

# 41 High Street, Bidford-on-Avon Warwickshire

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 2158  
JULY 2021



*Working for  
Warwickshire*

**Project:** 41 High Street, Bidford-on-Avon  
**Commissioned by:** Bryn Wiseman  
**Site Code:** BHS21  
**Planning Reference:** 20/03636/FUL  
**Planning Authority:** Stratford District Council  
**National Grid Reference:** SP 09953 51798  
**Project Manager:** Stuart Palmer MCI fA  
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Archaeological Watching Brief, Archaeology  
Warwickshire Report 2158*

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## SUMMARY

*A watching brief was carried out during ground reductions and underpinning in advance of a new single-storey garden room to the rear of a 17th-century cottage on behalf of Bryn Wiseman.*

*A small quantity of 15th/16th- to 18th-century pottery and early 19th-century material was recovered from a gravel layer beneath a blue lias floor. The floor is most likely from a 19th century wing and was constructed in Lias ashlar and included a flagstone floor. The floor was heavily sooted at one end and included brick repairs suggesting the wing may have been used for coal storage and perhaps as a scullery. It was demolished in the 1960s.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the creation of a single storey garden room to the rear of 41 High Street, Bidford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 6BQ (Planning ref. 20/03636/FUL).
- 1.2 The development site lies within an area of archaeological potential, in the historic core of Bidford-on-Avon, therefore Stratford-on-Avon District Council required that the application be accompanied by an assessment of the potential for the proposals to impact on archaeological remains. Archaeology Warwickshire's assessment, carried out in March 2021, suggested there was high potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site but that the proposals were of insufficient scale to warrant an evaluation and advised that a watching brief be carried out as a condition of planning permission (Bradbury 2021).
- 1.3 Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to carry out the watching brief, which took place between April and May 2021 and this report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code BHS21. The work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidelines (2020).

## 2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is centred on National Grid Reference SP 09953 51798 in the town of Bidford-on-Avon. Number 41 is a probable 17th-century cottage on the south side of the High Street, terraced within a row of residential and commercial properties. It lies c.30m north of the River Avon to which the rear garden slopes down towards.
  
- 2.2 The British Geological Society (BGS 2020) records the solid geology of the site as Mercia Mudstone Group, with superficial deposits of Breftord Sand and Gravel Member.

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The baseline archaeological data was reported in the assessment (Bradbury 2021) and was based on material garnered from a number of sources including the Warwickshire Historic Environment Record (HER), mapping of the site from the late 19th century as well as published and unpublished books and reports. The HER search was based on a 500m radius from the centre of the site (the study area). The relevant aspects are summarised below.

#### Previous archaeological investigations

3.2 No archaeological investigations have taken place within the site but 37 investigations are recorded from within the study area. Notably, on the north side of High Street various excavations, evaluations and watching briefs have recorded settlement or funerary remains dating from the Roman through to the post-medieval period (EWA1088, EWA3237, EWA3150, EWA7526, EWA9791, EWA9792, EWA9794).

3.3 The south side of the High Street, in proximity to the site, has not been as intensively investigated although in 1976 an archaeological evaluation c.50m east of the site (EWA3037) recorded medieval remains including possible building remains, pits, ditches and a cultivation layer as well as remains of post-medieval outbuildings.

3.4 The earliest evidence for human activity in the area is a Middle Palaeolithic flint artefact (MWA6131), recorded 50m north of the site. Other prehistoric flint artefacts have been recorded in the area (MWA4035, MWA6624, MWA6173, MWA9323 and MWA23865) as well as a Bronze Age cooper alloy razor (MWA15570) c.40m to the east of the site.

3.5 Cropmarks alongside the river outside the town and are likely to be of later prehistoric or Roman period date and a prehistoric ditch (MWA6136; EWA1076 and EWA2547) was excavated 130m north of the site. Pits and a ditch (MWA12912; EWA6114) were discovered c.80m north of the site.

