

Land at the Old Forge Station Road, Salford Priors Warwickshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1966

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*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project: Land at the Old Forge, Salford Priors
Commissioned by: Paul and Ruth Rigler
Site Code: SP18
Planning Reference: 19/00266/FUL
Planning Authority: Stratford-on-Avon District Council
National Grid Reference: SP 0792 5119
Project Manager: Pete Thompson
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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, comprising three trial trenches, was carried out on behalf of Paul and Ruth Rigler within the projected extent of the medieval settlement at Salford Priors.

Natural clay interbedded with gravel was exposed in all three trenches but no significant archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.

Extensive ground disturbance was recorded at the north end of Trench 1, possibly relating to the construction of Station Road.

The absence of any medieval deposits suggests this area was not developed in the medieval period. This is corroborated by the absence of medieval finds and the significant depth of former plough soils across the site.

Archaeology Warwickshire are confident that the proposed development will not impact on any significant deposits and no mitigation is warranted.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the construction of two houses with attached garages, access and car-parking at the Old Forge, Station Road, Salford Priors (19/00266/FUL). The development site lies within an area of Medium Sensitivity defined in the Historic Environment Assessment of Local Service Villages (AOC 2012).
- 1.2 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the planning authority. The fieldwork took place on the 10th June 2019. This report presents the results of that work. The archive will consist of this report submitted to OASIS and retained in the ADS grey literature library.
- 1.3 This work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and guidance for field evaluation (2014).

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The application area is centred on National Grid Reference SP 0792 5119 in the village of Salford Priors, in the parish of the same name. The site is located on the southern side of Station road, on the eastern edge of the village and within the Conservation Area. The site is currently partially screened from the road by a belt of trees.

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

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The valley of the River Avon is known to contain many archaeological monuments of prehistoric or Roman period date, principally because the soil conditions in the valley are particularly good for showing buried sites as cropmarks during dry summers. Worked flint flakes dating from the Early Neolithic to Late Bronze Age period are recorded at Warwickshire Environment Record Monument MWA 4051.
- 3.2 To the north of School Road a cropmark site (MWA 1497) consists of enclosures, pits, ditches and a possible field system. The site is undated but at least some of it is likely to be Iron Age and/or Roman in origin. To the north of this a further undated cropmark (MWA 6357) includes enclosures and pit groups.
- 3.3 A Roman villa was partially excavated at the northern edge of the search area (MWA 5757). A number of finds from this area have been collected by metal detectorists and included and at least 11 Roman coins dating from the 3rd and 4th centuries (MWA 4052).
- 3.4 The medieval village of Salford Priors lay alongside the route from Evesham to Stratford-on-Avon, on the north side of the River Avon. The possible extent of the medieval settlement (MWA 9025), based on map, aerial photograph and earthwork evidence recorded on the HER extends into the northern part of the development site, along the frontage of Station Road.
- 3.5 A priest was mentioned at Salford Priors in 1086. The current parish church of St Matthew (MWA 1516) dates from at least the mid-12th century, with alterations and additions in the 13th, 14th, 17th and 19th centuries.
- 3.6 A watermill is recorded in Salford Priors in 1086 and one, possibly on the same site, is mentioned in 1610 (VCH 1945), on the eastern edge of the village (MWA 1510) close to Ban Brook Bridge (MWA 20149). The current bridge on this site was built in the 20th century. To the east, crossing the river Arrow, Salford Bridge was built in 1806. It is probably on the site of a bridge mentioned in 1293. A ford (MWA 8645) is recorded here in 1086 and also in a document of 710 (thought to be a medieval fake). Its position on a 'Saltway' road from the production centre of Droitwich is believed to

be the origin of the name Salford, although another contender, possibly more likely, is the site of a ford across the Avon (MWA 1493), 400m to the south-west.

