

Howcombe Lane Napton-on-the-Hill Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1895

NOVEMBER 2018



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Howcombe Lane, Napton-on-the-Hill
Commissioned by: Lorraine Goring @ Noralle Traditional Country
Homes Limited
Site Code: NH18
Planning Reference: 15/04242/FUL
Planning Authority: Stratford-on-Avon
National Grid Reference: SP 4620 6104
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation comprising a single trial trench was carried out on behalf of *Noralle Traditional Country Homes Limited in advance of development in an area considered likely to contain medieval settlement associated with the village of Napton-on-the-Hill.*

Geological natural clay was exposed in the trench and a solitary undated pit or hollow which contained animal bone was recorded cutting the natural. The undated pit or hollow is difficult to interpret but as it was generally difficult to distinguish the fill from the older plough zone (102) it is possibly related to post-medieval activity.

A single sherd of St Neot's type medieval pottery was recovered from the older plough zone (102). This is a fairly typical find around medieval settlements and does not imply occupation of the site at that date.

Archaeology Warwickshire are confident that the proposed development is unlikely to impact on any significant archaeological remains and no further mitigation is necessary.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the erection of a new dwelling adjacent to a Nissen Hut, Howcombe Lane, Napton-on-the-Hill, Warwickshire, CV47 8NX.
- 1.2 It is a condition of the planning permission that the applicant secures the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been approved by the Planning Authority.
- 1.3 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the planning authority.
- 1.4 This report presents the results of the evaluation and has been compiled in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists standards and guidelines for archaeological evaluation (2014)

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The application area is centred on National Grid Reference SP 4620 6104 in the village of Napton-on-the-Hill, in the parish of the same name. The site is located on the western side of Howcombe Lane, on the western edge of the village. A corrugated iron Nissen hut is located to the north of the proposed new dwelling and is to be removed as part of the development.

- 2.2 The underlying bedrock geology of the site is Charmouth mudstone (British Geological Survey 2018).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric/Roman

- 3.1 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area is a Neolithic (c.4000BC-2200BC) polished flint axe found on the fringes of the village, to the west of the development site (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record MWA 4458), although this need not relate to settlement of this date.
- 3.2 Occasional sherds of Roman pottery have been uncovered in Napton-on-the-Hill which may indicate some activity during this period in the area, although not yet characterised (MWA 30016, MWA 13166, EWA 10539, EWA 7116/MWA 9188).

Medieval

- 3.3 At the time of Domesday Book (1086) Napton, then Neptone, had a population that can be estimated at 106 people (VCH 1904, 314). Napton also had its own priest in 1086, suggesting the presence of an early church in the village. The existing Church of St Lawrence (MWA 736, National Heritage List for England no. 1024444) dates from the 12th century
- 3.4 The village of Napton-on-the-Hill is polyfocal and multi-nuclear. There are three areas of settlement and the presumed original core area located to the south of the Church of St Lawrence (MWA 9060) and outlying settlements at Butt Hill and Chapel Green (MWA 744, MWA 9481, MWA 6212, MWA 6214). The latter gets its name from a medieval chapel site (MWA 740). The development site may have been on the western edge of the medieval settlement however by the time of the First Ordnance Survey map in 1887 (1:2500, Landmark 2003) there are no surviving boundaries to indicate this.
- 3.5 There is evidence in Napton-on-the-Hill for shrunken medieval settlement remains (MWA 19247, MWA 19252, MWA 8251). Immediately to the south of the church is an area of earthworks (MWA 748). These remain undated but could be linked to the earthworks found slightly further to the south (MWA 8251), which represent a deserted part of the medieval village. An archaeological observation at School Hill identified another possible area of deserted settlement in the form of a stone-lined well and wall foundations (MWA 8727 and EWA 6714). At Godson Lane, excavations

of extant earthworks revealed 12th and 13th century settlement activity (MWA 30014). A medieval windmill is believed to have existed to the north (MWA 859).

- 3.6 Ridge and furrow remains around Napton-on-the Hill are evidence of the medieval open fields (MWA 30230, MWA 30153). Their survival is very good in places such as to the north of the village and ridge and furrow earthworks are visible in the adjacent field to the site. The extent of ridge and furrow around the village was subject to an assessment of its condition and significance. The project determined it to be of national importance (EWA 10041).

