

3, The Crescent Brinklow Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



understanding heritage matters

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

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Planning Authority: Rugby Borough Council
Planning Archaeologist: John Robinson, Warwickshire
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, consisting of two trial trenches, was undertaken on behalf of Louise Thornhill in advance of the construction of a new dwelling and garage in an area likely to include medieval settlement.

Two medieval ditches and two pits were exposed within the trenches although only a small amount of medieval finds were recovered from them. They were each overlain by a probable cultivation layer. No finds were recovered from this layer which tends to suggest that the trenches were set back from the main focus of medieval settlement.

Two brick wall foundations and a large pit can be associated with a building complex, probably a candle factory, depicted on 19th century mapping. The demolition of these structures had significantly raised the ground level above the medieval deposits.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Rugby Borough Council for the construction of a new dwelling and garage to the rear of no 3, The Crescent, Brinklow, Rugby, CV23 0LG.
- 1.2 It is a condition of the planning permission that the applicant secures 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. This was carried out in January 2017.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code BK16.

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is located on the western side of The Crescent to the rear of No 3 in what is currently a small paddock. The site is centred around National Grid Reference SP 4357 7963 (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 possible evidence for human activity in the area is 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 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 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) 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, 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 large open space that consists of the modern main street and 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, Warwickshire Museum 1999), 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 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).

Medieval pottery was found during excavations at 'The Motte' Ell 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) where the development site was 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 An archaeological evaluation 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 house with jettied wings at either end, uncovered a medieval ditch, pit and posthole long with a relatively large amount of medieval pottery.
- 3.14 The site lies to the rear of number 3, The Crescent. This is one of a row of timber-framed cottages, probably originally divided into four. The framing is very square and is infilled with brick nogging, however, within number 3 some wattle and daub and an original very small wooden window frame do survive and imply a date in the second half of the 17th century. The property is not Listed.

Further HER records for Brinklow:

Monuments

MWA 3658	Early 18th century house (National Heritage List for England number 1299534)
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
MWA 13434	Raven public house

Events

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

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the evaluation was to determine if there were 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.
- 4.4 The trenches were opened up by a JCB type excavator fitted with a 1.60m wide toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and other plough soils were removed under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist until either the top of archaeological remains or geological natural was reached.

5 RESULTS

Trench 1

- 5.1 The geological natural consisted of brownish yellow clay (104) and was encountered at between 92.01m and 92.39m above Ordnance Datum, over 1.20m below the existing ground level.
- 5.3 The natural was cut by two medieval ditches. Ditch 109 was aligned NNE/SSW and ditch 107 was aligned at right angles. Both features were filled with greyish brown silty clay soil (108 and 110) which yielded sherds of 13th to 14th century pottery.
- 5.4 Overlying the ditches was a 0.50m layer of yellowish brown clay loam (103). No finds were recovered from this layer but its general homogeneity is suggestive of agricultural or horticultural build-up.
- 5.5 Layer 103 was overlain by a mixed yellow brown clay layer (102) that contained brick fragments and likely associated with a fragment of brick foundation (106). It was in turn overlain by a layer of black ash with bricks and plastic (101) and modern topsoil (100). At the northern end of the trench was a large modern pit containing bricks (111). This was cut through layer 103 and was deeper than the base of the trench and clearly extended to the north. It was filled by re-deposited brownish yellow clay (112) which contained fragments of 19th century brick.

Trench 2

- 5.6 The geological natural consisted of yellow clay (205) which was encountered at 92.87m above Ordnance Datum, some 1.1m below the current ground level.
- 5.7 At the west end of the trench was a large pit (208) which contained grey clay. Animal bone was recovered and it is thought likely that this is a medieval feature. A small pit cut (210) to the east yielded a sherd of medieval pottery.
- 5.8 Both medieval pits were cut by the construction trench, 206, for brick wall foundation 207. This foundation was up to 0.46m wide and included fragments of Lias limestone. The wall cut through, or was butted by, two different layers of soil. To its east was a red clay layer (203) and to its west was a mixed brown and yellowish

brown silty clay with occasional small to medium limestone frags (204). These were overlaid by a thick deposit of very dark greyish brown silty clay with large amount of ash and occasional brick fragments (202).