3.6 The Roman road Ryknild Street (MWA445) crossed the river at Bidford and a ford has been recorded south of the church (MWA591) with another c.10m east of the site (MWA603) and a third c.55m to the west, adjacent to Bidford Bridge (MWA604). A Roman settlement developed at the crossing (MWA7125; EWA862 and EWA6244) and c.300m north-east of the site (MWA12432; EWA9233 and EWA9225). A further

- concentration of activity is recorded 85m to the north of the site, (MWA596; EWA 1076) and to the east where a small walled enclosure surrounded a cremation burial (MWA6177; EWA1076).
- 3.7 A number of unstratified Roman finds are recorded (MWA6135, MWA6623, MWA15574 and MWA4036).
  - 3.8 The Anglo-Saxon and Medieval saltway (MWA 8217) runs east-west through the village and was referred to in a Bishopton Charter of AD 1016 as *Sealt Stet*.
  - 3.9 A large Anglo-Saxon cemetery (MWA605) is known as close as c.28m north of the site (EWA1088, EWA9792, EWA3149, EWA9794 and EWA6114). and settlement activity (MWA6132; EWA3149, EWA1076, EWA2547 and EWA3150) is also known.
  - 3.10 At Domesday (1086), the manor of Bidford was owned by *Odo*, bishop of Bayeux and included 57 households, although this encompassed the nearby settlements of Broom, Barton and Marcliff. Bidford achieved Borough status in 1220 when it was granted a market charter as part of the dowry of Joan (illegitimate daughter of King John) (Morton 2015).
  - 3.11 The possible extent of the medieval settlement (MWA9031) has been mapped based on the extent shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887. Possible building remains, pits, ditches and a cultivation layer have been recorded. The church (MWA586) has a 13th century foundation and a medieval bridge survives (MWA588).
  - 3.12 Bidford expanded during the post-medieval period and in the 16th century had styled itself as a borough even though no properties were held under burgage tenure (VCH 1945). A number of 16th- and 17th-century buildings line the High Street including no 41, which is thought to date from the 17th century (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 1993). It is thought that the building once comprised of two cottages (HOKO 2020).
  - 3.13 The earliest map available is the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 (Fig 2; Landmark 2003a) which depicts 41 High Street as a U-shaped building fronting the High Street with two projections at either side to the rear. A further small projection was attached to the west at the rear and two small outbuilding stood close to the end of the



backplot. A 'P' is depicted on the map indicating there was also a pump to the rear of the property.

- 3.14 By 1905 (Fig 3; Landmark 2003b) there had been no change to the building or the outbuildings but the pump is visible between the two rear projections. The 1966 map (Fig 4; Landmark 2003c) however no longer depicts the pump and garden outbuildings although the building itself remained unchanged. Aerial photographs dating to 1998 (SP0951-M and SP0951-N) indicate by this date the rear of the property, have been subject to change and the western rear projections had been removed. The cottage is today L-shaped in plan.

## 4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any significant archaeological deposits revealed by the development, to collate the fieldwork records into an archaeological archive and present the results of the fieldwork for dissemination.
- 4.2 An experienced archaeologist was present for each period of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with WSI. Where potential archaeological deposits were encountered, the supervising archaeologist assessed and recorded them before they were disturbed.
- 4.3 The underpinning trenches for the new building were excavated by a machine using a toothless bucket. The trenches varied in size from 1.00m x 0.55m to 1.00m x 0.80m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.50m. The site was reduced down to the formation level required for the concrete raft being installed.

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 Geological natural was reddish brown sand (2 and 9) and was recorded at a depth of 0.10-0.20m below the current ground surface.