Post-Medieval

- 3.7 Human burials were found in Chapel Green and were likely to have been associated with the Chapel (MWA 6213). The 18th-century Napton Windmill was restored in the 20th century (MWA 854, NHLE no. 1185610). Building occupied from the 18th century until perhaps 20th century (MWA 30013) survives as an earthwork and was excavated in 2013 (EWA 10552).
- 3.8 The Napton Brickworks were situated to the north of the development site (MWA 3779). They operated from the 19th century until the 1970s. Quarrying was associated with the brickworks and the old workings were later used by the Home Guard for firing practice in WWII (MWA 30440). Further quarrying activity on higher ground is associated with stone extraction (MWA 853). The quarrying/extraction activity seems to have been limited to the north of the village. Other WWII remains include the Royal Observer Corps (ROC) Aircraft Observer Post on Windmill Hill (MWA 9568). The Nissen hut remains on the site may be related to some of this activity.
- 3.9 The Nissen hut is shown on 1955 Ordnance Survey maps (*Old-maps.co.uk*) and a further building is visible in the area of the new development. Remains of this building are visible on aerial photographs from 2000 onwards (Google Earth 2000).
- 3.10 Rose Cottage to the south of the development is a Grade II Listed ironstone cottage dating from the 17th century (NHLE no. 1374959). Ironstone dwellings are typical of the village and there are many Listed examples, although Napton does not have a conservation area.

3.11 Other archaeological records in the area:-

MONUMENT	DESCRIPTION	DATE
MWA 20425	Brick arch bridge over stream	19 th century
MWA 20066	Single span brick bridge	Post-medieval

3.12 Archaeological fieldwork has shown that the medieval settlement did not extend to the south-west of the village in Dog Lane (EWA 10159). Further fieldwork to the south of the village has not revealed any archaeological remains (EWA 3595, EWA 3300, EWA 7606, EWA 7646). However previous excavations along Howcombe Lane have uncovered medieval and post-medieval archaeological features (EWA 10107, EWA 7605).

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 these 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 A single, 12m long by 1.60m wide, trench was opened up using a 360° excavator fitted with a 1m wide toothless ditching bucket, which was used to excavate the full width of the trench in two spits.
- 4.5 Topsoil, former ploughsoils and demonstrably modern overburden such as a concrete slab were removed by the machine using the toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Ground reduction was then undertaken in shallow spits until the potential archaeological horizon, or the geological natural was reached (whichever the higher). Excavation then continued by hand.

5 RESULTS

Geological Natural

- 5.1 The uppermost natural was yellowish brown clay with a light yellowish grey mottling (103).

Deposit Sequence

- 5.2 The geology had been cut by an indistinct pit or hollow (105), but was otherwise overlain by a simple sequence of plough soils (subsoil 102 and topsoil 101). On the north-eastern side of the trench a remnant concrete slab (100) overlay a make-up deposit.

Cut Features

- 5.3 Pit 105 at the southern end of the trench was sub-circular, approximately 0.9m in diameter, albeit with indistinct edges and 0.3m deep. It was backfilled with a crumbly deposit of greyish brown silty clay which included animal bone and fired clay but was otherwise undated.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No significant archaeological deposits or finds were recorded on the site.
- 6.2 The undated pit or hollow is difficult to interpret but as it was generally difficult to distinguish the fill from the older plough zone (102) it is possibly related to post-medieval activity.
- 6.3 A single sherd of St Neot's type medieval pottery was recovered from the older plough zone (102). This is a fairly typical find around medieval settlements and does not imply occupation of the site at that date.

Recommendations

- 6.4 Archaeology Warwickshire are confident that the proposed development is unlikely to impact on any significant archaeological remains and no further mitigation is necessary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Lorraine Goring of Noralle Traditional Country Homes Limited for commissioning the work.