- 5.9 Brownish yellow silty clay containing occasional small pebbles and brick fragments (201) was covered by up to 0.25m of topsoil (200).

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation has established that some archaeological deposits survive on the site. This includes two medieval ditches and possibly two pits.
- 6.2 Ditch 107 is aligned at right angles to the street frontage and ditch 109 parallel to it. This arrangement strongly suggests they form part of an early plot boundary system. Such a system may have been laid out by the lord of the manor around the time of the granting of the market charter (in 1218). The two possible medieval pits exposed in Trench 2 might be associated with activity in an adjacent plot.
- 6.3 The medieval features were buried beneath a thick layer of gardening or horticultural soil. The absence of medieval finds from this layer tends to suggest that the trenches were not positioned near to any focal points of medieval settlement and could be taken to imply that the plots were never entirely developed.
- 6.4 The brick foundation in Trench 1 aligns with a building depicted on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887. This would have formed part of a yard attached to the west side of larger complex of buildings, probably associated with a candle factory (information supplied by owners). The main complex of these buildings is depicted on a map of 1838 when the building in Trench 1 is not depicted. A further brick and stone foundation exposed in Trench 2 also matches the position of a building shown on the 1887 map and on the 1838 map and is therefore probably somewhat earlier than the wall in Trench 1.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Mr and Mrs Thornhill for their kindness and interest during the evaluation.

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WRO Z 262 (L) *Map of the Parish of Brinklow, William Phillips, 1838*, Warwickshire County Record Office

Ordnance Survey 1887 *First Edition 1:2500 map, Warwickshire Sheet 41.5*.

Ordnance Survey 1905 *Second Edition 1:2500 map, Warwickshire Sheet 41.5*.

APPENDICES

A Table of contexts

Trench	Context	Description	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	100	Brown clay loam		0.26	Topsoil
1	101	Very dark greyish brown silty clay with large amount of ash, some brick, metal and plastic		0.42	Layer
1	102	Mixed yellowish brown clay with occasional brick fragments		0.19	Layer
1	103	Yellowish brown clay loam		0.50	Layer
1	104	Brownish yellow silty clay			Geological natural
1	105	Foundation cut		0.15- 0.20	For 19th century wall (106)
1	106	Brick wall with sandstone foundation course		0.40- 0.45	19th century
1	107	Ditch		0.90	13-14th century
1	108	Ditch fill (of 107)		0.41	13-14th century
1	109	Ditch		0.80	13-14th century
1	110	Ditch fill (of 109), Yellowish brown silty clay		0.29	13-14th century
1	111	Large pit, only partly within trench		Over 0.4 wide	Probably 19th century
1	112	Pit fill (of 111)		Over 0.47 deep	Yellow clay with fragments of 19th century brick
2	200	Brown clay loam		0.25	Topsoil
2	201	Brownish yellow clay		0.20	19th century
2	202	Very dark greyish brown silty clay with large amount of ash and occasional bricks		0.30	Geological natural
2	203	Red clay on east side of wall		0.40	Layer

		207			
2	204	Mixed brown and yellowish brown silty clay with occasional small to medium limestone frags		0.35	Layer
2	205	Brownish yellow clay			Geological natural
2	206	Foundation cut for wall 207		0.58	
2	207	Brick wall foundation with occasional limestone fragments		0.46	
2	208	Pit, large and irregular			Probably medieval
2	209	Pit fill (of 208), grey silty clay with a fragment of ceramic roof tile and occasional animal bone		Over 0.30	Probably medieval
2	210	Pit, small		0.75m wide	<i>Circa</i> 1250-1300, truncated by wall 207
2	211	Pit fill (of 210), greyish brown silty clay. One sherd of medieval pottery			Unexcavated, <i>Circa</i> 1250-1300