### Post-medieval

- 5.2 Due to the formation levels, geological natural was not reached beneath the 0.20m+ thick layer of gravel (8) which contained pottery, clay pipe and glass dating from the 16th century to the early 19th century. This was overlaid by partially flagged floor (4)(3.00m x 5.60m), comprised of irregular blue lias stones (from as small as 0.10m x 0.08m to flagstones at the northern end of the floor). In some areas the floor had been patched with red brick.
- 5.3 Two external side wall foundations, in blue lias ashlar with dressed faces (5 aligned NE/SW, 3.22m x 0.35m; and 6 aligned NW/SE, 5.90m x 0.22m; Photo 1) were overlain by 0.10-0.15m of modern concrete (3).
- 5.4 The cut for a well (10) contained a 1.15m diameter drystone blue lias well wall (11), in stone blocks 0.30m x 0.40m (Photo 2) of unknown depth. Its uppermost backfill was dark grey silty sand (12) which contained modern ring pulls and wrappers. Above this lay a disturbed layer of topsoil mixed with rubble between 0.05-0.10 m deep.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The programme of archaeological work has enabled several observations to be made regarding the former use of the site.
- 6.2 A small quantity of artefacts from the 15th/16th to 18th century was recovered which very likely is associated with the use of the timber-framed 17th-century frontage building. Its incorporation into an underlying gravel layer would suggest there to be residual pottery in the vicinity as it also contained later 18th/19th-century finds.
- 6.3 The floor of the former south-west wing shown on the 19th-century mapping was uncovered along with the eastern and southern walls. This floor was probably laid during the early 19th century as pottery of probable early 19th-century date was recovered from below it. It may be contemporary with the walls but could be a later insertion. Running the width of the floor, a line of blue lias suggests a form of partition within this building. This partition runs from the blocked doorway in boundary wall 7.
- 6.4 The southernmost end of the floor was quite heavily sooted (but unburnt), which suggests this part was used to store coal (Photo 3). The western wall (7) of this extension has been retained as part of the boundary wall and it contains a blocked doorway and lintel (Photo 4) which would have offered a through passage before the adjacent brick wall was constructed. The wing was still shown on the 1966 Ordnance Survey mapping.
- 6.5 The well appears on the 1887 and 1905 mapping and can be associated with the pump so recorded. The ring pulls and food wrappers within its upper fill suggest a very late infilling.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank Bryn Wiseman for commissioning the work and to Steve and Tim for being accommodating on site.

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### **Cartographic sources**

Landmark 2003a *First Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1887, 1:2500, digitised version*

Landmark 2003b *Second Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1905, 1:2500, digitised version*

Landmark 2003c *Ordnance Survey map, 1966, 1:2500, digitised version*



1: Floor 4, wall foundations 5 and 6 facing NW



2: Cut for well 10 facing NW





3: Southern elevation



4: Wall 7 facing WNW

## APPENDICES

### A List of contexts

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Length (m)</b>	<b>Thickness (m)</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1	Dark brown silty loam, mixed with broken rubble, brick, tiles and ceramic pipes.		0.10-0.12	Topsoil mixed with rubble already disturbed on arrival
2	Brownish red mottled sand, friable and clear horizons.			Natural geology
3	Concrete floor, mixed with broken brick rubble. Smooth finish, external concrete floor		0.10-0.15m	Modern concrete floor
4	Blue lias limestone, irregular size, rough finish, irregular pattern. Southern most end had a layer of coal dust.	6.10m	0.09m	A blue lias stone floor.
5	Blue lias limestone blocks. Foundation	3.22m	0.36m	Foundation wall
6	Blue lias limestone blocks	5.90m		Foundation wall
7	Blue lias limestone wall. Irregular size blocks, with repairs made in brick. Lime mortar bonding. Some patches of lime plaster	6.06m		The retained western wall of the demolished west wing.
8	Gravel and sand bedding layer, containing pottery, clay pipe, bottle glass and animal bone dating to the early 19th century		+0.20m	A floor bedding layer
9	Dark brownish red sandy loam		0.20m	Natural geology
10	Circular, straight sided, base not reached			Cut of Well
11	Blue lias blocks approx. 30x40 dry stone form, 2 courses revealed.			Stone lined Well
12	Dark brownish grey, silty sand with bricks, stones and grey lias			Modern backfill of Well 11

	frags. No dating evidence. Modern backfill included ring pull, wrappers. Modern – not retained			
<b>13</b>	Soakaway from various drains. Frogged bricks.	1.06m	0.93m	Soakaway - Modern
<b>14</b>	Dry stone, grey lias wall base from an old building return.			Stone wall – same as 6

## B List of Finds

<b>Context</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Date/Comments</b>
1	Animal Bone	10	1 pig phalanx, 1 butchered humerus ?pig, 1 pig ulna, 1 pig tibia shaft, 1 vertebra fragment, 4 longbone shaft fragments
8	Glass	3	Pale green bottle body fragments, partially coated in burnt soot, very clear glass.
8	Animal Bone	5	1x butchered pig femur, 2 x ribs, 1 showing butchery marks, 1x pig phalanx and 1x partial cattle rib
8	Pottery	9	1x MANG, Manganese mottled ware 1680-1740 1x MB02, Midlands black glazed ware 1600-1800 2x STE03, White Salt-glazed Stoneware 1720-1780 1x STG01, Langerwehe German Stoneware, mid 15th – 16th century 2x MGW, blue transfer-decorated, ? early 19th century 2x CRW, Creamware 1740-1790
8	Clay Pipe	3	2x bowl fragments, no decoration. Oswald Type 7 and 8 late 18th-early 19thC. 1 x pipe stem

## Summary for archaeol27-502023

OASIS ID (UID)	archaeol27-502023
Project Name	41 High Street, Bidford-on-Avon: Archaeological Watching Brief
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	BHS21 41 High Street Bidford
Planning Id	20/03636/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Archaeology Warwickshire
Project Dates	01-Apr-2021 - 31-May-2021
Location	41 High Street NGR : SP 09953 51798 LL : 52.1643635244773, - 1.85590669413061 12 Fig : 409953,251798
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Warwickshire District : Stratford-on-Avon Parish : Bidford-on-Avon
Project Methodology	A watching brief was carried out during ground reductions and underpinning in advance of a new single storey garden room to the rear of a 17th century cottage. This work was carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidelines (2020).
Project Results	A small quantity of artefacts from the 16th/17th century was recovered which very likely is associated with the use of the timber-framed 17th century frontage. Its incorporation into an underlying gravel layer would suggest there to be residual pottery in the vicinity as it also contained the 19th century finds. The floor of the former south-west wing shown on the 19th century mapping was uncovered along with the eastern and southern walls. The well appears on the 1887 and 1905 mapping and can be associated with the pump so recorded.
Keywords	Well - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Floor - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types

HER	Warwickshire HER - unRev - STANDARD
HER Identifiers	
Archives	FINDS, PAPER, DIGITAL - to be deposited with Warwickshire Museum

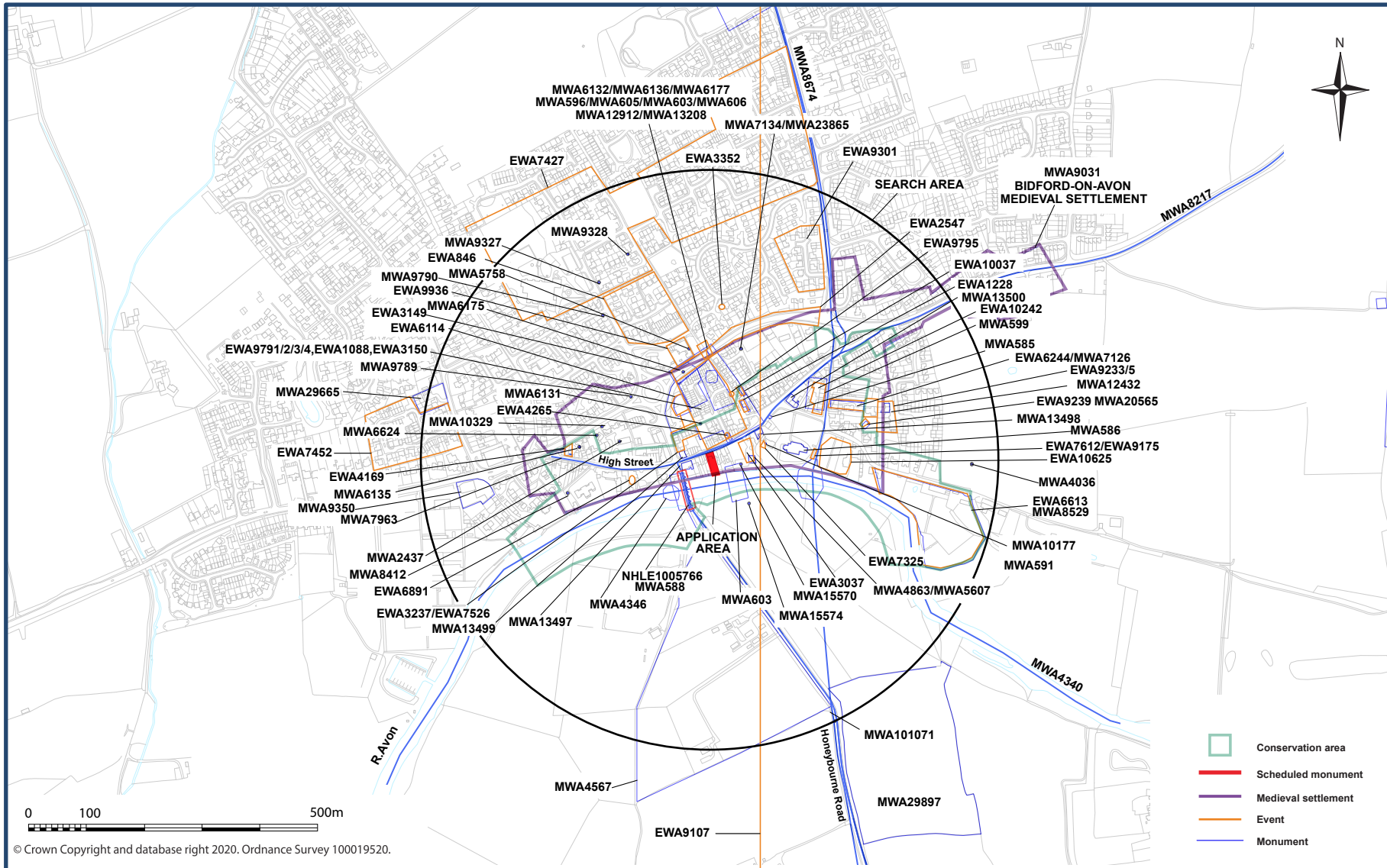


Fig 1: Location of application area and Historic Environment information

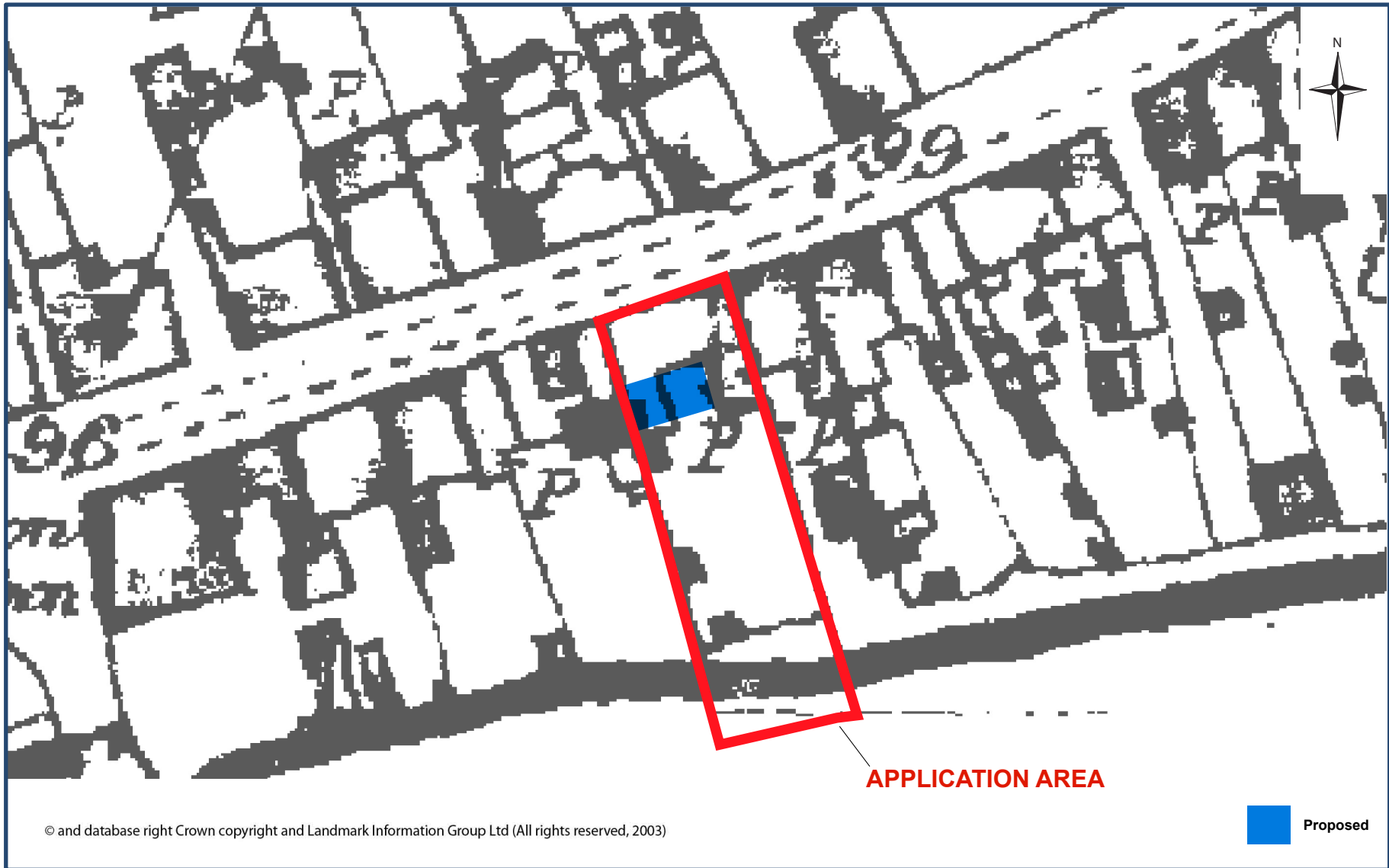


Fig 2: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1887



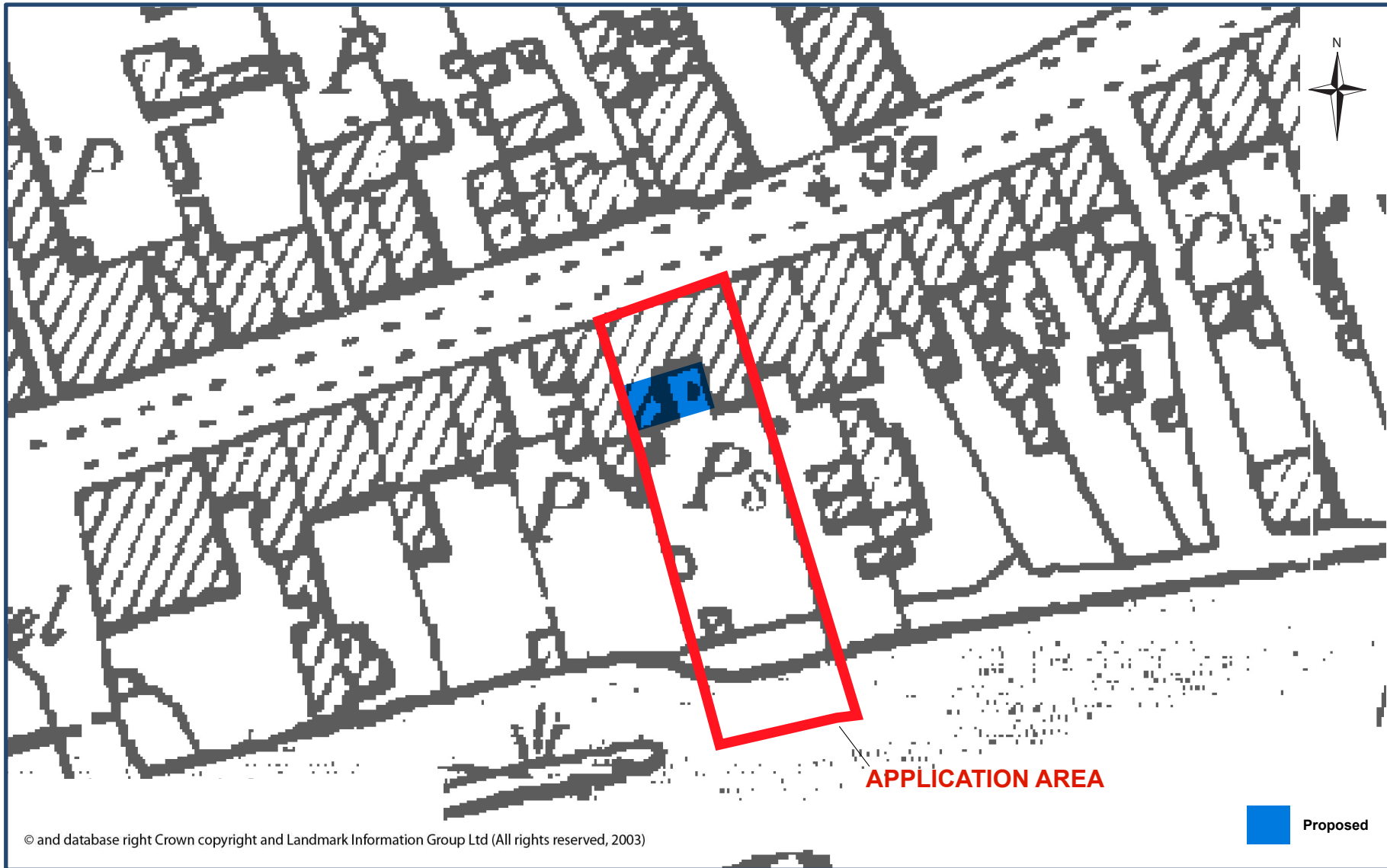


Fig 3: Detail from Second Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1905