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1: South facing view of trench 1



2: East facing section of pit or hollow 105

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	100	Concrete slab	0.10	Concrete associated with the remains of pre-existing structure
1	101	Very dark silty loam, 0.2m thick, in places, covered by concrete floor slab extends for most of the trench, but does not extend further west.	0.20	Top soil
1	102	Grey brown silty clay with occasional sandstone fragments, animal bone and pot. Varies in thickness between 0.3-0.4m	0.3-0.4	Subsoil
1	103	Yellowish brown clay with light yellowish grey clay mottling.		Geological natural
1	104	Greyish brown silty clay, contains animal bone fragments, including sheep jaw, 2 fragments of burnt clay. Fill is ill defined, but 'crumbly' texture		Fill of 5
1	105	Sub-circular pit or hollow, edges largely unclear. Filled by (4) 0.80-1.0m diameter.		Ill defined, potentially a hollow or scoop

B List of finds

Context	Type	Quantity	Comment
2	Pottery	1	CS01 – St Neots type ware c.1100-1400
4	Animal bone		

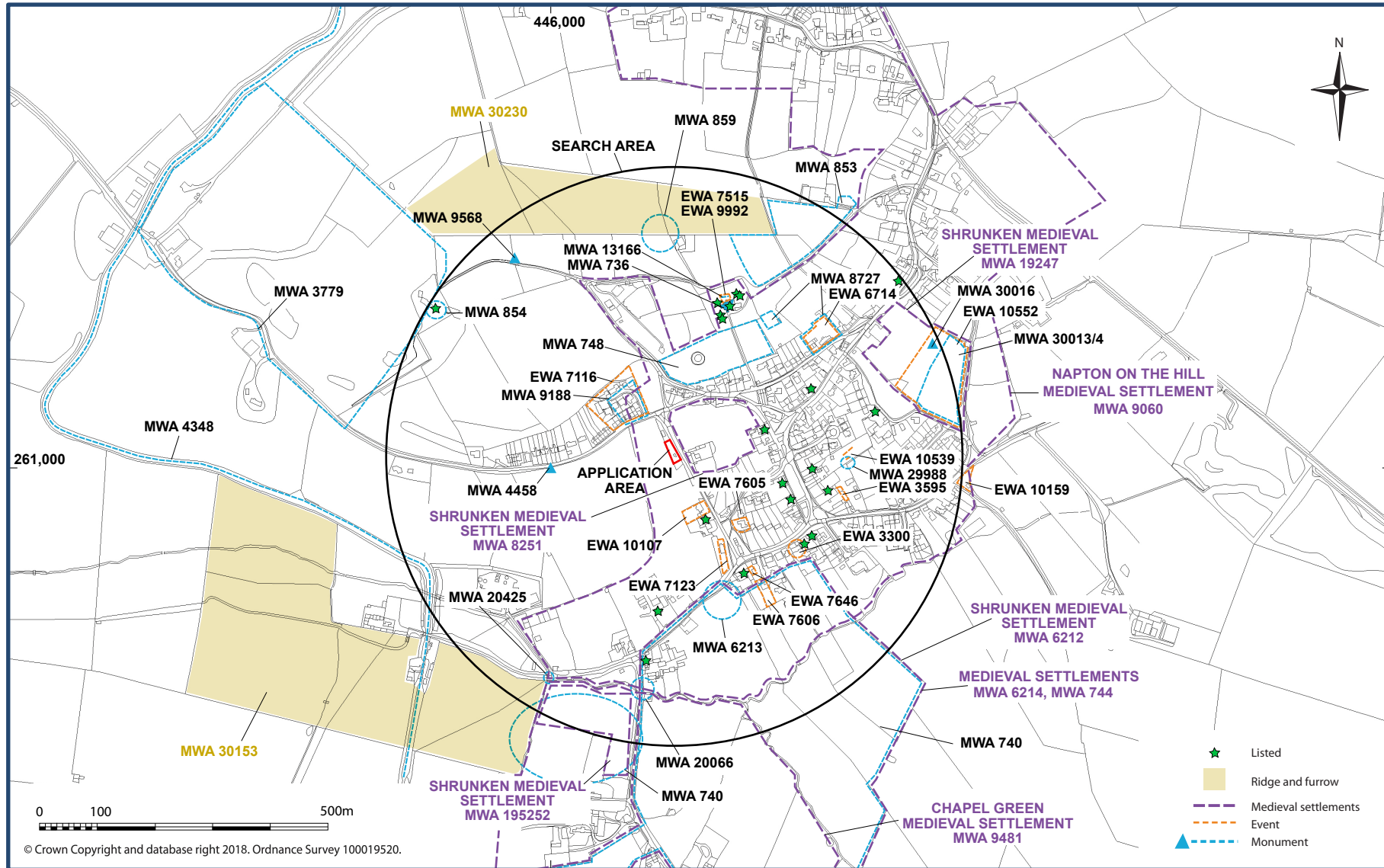


Fig 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment information

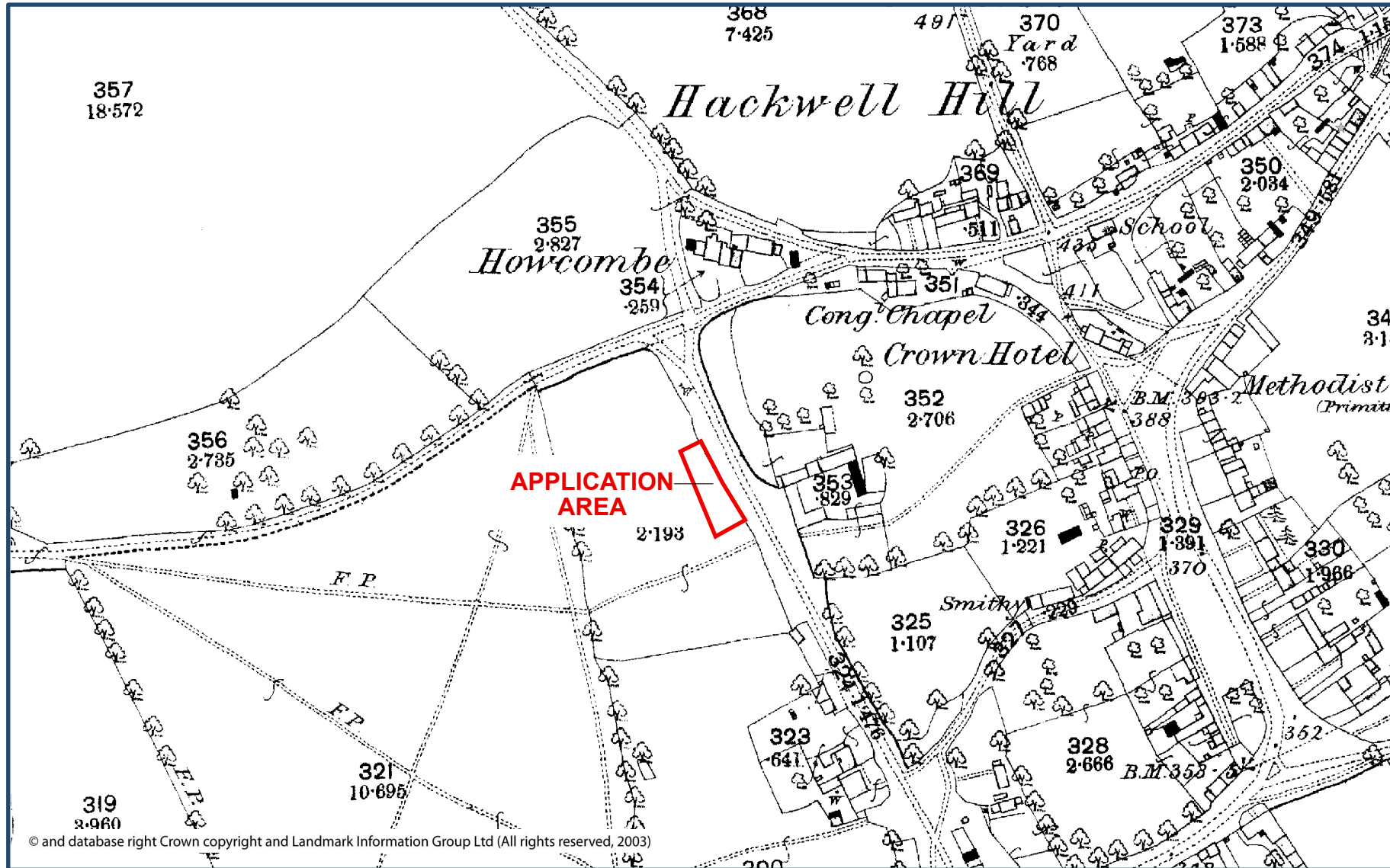


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887

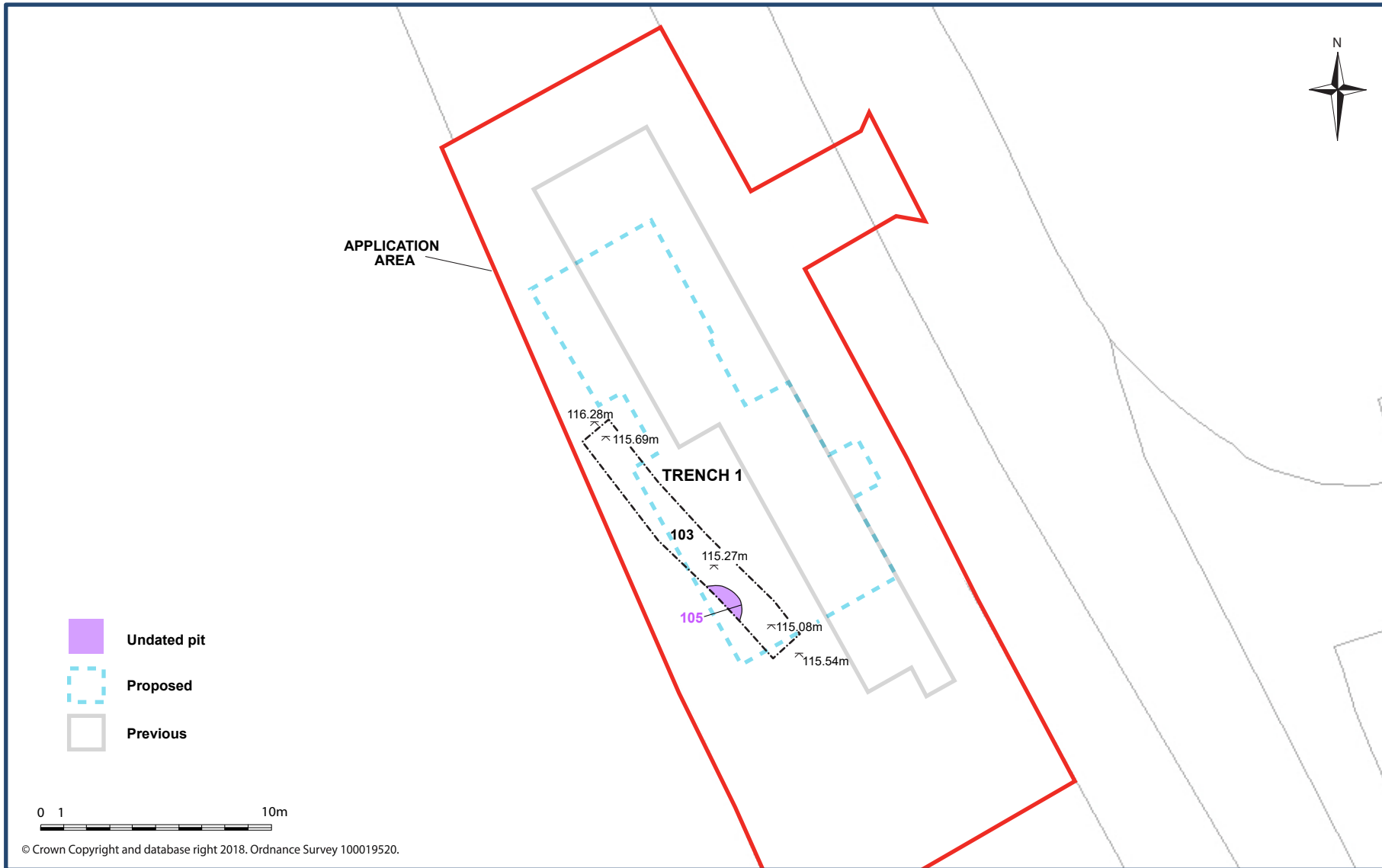


Fig 3: Location of excavated trench