- 3.7 Just to the west of the church, in a field known as ‘The Vineyard’, a number of earthworks are recorded (MWA 1537). This might be the site of a manor house as a Manor Court is recorded as being held at ‘The Vineyard’ in 1547 in a building which formerly belonged to Kenilworth abbey. Some of these earthworks seem to be gravel pits, presumably post-medieval in date, whilst a large square earthwork (MWA 12330) has the appearance of a moat. A LiDAR image of this square feature seems to show some earthworks which resemble formal planting beds within it and so another interpretation would be a formal garden (B. Gethin, pers. comm.). Some cropmarks of possible walls, just to the north-east of the church, might show the possible site of the former house.
- 3.8 Pleasure grounds (MWA 13066), a form of large garden, are recorded in association with the former vicarage. Their precise date is uncertain although it is likely to be mid-19th century to early 20th century.
- 3.9 The southern boundary of the site is the line of the former Barnt Green, Evesham and Ashchurch branch of the Midland Railway (MWA 7233). It was originally opened as the Evesham and Redditch Railway in 1863 and closed in the 1960s, the line being pulled up in 1965. The site of the former station and goods yard (MWA 1473) lay on the north side of Station Road and a quarter milepost associated with the railway is recorded to the south of Station Road (MWA 7242).
- 3.10 An archaeological evaluation on the north side of Station Road in 1993 uncovered a series of medieval gullies, some of which included pottery (MWA 7203 and EWA 888).
- 3.11 A number of other archaeological events have taken place in the immediate area. These are:

NHLE	Description
EWA 2777	An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and initial fieldwork on the route of the A435 Norton Lenchwick Bypass
EWA 7742	A geophysical survey prior to the construction of the A435 Norton Lenchwick Bypass

EWA 9009	An Archaeological Desktop Assessment and initial field inspection of the route of the A435 Norton Lenchwick Bypass
EWA 9010	A geophysical survey and evaluation trenching, Phase 2 part III of the A435 bypass works
EWA 9107	Part of the English Heritage National Mapping Project
EWA 10064	An archaeological evaluation at the Alamo Works, Station Road

Cartographic Evidence

- 3.12 There are no very early maps of Salford Priors and so those that do exist might not show the full extent of settlement at an earlier date. The development site is depicted on the 1812 Ordnance Survey two inch to one mile drawings used later to create the 1834 one inch to one mile map. Although not very detailed it does show the layout of the village at that time and indicates that in 1812 the land was part of a field immediately beyond the eastern edge of houses within the village. The same is shown slightly more clearly on the 1834 version, again with no buildings in this area. The 1887 First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Landmark 2003a) shows a narrow paddock running parallel with Station Road and associated with a small outbuilding, perhaps a stable. The Second Edition 1905 map (Landmark 2003b) shows an extra outbuilding adjacent to two small, enclosures and a third has been added by the time of the 1923 Revised Edition of the map (Landmark 2003c).

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 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.
- 4.4 The area was evaluated by means of three 5m x1.6 m trial trenches opened by a JCB fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were modified from those in the WSI due to standing trees.
- 4.5 Topsoil, former plough soils and demonstrably modern overburden were removed by an appropriate machine using a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Ground reduction was carried out in shallow spits until the uppermost archaeological horizon, or the geological natural was reached (whichever the higher).

5 RESULTS

Geological Natural

- 5.1 The geological natural across the whole site was dark reddish brown sandy clay with bands of gravel (104, 202 and 302) which was exposed at a depth of 0.96-1.52m below the current ground surface (Photos 1-3; Fig 3).

Deposit Sequence

- 5.2 The natural substrate was directly overlain by a simple sequence of plough soils; reddish brown clayey loam subsoil (103, 201 and 301) overlaid by greyish brown clayey loam topsoil (100, 200 and 300).

Modern Features

- 5.3 A large area of modern disturbance (102) was recorded at the north end of Trench 1. Its fill (101) contained fragments of tarmac, bricks and other building material.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No significant archaeological deposits or finds were recorded on the site.
- 6.2 Modern disturbance encountered in Trench 1 was likely to be associated with the construction of Station Road to the north of the site in the 1960's.
- 6.3 The absence of any medieval deposits suggests this area was not developed in the medieval period. This is corroborated by the absence of medieval finds and the significant depth of former plough soils across the site.

Recommendations

- 6.4 Archaeology Warwickshire are confident that the proposed development will not impact on any significant deposits and no mitigation is warranted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Paul and Ruth Rigler for commissioning the work.