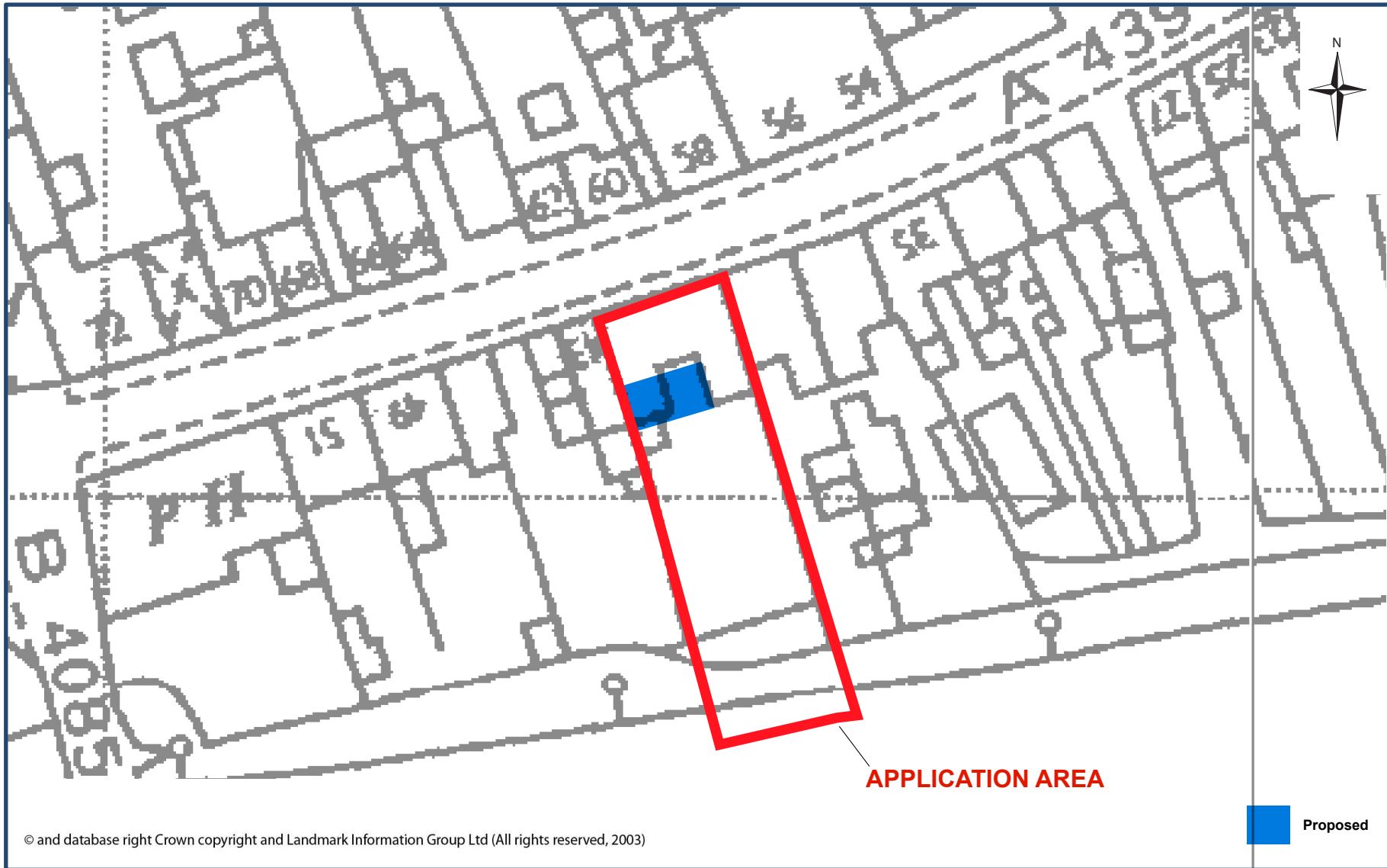


Fig 4: Detail from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