B Table of Finds

Context	Type	Number	Comments
108	Pottery	3	3 x SQ203 Coventry Sandy A Ware, 13th to 14th century
110	Pottery	4	1 x SQ203 Coventry Sandy A Ware, 1 x SQ01 Sandy Coarse ware, 2 x RS02 Warwickshire grey ware, likely date range from the 13th to the 14th century
110	A. bone	1	1 burnt fragment, medieval
209	Roof tile	1	Hand-made, probably medieval
209	A. bone	2	Probably medieval
211	Pottery	1	WW01 Chilvers Coton A ware circa 1250-1300



1. Evaluation in relation to medieval church



2. Trench 1



3. Brick foundation 106



4. Trench 2

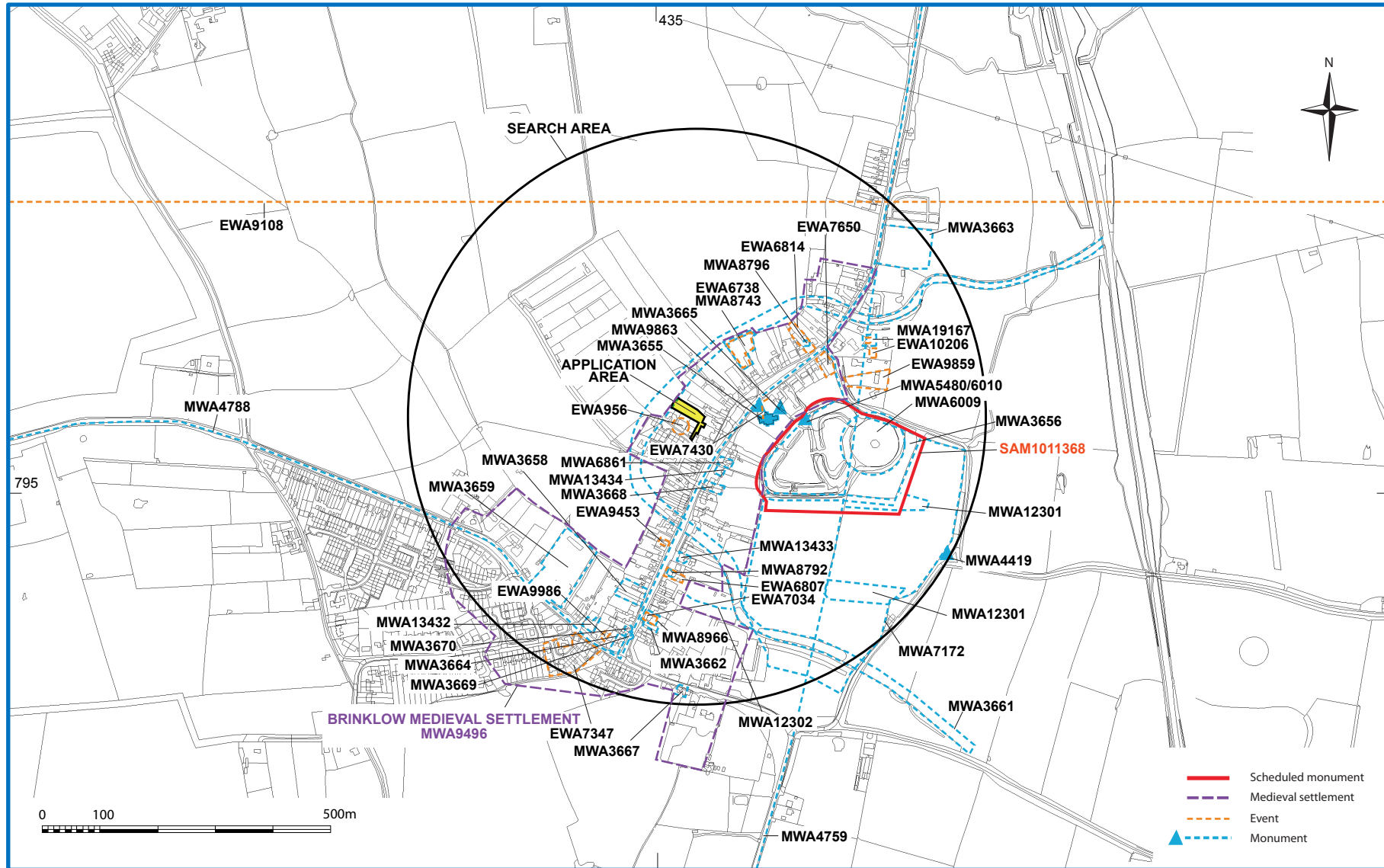