REFERENCES

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Ordnance Survey one inch to one mile map 1834 Digital Version, <http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/maps/>, accessed February 2018



1: Trench 1, Looking SE



2: Trench 2, Looking N



3: Trench 3, Looking SW

APPENDICES

A List of contexts

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Thickness (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	100	Greyish brown clayey loam with frequent small and medium stones		0.26	Topsoil
1	101	Reddish brown clayey silt with modern building material	7m (min)	1.77 (min)	Fill of modern disturbance
1	102	Almost vertical, not fully exposed	7m (min)	1.77 (min)	Cut of modern disturbance
1	103	Reddish brown clayey loam with frequent stones		1.26	Subsoil
1	104	Dark reddish brown sandy clay with gravel			Geological natural
2	200	Greyish brown clayey loam with frequent small and medium stones		0.27	Topsoil
2	201	Reddish brown clayey loam with frequent stones		0.83	Subsoil
2	202	Dark reddish brown sandy clay with gravel			Geological natural
3	300	Greyish brown clayey loam with frequent small and medium stones		0.26	Topsoil
3	301	Reddish brown clayey silt with modern building material		0.70	Subsoil
3	302	Dark reddish brown sandy clay with gravel			Geological natural

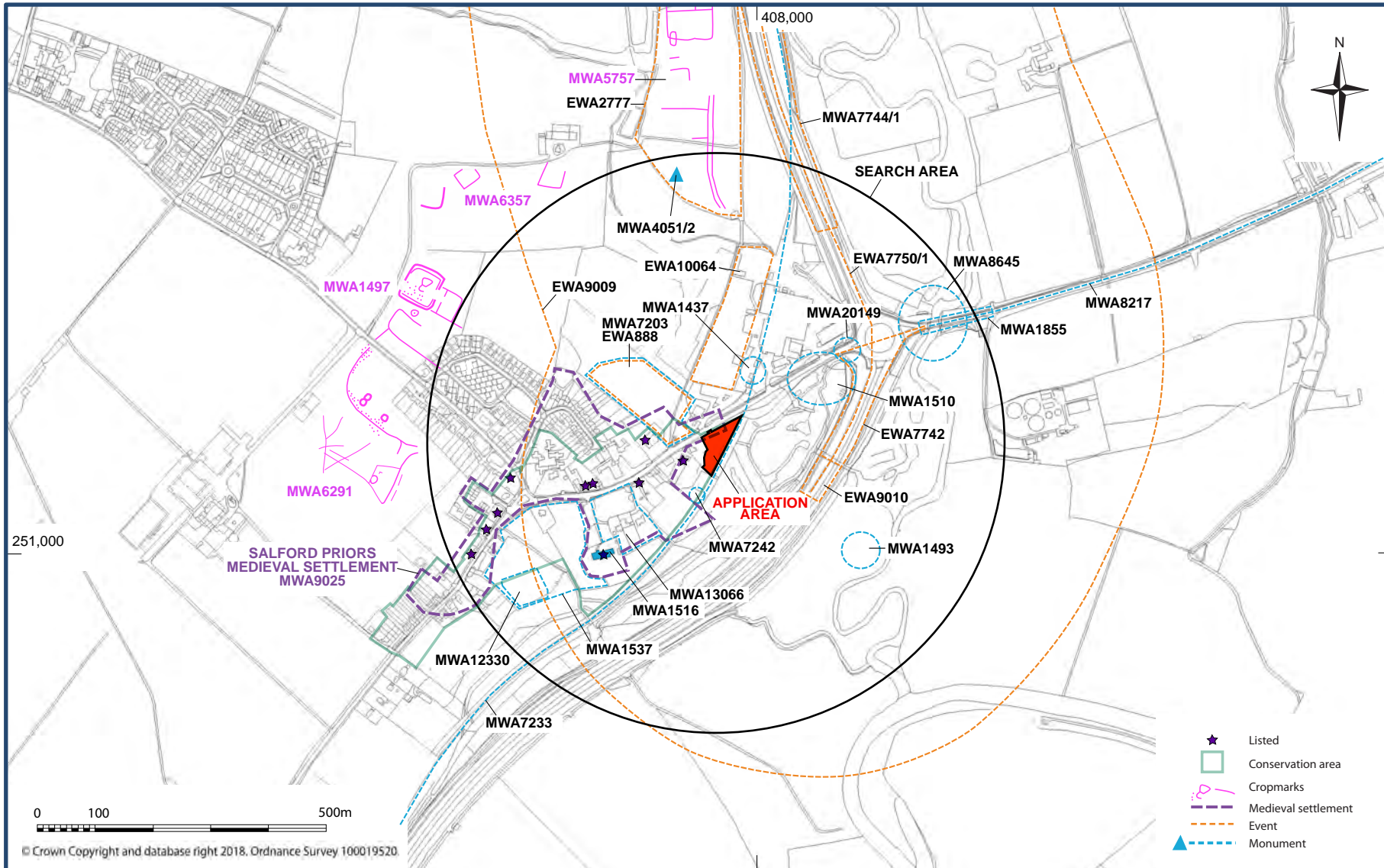
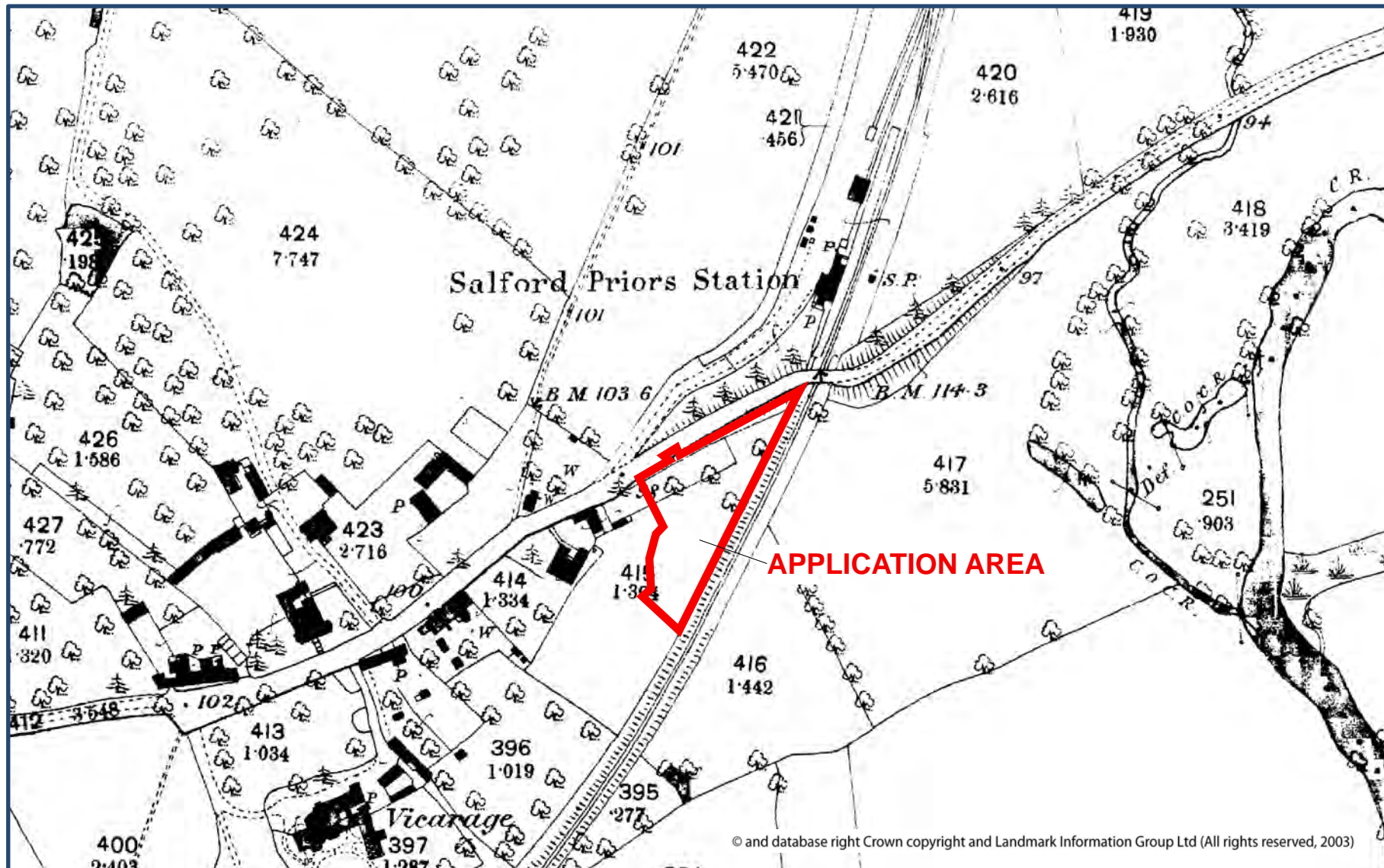


Fig 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment information



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

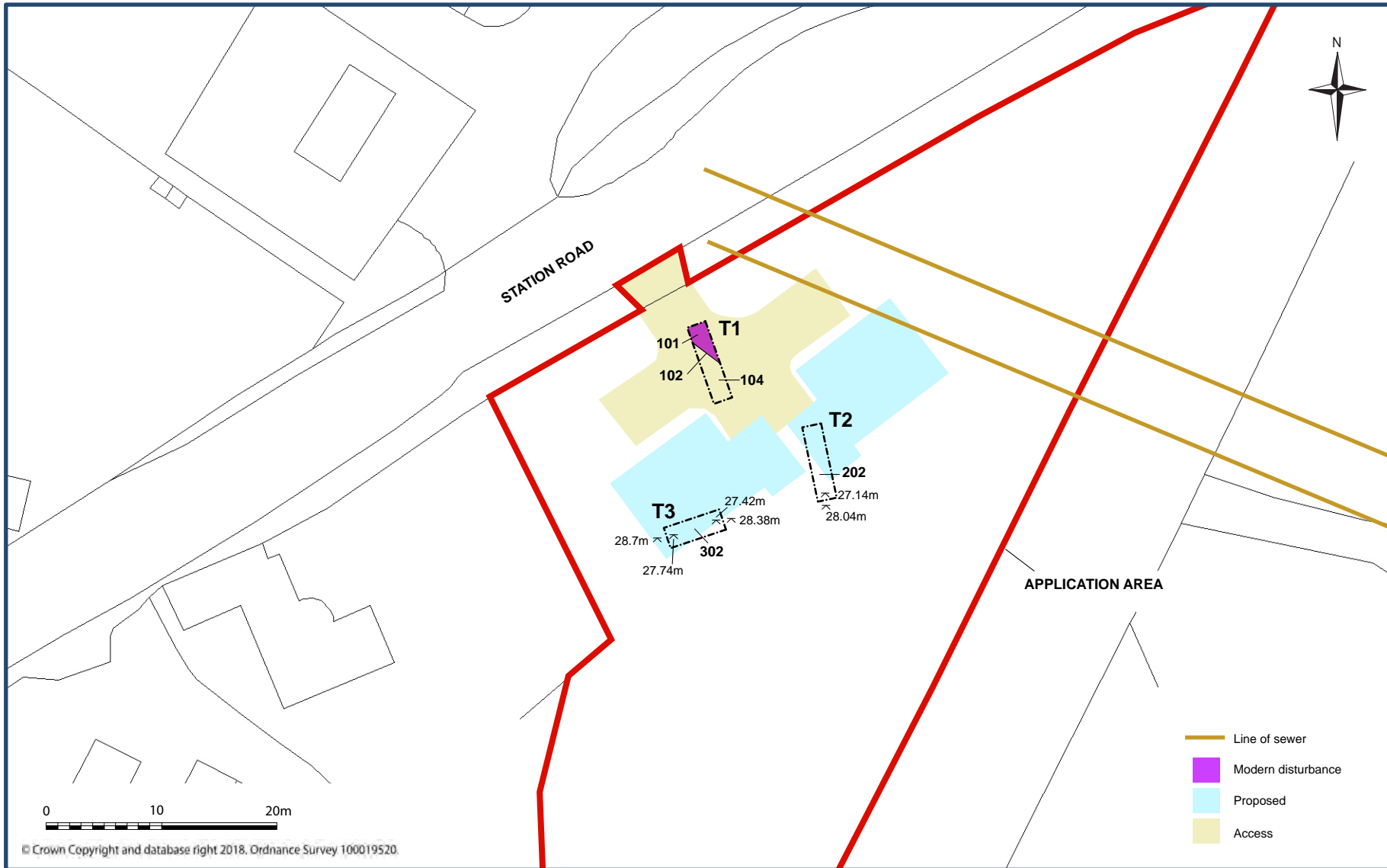


Fig 3: Location of trenches excavated