1966

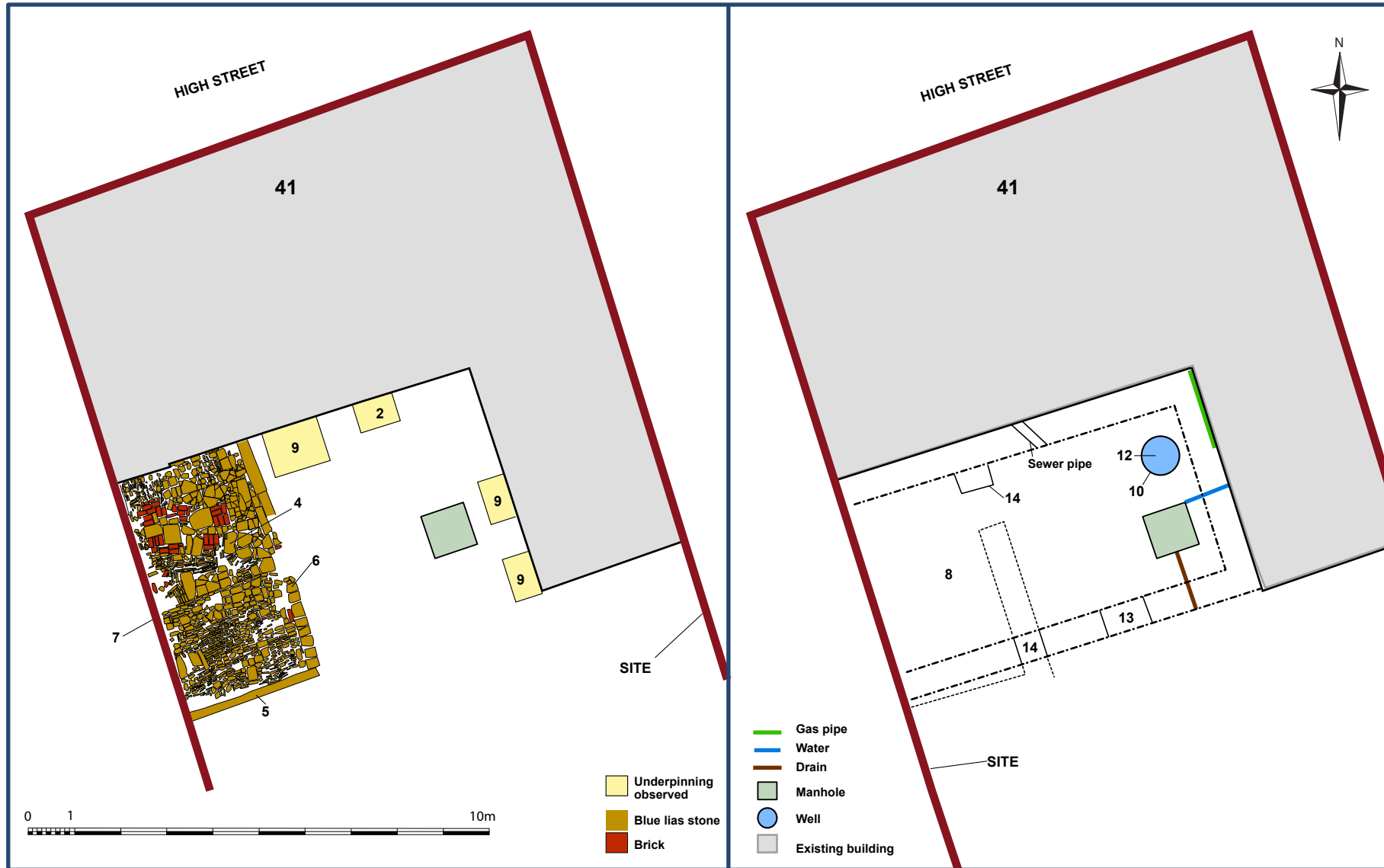


Fig 5: Location of works observed