Fig 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment information

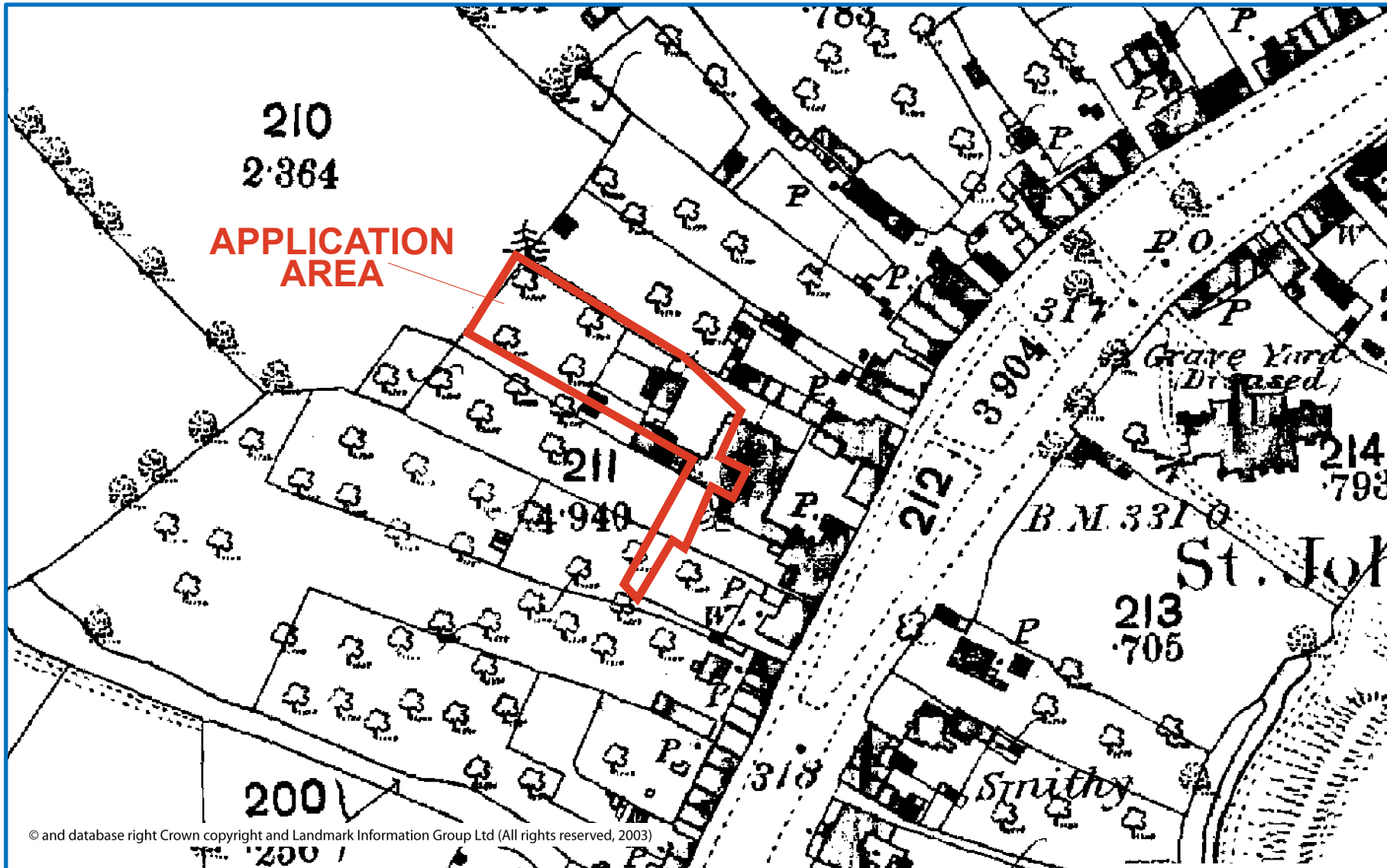


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

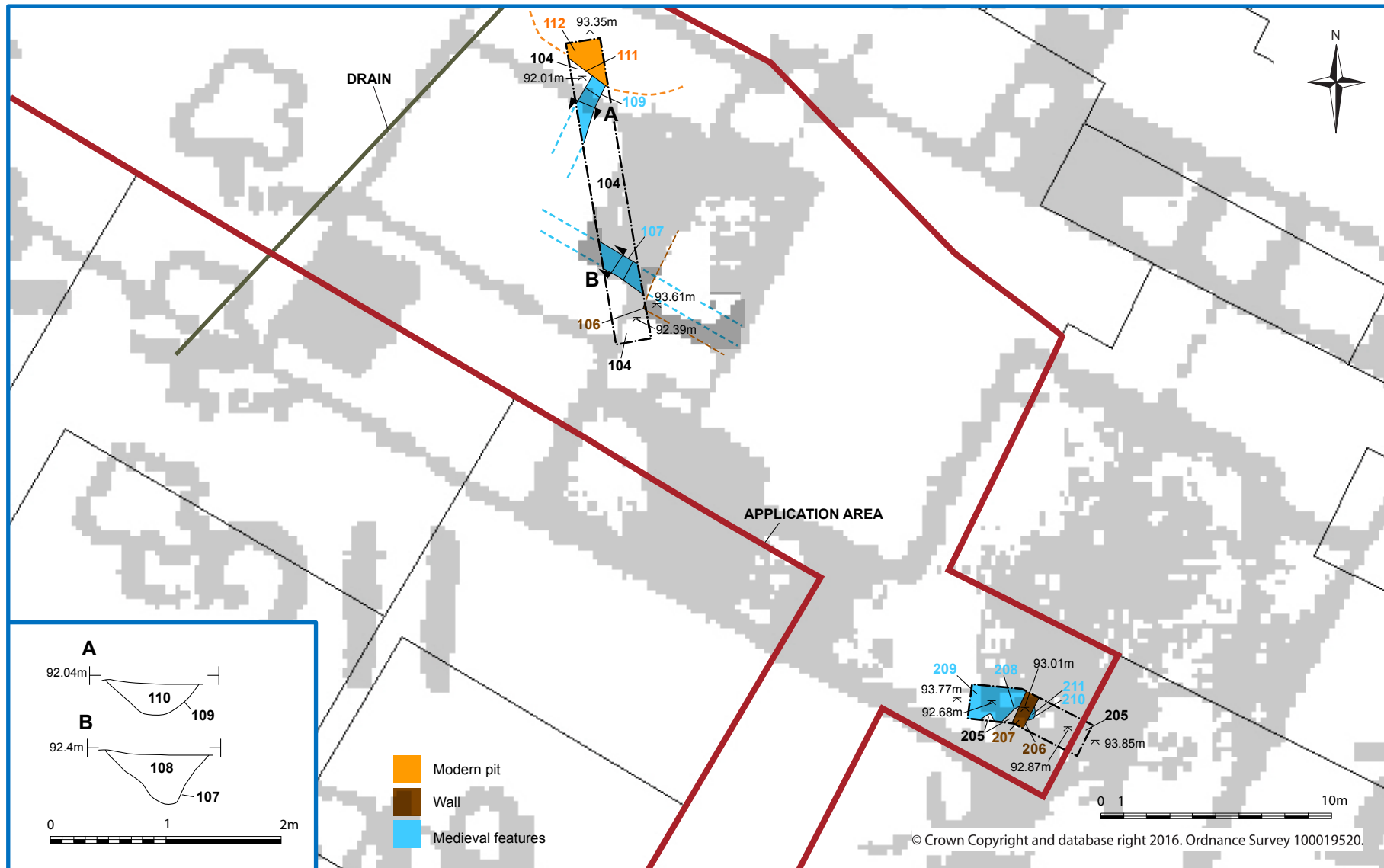


Fig 3: Location of excavated trenches and sections A and B, with 1887 First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping