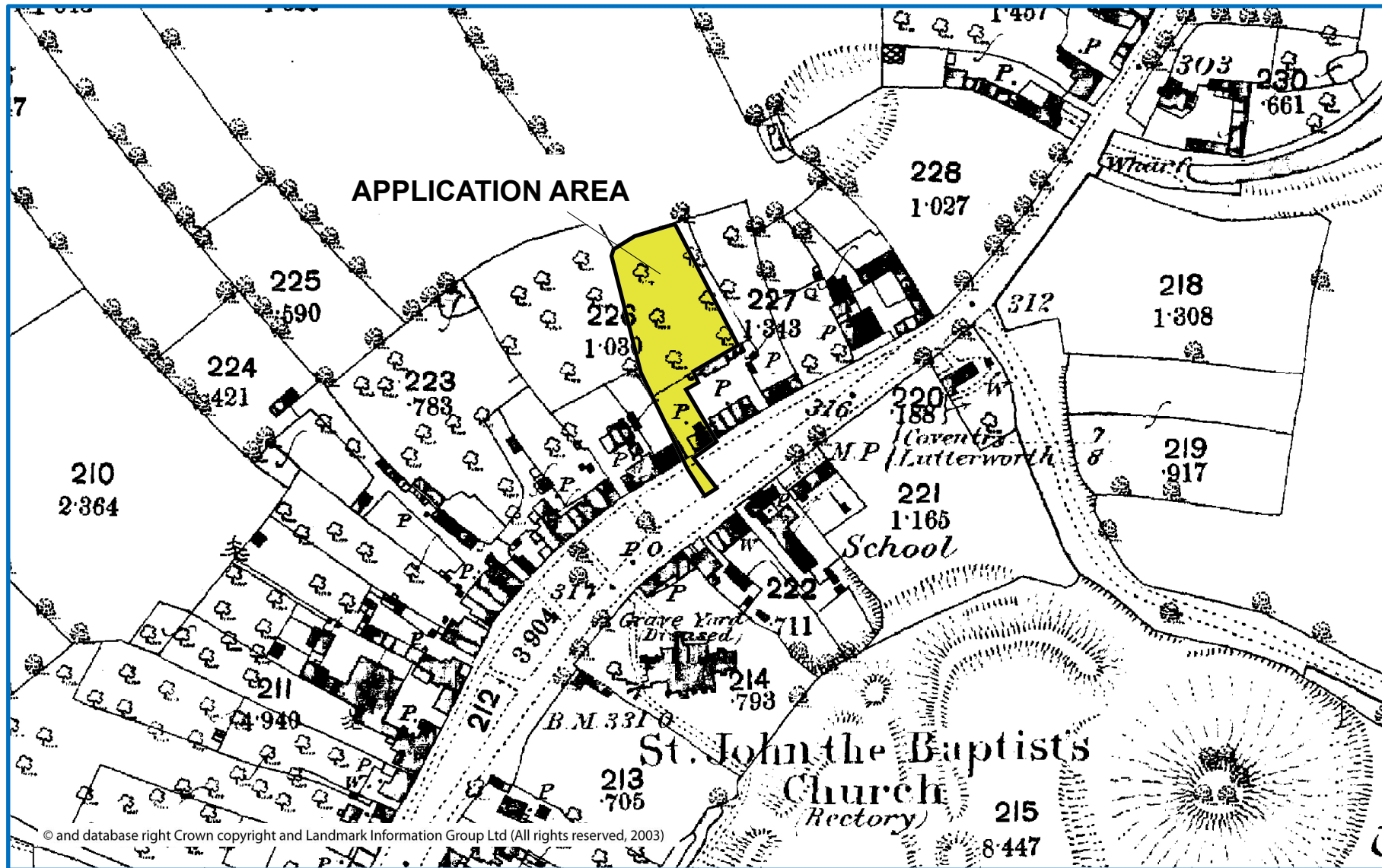


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

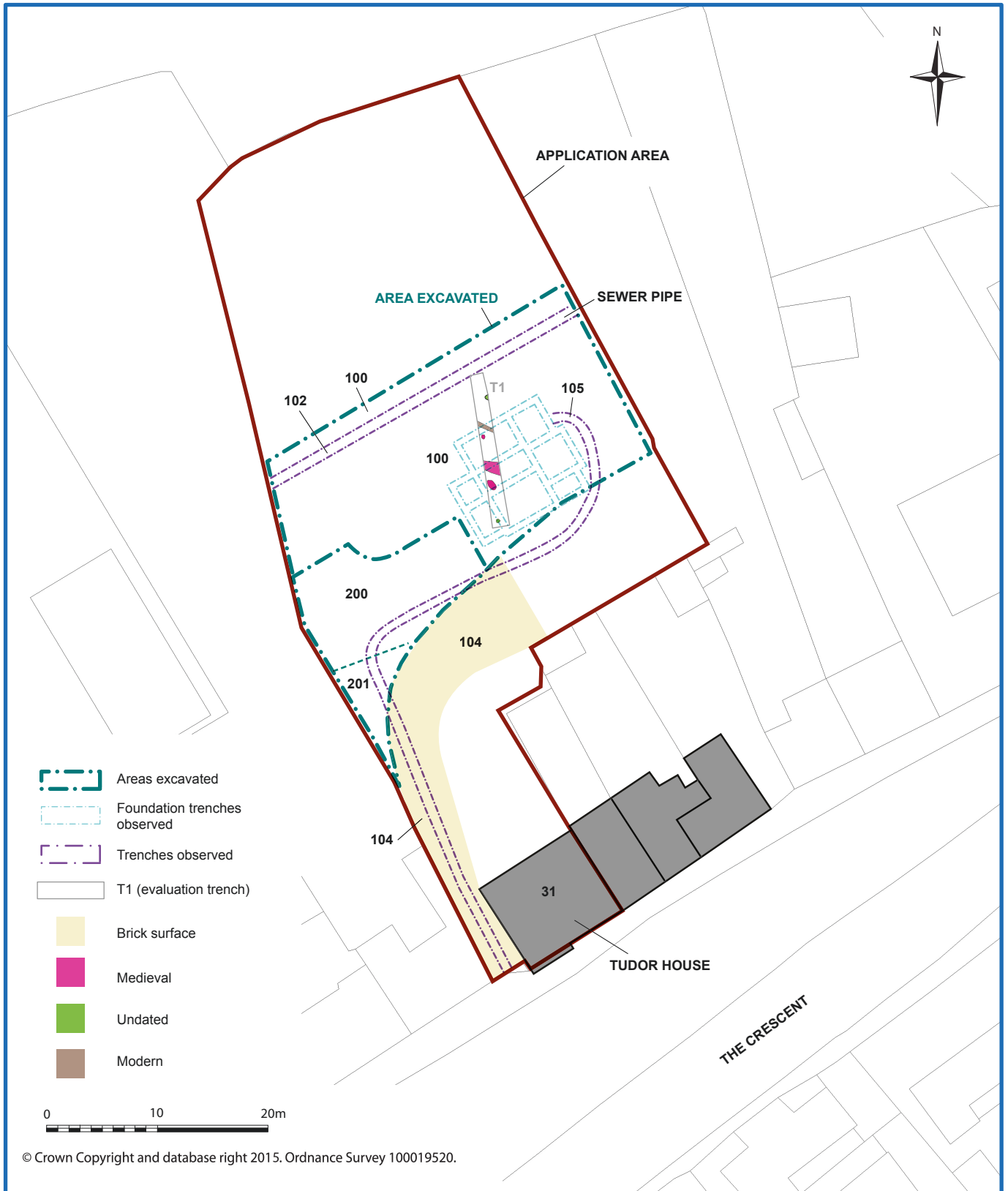


Fig 3: Location of excavated areas and observed trenches